

Northern Ireland: A Struggle to Co-Exist
Research on “the Troubles” in Northern Ireland
by
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Classroom Sessions / Estimated Time:

This project is broken into three, stand-alone lessons. Each may be used individually to explain a single purpose, or together to form a three-day unit on the history as well as current situation in Northern Ireland

Lesson #1 - The History of the Conflict in Northern Ireland (One 90 minute block)

This lesson explains the background on the history of Northern Ireland using a powerpoint presentation. Some of the basis of the current situation is discussed, including the latest peace process between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Lesson #2 - Pride Murals in Belfast and Londonderry (One 90 minute block)

This lesson is also prepared using powerpoint. The purpose of the lesson is to demonstrate how murals are being used to demarcate neighborhoods, pay homage to fallen soldiers, or remember specific events that helped shaped the history of both the Catholics and Protestants. This lesson attempts to explain why the use of murals are beneficial to each side, as well as explaining the background of several popular murals found in the cities of Belfast and Londonderry.

Lesson #3 - Residential Segregation in Northern Ireland (One 90 minute block)

Taken from the textbook titled “Human Geography in Action”, the actual lesson is titled “Do Orange and Green Clash?”. The lesson can be used to provide hands-on use of the information presented over the past several classes. This lesson will required use of the textbook, as well as a computer with a CD drive.

Grade Level Appropriateness:

I plan on using this lesson to coincide with the Political Geography Unit in the Advanced Placement Human Geography class. Currently this class is taught to 10-12 grade students. These lessons may also be beneficial for the same grade level students in a World History, European History, or Current Affairs class.

Purpose / Rationale:

Political Geography is one of the most engaging and thought-provoking units in the AP Human Geography course. It gives the students the opportunity to witness how we as humans have divided up the surface of this planet for the purpose of management and control, as well as investigate how this division has created problem area in the world today.

One of those problem areas has been the conflict in Northern Ireland. The rationale of this lesson is to examine the conflict and how it differs from other problem

areas in the world today.

Indiana Standards that correspond to lesson (These standards also correspond to National Geographic Standards)

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| W.G. 1.3 | Use locational technology to establish spatial relationships. |
| W.G. 1.5 | Ask geographic questions and obtain answers from a variety of sources |
| W.G. 2.3 | Give examples of how place and regions change over time |
| W.G. 2.4 | Give examples and analyze ways in which people's changing views and places and regions reflect cultural change |

Objectives:

- *Students will become familiar with the history of Northern Ireland through the use of pictures and first-hand accounts gathered into a powerpoint presentation.
- * Students will better understand the religious segregation in the cities of Belfast and Londonderry, Northern Ireland
- *Students will be able to discuss how murals help maintain borders as well as provide a source of pride among citizens in Belfast and Londonderry
- *Students will be able to evaluate the current situation in Northern Ireland and predict what the future might hold in the region

Background:

Lesson #1 - This lesson was created with the help of personal experience and gathering of information while in Northern Ireland. I was able to learn first-hand of some of the history of Northern Ireland through a number of sources before my trip even began. I used the "Geography in Action" and "Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN)" websites for most of my research.

Upon arriving in Northern Ireland, I was able to arrange for local guides to assist me in my research of the history of the conflict. I visited Belfast, which is considered the epicenter of the conflict between the two sides. For decades, the working class Catholics and Protestants in Belfast have lived just mere blocks from one another. Their differences, however, make those few blocks seem like worlds away.

I continued on in my research to the city of Londonderry. It was here that the conflict between Catholics and Protestants became known as "the Troubles". Like Belfast, the two were groups were only separated from one another by a short distance. Catholics lived just outside the main gated part of the city in an area they called "Free Derry". The city is filled with historical monuments, including the Bloody Sunday Monument, where 14 unarmed demonstrators were killed by British troops on January 30, 1972.

In this lesson, I attempt to give a basic overview of the reasons why this conflict differs from other political battles taking place in the world. The lesson, shown on powerpoint slides, is broad and basic, so as one may add any additional information themselves, or allow for further research by students. This lesson allows the student to understand what has happened in the past to cause the differences between the Catholics

and Protestants in Northern Ireland as well as a quick overview of the present situation.

Lesson #2- This lesson actually came about during my travels in Northern Ireland. I was taken back by how murals were being used as a means of communicating a message about the struggles that each side has faced during that past several decades.

These murals, which are hand-painted on the sides of homes and businesses, started becoming part of the cultural landscape of Belfast and Londonderry during the late 1970's. Today, they are a living history of the cities involved in the conflict. Tours can be taken in both Belfast and Londonderry of these murals, which are found in heart of the Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods respectively.

I developed this lesson by first explaining what the murals are, where they are located, and the reasons why they even exist. I included pictures of murals from both the Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods and included a short description of each mural shown.

Lesson #3- "Do Orange and Green Clash?" is a lesson which I feel should be used to conclude the unit on Northern Ireland. It is a hands-on simulation in which the students are allowed to see how the political turmoil has affected the settlement pattern of the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. The lesson is found in the "Human Geography in Action" textbook. It requires use of a computer with a CD drive.

In the lesson, the students attempt to make an index of residential settlement patterns over several decades, make maps using GIS, and provide answers as to how the political conflict has caused geographical consequences.

Resources:

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk>

Conflict Archive on the Internet website. This website provided in-depth research of "the Troubles" in Northern Ireland.

<http://www.geographyinaction.co.uk>

This website provides needed background information on the current situation, particular in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Kuby, Harner, and Gober: Human Geography in Action. Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Lesson: "Do Orange and Green Clash?: Residential Segregation in Northern Ireland"

This interactive activity found in the "Human Geography in Action" textbook was used to develop lesson #3.

Special Thanks:

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