



## Historical Perspective – Movement In and Out of Ireland

People have always journeyed around the world, moving from place to place, leaving one land to settle down in another.

There have always been people eager to discover new lands, to explore.

Others travelled to trade, or in search of work.

In the past it was very common for people to travel on foot or on horseback to faraway places on pilgrimages and today many Muslims still make the journey of a lifetime to the holy city of Mecca while Christians still travel to holy places such as Lourdes.



## THE INS AND OUTS OF POPULATION IN IRELAND OVER THE CENTURIES

### The Celts

The Celts were among the first races to abandon the hunters' nomadic life when they discovered iron and were able to clear forests, plough land and grow plenty of food. They lived in large family groups or tribes, with parents, children, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles forming a clan. As their settlements grew larger, they gradually moved into new territories and lands across Europe, eventually reaching Ireland between 500BC and 600BC.

### The Vikings

In AD795 the first raiders from Norway attacked Irish monasteries and by 841 a Viking warship had landed near the Dubh Linn at the mouth of the river Liffey. They built a *longphort* to protect themselves in what became Dyflin, not far away from the small settlement known as Átha Cliath, or 'the ford of the hurdles'.

### The Normans Arrive

In 1169 the first large band of Normans reached Ireland and a year later they took control of Dublin. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Normans had intermarried with the Irish and controlled most of the country. The Norman lords swore allegiance to Henry II. From this time on, English kings and queens claimed the right to rule Ireland.

### Plantations and English settlers

Counties Laois and Offaly were planted by English settlers in 1549 and the Plantation of Munster began in 1586, with Ulster being the last province to be settled in the early 1600s. The Flight of the Earls (*Teitheadh nó Imeacht na nIarlaí*) represented the end of native Irish rule and the completion of the English conquest. The way was clear for the plantation of Ulster to begin. This was one of the most significant migrations to have taken place in early modern Europe and it changed Ireland's politics forever.

### The Great Famine (An Gorta Mór)

In Ireland in the 1840s there was a terrible famine when potato blight arrived. Most of the land was owned by landlords, and ordinary workers and tenant farmers – maybe ninety percent of the population – completely relied

on the potato as their main food. Blight struck the potato crop in September 1845 and within one month over seventy thousand people had died of starvation and disease. The following September almost the entire potato crop was destroyed and thousands more left the country in search of a better life in America, Canada, Australia and England. Because they were in such poor health, so weakened by hunger, large numbers died on board ship – and the ships became known as 'coffin' ships.

1847 became known as 'Black '47' because it was the worst year of the Famine – it was also a very cold winter and people were dying of starvation, cholera and famine fever. The Society of Friends, or Quakers, set up some soup kitchens and these saved many lives. The people's only refuge, the hated workhouses, became overcrowded. At the start of the famine, the population of Ireland was approximately eight and a half million. It is now estimated that at least one million people died in the ten years after the first potato crop failed and approximately two million people emigrated in that same decade.

### Work Abroad

In later years, demand for factory workers and for labourers or 'navvies' to help build canals and railways led to many thousands of Irish people travelling to Britain in search of work, while many more continued to travel to America and Australia to join those who had left during and after the Famine. Many, though, had no friends or relations in America, and many could not speak English. Cork-born Annie Moore became the very first immigrant of any nationality to land, on her fifteenth birthday, at the now historic reception centre on Ellis Island, New York, on the day it opened in 1892.

### Emigration from Ireland in the 1950s

Between 1951 and 1956 annual net migration was 39,353 and between 1956 and 1961 this rose to over 40,000, peaking in the late 1950s at a rate of 14.8 per 1000 of population. The highest rate of emigration between 1951 and 1956 took place from counties such as Leitrim, Donegal, Monaghan and Mayo. In 1950, the population of Ireland was 2,818,000 and by 1960 it was still only 2,884,000.





## THE MEMORY BOX

### RECENT IMMIGRATION TO IRELAND: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### IMMIGRATION IN IRELAND

We can now control potato blight with spray, yet crops fail in other parts of the world because of drought, natural disasters, pests and diseases. Many people leave their homes and extended families in search of food and a better life, just as the Irish did in the past. The past ten years have seen a mass migration to Ireland with thousands of people arriving from eastern Europe, the Philippines and some African countries. Because the number of workers from EU countries was not sufficient to meet the economy's labour needs during the so-called Celtic Tiger boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, work permits were issued to non-EU citizens for specified jobs.

These migrant workers and their families contributed to significant changes in the make-up of Irish society, changes which brought issues of cultural, religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity to the forefront of educational and national policy-making. What marks Ireland's change as different to that in most European countries is the rapidity with which the country moved from being one from which people traditionally emigrated to being a recipient of immigrants.

Currently, information about the 2006 census is becoming available and indicates that the combined number of immigrants from the ten states that joined the European Union in 2004 has amounted to more than 100,000 people. Poles are the dominant migrant group (63,278), followed by Lithuanians (24,638), Nigerians (16,300) and Latvians (13,319).

