

# St. Patrick's Day

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. When is St. Patrick's Day?
2. Where is St. Patrick's Day the most important national holiday?
3. What colour and symbols are associated with St. Patrick's Day?
4. Have you ever celebrated St. Patrick's Day?  
If yes, what did you do?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| _____ 1. descent  | a) to change   |
| _____ 2. shamrock | b) a person who takes care of sheep                                      |
| _____ 3. kidnap   | c) a festive march with music and costumes                               |
| _____ 4. slave    | d) to like and respect   |
| _____ 5. shepherd | e) a thief or robber who lives on the sea                                |
| _____ 6. Bible    | f) a plant which usually has three leaves on each stem                   |
| _____ 7. priest   | g) origin, coming from   |
| _____ 8. convert  | h) a person who is forced to work for someone and can be bought and sold |
| _____ 9. admire   | i) an unbelievable event, an act of God                                  |
| _____ 10. miracle | j) to steal a person   |
| _____ 11. pirate  | k) a religious man who works for the church                              |
| _____ 12. parade  | l) a book of sacred writings of the church                               |



## Reading

### St. Patrick's Day Today

1. March 17 is St. Patrick's Day. This is Ireland's most important national holiday, but it is also a special day for Irish people living throughout the world. On St. Patrick's Day, people of Irish **descent** wear the colour green. This is the national colour of Ireland. It is the colour of the **shamrock**, a plant with three leaves on a single stem. The shamrock is a symbol of Ireland and St. Patrick's Day. In many cities, St. Patrick's Day is celebrated with **parades**, dances, and festive dinners. People greet each other with good wishes and often send cards to each other. Many stores are filled with green decorations, and cakes and candies are often decorated with the colour green. Some restaurants and pubs even sell green beer!

### A History of St. Patrick's Day

2. St. Patrick was born at the end of the fourth century in Britain. When he was 16, he was **kidnapped** from his home by a group of Irish **pirates** and taken to Ireland. In Ireland, he was sold as a **slave** and had to work for the next six years as a **shepherd**. When Patrick was living in Ireland as a slave, he had a very lonely life and he turned to religion for comfort. After six long years of slavery, at the age of 22, he escaped to France and began to study the **Bible**. Later, he became a **priest** and decided to return to Ireland to **convert** the people to Christianity. Patrick was a very brave man and the people **admired** him. He travelled all over the country setting up schools and churches for the Irish people. He also worked very hard to develop a strong national spirit in the country.
3. There are many stories about St. Patrick. Some people say that he used the shamrock when he was teaching about Christianity. The shamrock, with its three leaves, represented the Trinity (the father, the son, and the holy spirit), which is a basic principle of the Catholic religion. Many people believe that St. Patrick performed **miracles**. The most famous story about St. Patrick is that he drove all the snakes out of Ireland. He put them in a box and threw them into the sea. People say that is why there aren't any snakes in Ireland today.
4. St. Patrick died on March 17, 461. Ever since his death, March 17 has been celebrated as St. Patrick's Day. It is an important day for the Irish because it celebrates the conversion of Ireland to Christianity. Nowadays, it is also a special day to celebrate one's Irish traditions and to have fun.



## Comprehension

Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner.  
Then write the answers in the spaces below.

1. Which country celebrates St. Patrick's Day as a national holiday?

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2. When and where was St. Patrick born?

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3. What happened to Patrick when he was 16?

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4. What kind of work did he do when he was a slave?

---

5. How long did he live in slavery?

---

6. What did Patrick do after he escaped to France?

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7. Why did Patrick return to Ireland?

---

8. What did Patrick do to help the people of Ireland?

---

9. When did Patrick die?

---

10. How do people celebrate St. Patrick's Day?

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## Vocabulary Review

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.

You may need to change the word forms.

1. Pierre is of French \_\_\_\_\_. His grandparents moved to Canada from France 40 years ago.
2. In many cartoon movies, a \_\_\_\_\_ wears a black patch over one eye and a scarf on his head.
3. When his mother recovered from cancer, he thought it was a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the national symbol of Ireland.
5. There were many clowns, dancers, and marching bands in the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ will perform the marriage ceremony in the church.
7. Before the American Civil War, it was legal to own \_\_\_\_\_ in the US.
8. You can \_\_\_\_\_ your American dollars to Canadian dollars at the airport.
9. He is a very religious person. He reads the \_\_\_\_\_ every day.
10. After they \_\_\_\_\_ the child, they asked for a million dollars for his safe return.



## Pair Work (Student A)

### A. Paraphrasing & Sharing Information

You and your partner each have a different reading about an Irish legend. Read your legend and retell it to your partner in your own words. Listen to your partner tell you about his or her legend.

#### Challenge

Do you know a legend from your own country? Share it with your partner too.

#### The Blarney Stone

The Blarney Stone is a stone located in a wall of the Blarney Castle in the small village of Blarney in Ireland. People believe that the Blarney Stone has magical powers. According to the legend, an old woman made the stone magical in order to reward the king after he had saved her from drowning. The stone gave the king the ability to speak very beautifully. People believe that anyone who kisses the Blarney Stone will receive "the gift of the gab," a special ability to talk sweetly and convincingly. It is not easy to reach the Blarney Stone. You have to climb many stairs in the castle and then lie on your back, bend downward, and hold onto iron bars for support.

