



Waterways Ireland Oral History Project Lesson Plan 6

Time Travel - The Island of Ireland in the 1940s

Transition Year Subject

History, Environmental and Social Studies, Geography, English

KS 4

Environment and Society, History, Community Based Learning

Aims of Lesson

This Lesson Plan will show how memory to transport students to another time. It demonstrates how oral history and the memory of older people generally, can make the past more human and relatable to students, as well as helping them discover layers to their own local history and place. It also shines a light on the different experiences of World War II or 'The Emergency', in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.



What you Need

Internet Connection, Whiteboard/Computer, amplification and printout paper.

Preparation

Teachers should make sure that the Waterways Ireland Archive website is accessible within the classroom and that the oral history selections are playing through your speaker system/whiteboard.

Getting Started

If introducing oral history, teachers should explain the following:

Oral history is 'the recording of people's memories and experiences and using those oral sources to better understand the past. It can be divided into two categories:

- Oral History – The direct memories of a speaker
- Oral Tradition – Stories passed to the speaker from a previous generation





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Activity

The Lesson Plan can be implemented across 2 – 3 lessons, depending on the depth the teacher wishes to pursue.

Lesson 1

In the first lesson, the teacher should summarize what 'The Emergency' (World War II) was.

Note: World War II also known as the Second World War, was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. The Emergency was a 'state of emergency' which existed in Ireland during that war. The State of Ireland (Republic of Ireland) remained neutral in the war and so the term 'Emergency' was officially used to describe the state's experience of the war. In Northern Ireland, the war was felt more intensely with many air raids and a presence of the Royal Air Force, throughout the state, which was not neutral in the war.

The following slideshow is a useful resource for teachers:
History Matters 365 - The Emergency

Lesson 2

Divide the classes into groups of three. Ask each group to spend 10 – 15 minutes discussing the following before answering?

- ✓ What would you expect to see on the Royal Canal during 'The Emergency' (World War II)?
- ✓ What experiences would a child have in workplaces around their community in the 1940s?
- ✓ Why do you think the Royal Air Force were based in Lough Erne in the 1940s?

After this lesson activity, the group will be played the audio selected below. They will then be asked to return to the exercise with the benefit of having heard the memory: The groups should then be asked to reflect and write down three ways that they know more about 'The Emergency' (World War II) now, having listened to the audio.

Waterways Audio Samples

Noel Spaine

Noel Spaine's early memories of the Royal Canal in Dublin take us to 'the Emergency' (World War II).

Michael Clarke

Michael Clarke, a maritime enthusiast from Larne in County Antrim recalls to the way in which as a child he spent time on passenger boats and coal boats and explains how relaxed workers were about children spending time in their workspaces.

Michael Clarke

Michael Clarke speaks about his childhood which was during World War II (known in the Republic of Ireland as 'The Emergency').

Fred Tiernan

Fred Tiernan from Irvinestown in Fermanagh explains how the RAF (Royal Air Force) had base on Lough Erne, during the war. He also speaks about the ML Endeavour which was the largest clinker built boat ever built on Lough Erne. The ML Endeavour was used to service flying boats during WWII.

The stories you will hear are told in a variety of different accents from across the island of Ireland, so listen carefully!