#### Refugees/asylum seekers

*'Another group of recent immigrants to Ireland comprises those who are seeking asylum. The asylum process is designed to protect those who have a well-founded fear of persecution in their country of origin. In order to protect such people, the right to ask for asylum was written into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Those who are granted asylum are known as refugees. The number of asylum seekers and refugees grew internationally*

*during the 1980s and early 1990s. Asylum applications also increased in Ireland during the 1990s.'*

*Intercultural Education in the Primary School,*  
NCCA (2005) p11

Asylum applications increased in Ireland during the 1990s. People came from many countries including Nigeria, Romania, Republic of Moldova, Somalia, Sudan and the Ukraine. The average monthly figure for asylum applications in 2004 was 355, compared to 620 per month in 2003; 2,216 applications were received in the Department of Justice from January to the end of June 2005. In 2004, 4,766 applications were received, and of these, 1,138 were successful.

Legislative changes in Ireland and across the EU made it increasingly difficult for asylum seekers to come to Ireland and, as a result, numbers have dropped dramatically. Legislation relating to this area includes:

- The Immigration Act of 2003 included a 'liability of carriers' clause in which carriers became subject to prosecution if their vehicle had passengers who did not have a valid Irish transit visa.
- An EU-wide ruling set out criteria for determining which country is responsible for dealing with an asylum appeal. It means that asylum seekers can be transferred within the EU back to the country in which the person first arrived.
- The Citizenship Referendum of 2004 changed the Constitution so that a child born in Ireland is deemed a citizen only if he or she has one Irish parent.

Therefore the majority of children from a majority ethnic background arriving into Irish schools are no longer the children of asylum seekers. They are from families of economic migrants, mostly from Eastern Europe. Some are children of refugees, others of asylum seekers, some may have been born in Ireland of migrant parents, others are children of returned emigrants and a few are unaccompanied minors.

We wish to acknowledge the Irish Refugee Council for providing relevant information for this section.

#### TOP TEN FOREIGN NATIONAL GROUPINGS RESIDENT IN IRELAND

Poland = 150,000   China = 60,000   Lithuania = 45,000   Latvia = 30,000   Nigeria = 28,000  
UK = 25,000   US = 6,000   Romania = 5,000   Philippines = 5,000   Pakistan = 4,500

*The Irish Times 'Who We Are', 23 May 2006*





## THE MEMORY BOX

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE – MOVEMENT IN AND OUT OF IRELAND

New applications for asylum in 2006: 4314  
Number of countries of origin: 91  
Number of languages spoken: 80  
Country with most applicants: Nigeria (24%)  
Male/female ratio: 2:1  
Granted asylum: 397

*From the Irish Examiner, 8 June 2007*

**In 2006 Ireland was criticised for granting refugee status to just eight percent of asylum applicants and for the low level of State care offered to children seeking asylum.**

In June 2007 the Ombudsman for Children, Emily Logan, told a UN committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva that the State's treatment of separated children seeking asylum was in breach of UN and European conventions on children's rights. She said the vast majority of such children were accommodated in privately owned hostels, operated by staff without any childcare training, and did not meet the standards for residential centres where Irish children are placed. 'The inferior care provided to separated children seeking asylum is unacceptable and places the State in breach of its obligation to prevent discrimination under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights,' she said.

*From The Irish Times, 8 June 2006*

## EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE

### THE IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE AND THE ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

Immigration is a significant dislocation for the people concerned, even for those for whom the change of country is the result of a planned, voluntary process. It is particularly difficult for people whose immigration is due to war or crisis. Immigrants, whatever their circumstances, tend to go through a predictable series of stages in adjusting to their changed situation. It is useful for teachers to be aware of these stages because newly arrived children in our classes may be experiencing some of the following emotions. Also, a child's openness to a new language and readiness to absorb it, may be affected by the stage of adjustment they are at.

#### 1 Arrival and First Impressions

Newly arrived immigrants are excited to be in a new country and optimistic about new opportunities. Asylum seekers are relieved to have arrived in a safe place.

#### 2 Culture Shock

At this stage immigrants are less optimistic as the challenges of resettlement become more evident and as they begin to miss family, friends and the familiar situations that they have left behind. They may have difficulties making contacts and making friends, and also

may find the challenge of learning English overwhelming.

Sometimes people can get 'stuck' at this stage and a small number can become depressed. Children going through this phase need a lot of support and encouragement.

#### 3 Recovery and Optimism

At this stage the person has renewed enthusiasm about their new situation. This can be prompted by making friends, success at school, becoming more familiar with the new environment and so on. Children whose language and cultural identity are well supported at school begin to feel more confident about their new situation.

#### 4 Acculturation

Immigrants at this stage become comfortable with a new identity that balances their original culture with aspects of the new cultural environment. To help children reach this stage, schools need to support them by recognising and valuing their cultural identity so that they become able to move between their old and new linguistic and cultural worlds.

*Adapted from 'Many Roots, Many Voices' Ontario Education Service. With thanks to INTO /Coláiste Mhuire's online course 'Teaching English as an Additional Language – An Intercultural Approach', July 2007*