### B. Facts about Ireland

You and your partner each have some information about Ireland. Complete the sentences below by asking your partner for the missing information.

1. Ireland is also called the Emerald Island.
2. The capital of Ireland is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The official languages of Ireland are English and Gaelic.
4. Ireland is located \_\_\_\_\_ of Great Britain.
5. The shamrock is the national flower of Ireland.
6. The longest river in Ireland is the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The flag of Ireland has three vertical stripes.
8. The stripes on the flag of Ireland are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The size of Ireland is 27,136 square miles (about 43,671 square kilometres).
10. The population of Ireland is \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Ireland became self-governing in 1922.
12. St. Patrick's Day was first celebrated in North America in \_\_\_\_\_ (city) in 1737.



## Pair Work (Student B)

### A. Paraphrasing & Sharing Information

You and your partner each have a different reading about an Irish legend. Read your legend and retell it to your partner in your own words. Listen to your partner tell you about his or her legend.

#### Challenge

Do you know a legend from your own country? Share it with your partner too.

#### Leprechauns (Irish Fairies)

According to legend, leprechauns are little Irish fairies who look like old men. They are only about two feet tall and they dress like shoemakers. They are not very friendly. They live alone and spend their time making shoes. They are very special because they possess a hidden pot of gold. You can try to find a leprechaun by listening for the sound of his hammer when he is making shoes. If you find one, you can try to force him to tell you where he has hidden his gold.

### B. Facts about Ireland

You and your partner each have some information about Ireland. Complete the sentences below by asking your partner for the missing information.

1. Ireland is also called \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The capital of Ireland is Dublin.
3. The official languages of Ireland are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Ireland is located west of Great Britain.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the national flower of Ireland.
6. The longest river in Ireland is the Shannon River.
7. The flag of Ireland has three \_\_\_\_\_ stripes.
8. The stripes on the flag of Ireland are green, white, and orange.
9. The size of Ireland is \_\_\_\_\_ square miles (about 43,671 square kilometres).
10. The population of Ireland is about four million.
11. Ireland became self-governing in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).
12. St. Patrick's Day was first celebrated in North America in Boston in \_\_\_\_\_ (date).



# Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions

## A. Reference

| VOCABULARY, IDIOM, OR EXPRESSION  | DEFINITION  |
|---|---|
| <b>be green with envy</b> ( <i>idiom</i> )  | to be very jealous of what somebody else has  |
| <b>get (or give) the green light</b> ( <i>idiom</i> )                                   | to get (or give) permission to start something  |
| <b>be green</b> ( <i>idiom</i> )  | to have no experience   |
| <b>have a green thumb</b> ( <i>idiom</i> )  | to be a good gardener or have a natural ability with plants and flowers   |
| <b>the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence</b> ( <i>expression</i> ) | we always think that what other people have is better than what we have or that somebody else's situation is better than ours |
| <b>the luck of the Irish</b> ( <i>expression</i> )                                      | to have the good luck of Irish people   |
| <b>the gift of the gab</b> ( <i>expression</i> )  | the ability to speak very well, to have a good way with words   |

## B. Practice

Choose the correct idiom or expression from the list above to complete the following exercise.

- All my plants die. I don't have \_\_\_\_\_. Maybe I should buy some artificial plants.
- The new president of our club is a wonderful speaker. He is very persuasive. He really has \_\_\_\_\_.
- My friend is going to Hawaii for a three-week vacation. I wish I could go, but I have to work. I am \_\_\_\_\_.
- Sarah has won the lottery three times this month. She must have \_\_\_\_\_.
- Frank is thinking of quitting his job and moving to another company. He always thinks that \_\_\_\_\_.
- If Robert gets the job, the company will have to spend a lot of time training him. He is really \_\_\_\_\_. He knows nothing about sales.
- The government has finally given \_\_\_\_\_ to start building a new hospital.



## Class Activity

Walk around the classroom and ask your classmates questions.  
Write the questions in the spaces provided below, and write  
your classmate's name on the right if he/she answers "yes."

| #  | Find someone...                                    | Question | Classmate |
|----|--|----------|-----------|
| 1  | who has seen green beer.                           |          |           |
| 2  | who has felt green with envy.                      |          |           |
| 3  | whose favourite colour is green.                   |          |           |
| 4  | who has a green thumb.                             |          |           |
| 5  | who has been to<br>the capital of Ireland.         |          |           |
| 6  | who has seen a parade<br>in the past few months.   |          |           |
| 7  | who is afraid of snakes.                           |          |           |
| 8  | who can describe a leprechaun.                     |          |           |
| 9  | who can draw the flag of Ireland.                  |          |           |
| 10 | who is planning to celebrate<br>St. Patrick's Day. |          |           |





# Listening

🔊 <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2011/03/15/st-patricks-day/>

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

## St. Patrick's Day Today

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## A History of St. Patrick's Day

2. St. Patrick was born at the end of the fourth century in Britain. When he was 16, he was \_\_\_\_\_ from his home by a group of Irish pirates and taken to Ireland. In Ireland, he was sold as a slave and had to work for the next six years as a \_\_\_\_\_. When Patrick was living in Ireland as a slave, he had a very lonely life and he turned to religion for comfort. After six long years of slavery, at the age of 22, he escaped to France and

began to study the Bible. Later, he became a \_\_\_\_\_ and decided to return to Ireland to convert the people to Christianity. Patrick was a very brave man and the people \_\_\_\_\_ him. He travelled all over the country setting up schools and churches for the Irish people. He also worked very hard to develop a strong national spirit in the country.

