

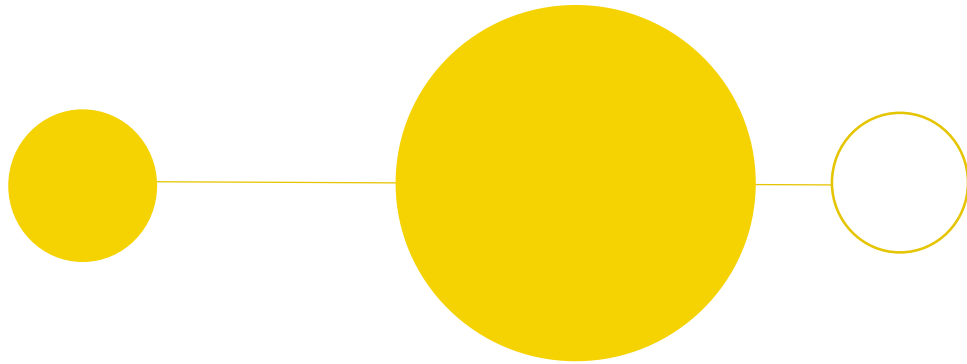
IRISH VOICES

OUR STORIES SHARED

LEARNING RESOURCE

MAKING MEMORIES

LESSON PLAN



A group of people are gathered together, with their hands joined in a circle. Several individuals have temporary tattoos on their wrists, featuring a colorful, abstract design. The scene is outdoors, and the people are wearing winter clothing like jackets and sweaters. A yellow text box is overlaid on the center of the image.

“See the colours and the camaraderie, the shouts and the cheers.”

MAKING

MEMORIES

CLASSROOM WORKSHOP

OBJECTIVE

To introduce the concept of memory, how it is constructed and communicated. In this activity, students are asked to recall their own memory as well as an Irish Voices narrative from the [Irish Voices website](#).

PREPARATION

Ask the students to do these preparation activities either in advance as homework or as part of a longer session in class. Remember an event that has been shared by all the class (a school performance, trip, sports day etc.) and write down all that they can remember about the event.

Then listen to one of the Irish Voices testimonies that particularly interest them. Ask them-what attracts you to this story? What event/s are being described? How is the interviewee feeling? Can you visualize the event in your head? What details can you remember? Practice retelling this narrative.

ACTIVITY TIME : 1 HOUR

ACTIVITY ONE MEMORY CONNECTIONS WEB

Students sit in a circle with a ball of string. Using string creates a visual demonstration of how individual and collective memories are connected.

One student takes the ball of string and starts telling his or her memory of a shared school event. When they have finished recounting the event they pass the ball of string to another student who shares that memory, allowing the string to unravel as they pass, roll or throw the ball. The second student tells another recollection. Once they have finished, they again pass the ball of string to a student who remembers the same event, and it will be their turn to tell another shared memory.

As the students share their experiences a web-like net is formed. The recalled events can be different but they students should focus on shared memories, as the ball of string can only be passed on to another student who remembers the same event. They can choose to tell the same event from a new perspective or a different shared event.

ACTIVITY TWO IRISH VOICES RECALL

After the net has been formed, the student who has the end of the string tells the story of the Irish Voices oral history that they have listened to. Afterwards the ball of string is passed onto another student, who will retell a different Irish Voices oral history narrative that if possible, has something in common with the first story (same place, same year, same event etc.). As each student narrates the Irish Voices oral history they have listened to, focusing on how it might connect to a previous one, they coil the string back up, so by the end of the activity, the ball of string is wound up again.

ACTIVITY THREE DISCUSSION

Consider what happened when students retold their memories of the shared school event. Were there any differences in the accounts of the same event? Why might this have been? Or were they similar?

Ask the students:

Were you influenced by what you heard? As you heard details that others remembered did this influence your own memory?

Consider the Irish Voices oral histories. How easy was it to recall the narrative? What sort of details did people remember? Which were the most interesting accounts to listen to? Why? Was it the way the narrative was told or the story itself? Or both? What was easiest to tell the class- your own memory or a memorised account from someone else?

ACTIVITY FOUR IRISH VOICES - DIVERGENT MEMORIES

Listen to these different narratives describing the same event at the London Irish festival in Roundwood Park in 1989.



Ask your students-What does the narrator's portrayal of the event tell you about what is important to them?

In what way do the versions differ? Why do you think the speakers remember the event differently? Which version of events do you think is true? How can you tell? Can more than one version be true?



“It was wonderful... some people paid to get in, more climbed over the fence!”

In **activity one**, if possible use primary documentation of the school events when students are remembering (photos, programmes, newsletters, posters). Students can compare their memories with the official or documentary record. Discuss the differences between the types of information that are held in these records and their personal testimonies

In **activity four**, two speakers attribute different causes to one of the few occasions of trouble at the London Irish festival and another does not remember any trouble at all. This is a useful example of how memory is constructed. Some events are remembered and others are forgotten or possibly silenced. Memory is created in the present and current perspectives or hindsight can alter how an event is remembered.

When discussing these narratives you could consider that John Connolly reflects on events through the lens of a wider context, the tensions associated to the Northern Ireland conflict, Tom Monaghan remembers the festival nostalgically and mourns its loss. He remembers the best of it.

TIPS

&

TEACHERS

NOTES

USEFUL RESOURCES

IRISH VOICES AUDIO CLIPS

Themes-Culture - [Irish Festival - Bill Aulsberry, Tom Monaghan, Malcolm McNally](#)

Themes-Politics - [Troubles - John Connolly](#)

BOOKS

Harrison, Gerry (2004), *The scattering: a history of the London Irish Centre, 1954-2004* London: London Irish Centre

MUSEUM RESOURCES

Foundling Museum: <http://foundlingvoices.foundlingmuseum.org.uk>

Museum of London: <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections-research/about-collections/life-stories-oral-history/>

Imperial War Museum: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/sound>

DOCUMENTARIES

Testimony Films <http://www.testimonyfilms.com>

LIBRARIES & ARCHIVES

The British Library <http://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-history>

Archival Platform, South Africa http://www.archivalplatform.org/blog/entry/oral_histories/

East Midlands Oral History Archive <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/>