3. There are many stories about St. Patrick. Some people say that he used the shamrock when he was teaching about Christianity. The shamrock, with its three leaves, \_\_\_\_\_ the Trinity (the father, the son, and the holy spirit), which is a basic \_\_\_\_\_ of the Catholic religion. Many people believe that St. Patrick performed \_\_\_\_\_. The most famous story about St. Patrick is that he drove all the snakes out of Ireland. He put them in a box and \_\_\_\_\_ them into the sea. People say that is why there aren't any snakes in Ireland today.
4. St. Patrick died on March 17, 461. Ever since his death, March 17 has been celebrated as St. Patrick's Day. It is an important day for the Irish because it celebrates the conversion of Ireland to Christianity. Nowadays, it is also a special day to celebrate one's Irish traditions and to have fun.



# Answer Key

## LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read about the history associated with St. Patrick's Day. Includes a comprehension check, a vocabulary review, an information gap activity to do in groups, and a class survey. Fun idioms are introduced.

**LEVEL:** Int – High Int

**TIME:** 2–3 hours

**TAGS:** St. Patrick's Day, shamrock, green, Ireland, history, luck, idioms, holiday, St. Patrick

## Warm-Up & Introduction to St. Patrick's Day

You can begin by bringing pictures of shamrocks, leprechauns, pots of gold, an Irish map, an Irish flag, cookies or candies decorated in green, or any other symbols of St. Patrick's Day to class. Ask the students if they know why they have been seeing so much "green" in the stores lately. Then ask them to share any information they may already have about this celebration or about Ireland.

## Pre-Reading

### A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. St. Patrick's Day is on March 17.
2. St. Patrick's Day is the most important national holiday in Ireland.
3. Green is the colour of St. Patrick's Day. Symbols include shamrocks, four-leaf clovers, horseshoes, leprechauns, and pots of gold.
4. Answers will vary.

### B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- |      |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. g | 3. j | 5. b | 7. k | 9. d  | 11. e |
| 2. f | 4. h | 6. l | 8. a | 10. i | 12. c |

## Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 9. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

## Comprehension

After reading the passage, break the students into pairs and have them practise asking and answering the comprehension questions. At the end of the oral practice, have the students write the answers. Review again orally with the whole class.

1. Ireland celebrates St. Patrick's Day as a national holiday.
2. St. Patrick was born at the end of the 4th century in Britain.
3. When he was 16, he was kidnapped from his home by a group of Irish pirates and taken to Ireland.
4. He worked as a shepherd while he was a slave.
5. He lived in slavery for six years.
6. After he escaped to France, he began to study the Bible.
7. He returned to Ireland to convert people there to Christianity.
8. He travelled all over the country setting up schools and churches for the Irish people. He also worked very hard to develop a strong national spirit in the country.
9. St. Patrick died on March 17, 461.
10. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated with parades, dances, and festive dinners. Many people wear green, drink green beer, and send cards.

## Vocabulary Review

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. descent  | 6. priest     |
| 2. pirate   | 7. slaves     |
| 3. miracle  | 8. convert    |
| 4. shamrock | 9. Bible      |
| 5. parade   | 10. kidnapped |

*(continued on the next page...)*



## Answer Key cont.

### Pair Work

Break the class into pairs. One student is given a reading on leprechauns and the other a legend about the Blarney Stone. Have the students read their own legend silently and then share the information orally with their partner. You may then have a few students retell the legends to the whole class. The students also have some information about Ireland. Each student has half the information. Have them complete the information sheets by asking their partner questions. You can also follow up this activity with a review of question formation. The students can write the questions for each of the underlined words.

### Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions

#### A. REFERENCE

Teach expressions related to the colour green and St. Patrick's Day. Explain the meanings, use them in context, have the students complete the sentences, and then have them write their own sentences using the idioms.

#### B. PRACTICE

1. a green thumb
2. the gift of the gab
3. green with envy
4. the luck of the Irish
5. the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence
6. green
7. the green light

### Class Activity

Distribute the worksheet. Have the students circulate around the class asking the questions on the sheet. When a student finds a classmate who can answer the question, he/she will then write the student's name on the line and follow up with one more question of his/her own. Ex. *Have you ever been green with envy?* If the student answers "yes," the second question might be: *Who did you envy?* Try to encourage the students to engage in real conversation during this activity. Follow up by sharing the information with the class.

### Listening

1. descent, shamrock, parades, decorations
2. kidnapped, shepherd, priest, admired
3. represented, principle, miracles, threw