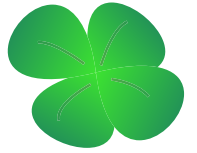


ireland



- A:** I'm thinking about studying abroad for a year.
B: Yeah? Where are you thinking of going?
A: Well I'm thinking about going to Ireland. My friend went there and she had a great time.
B: Nice. Actually, I don't really know much about Ireland. What's there?
A: I don't know either. I mean, it's famous for having a beautiful countryside but other than that I'm not sure.
B: Why did your friend go there?
A: She made some really good Irish friends at school. I think they convinced her to go.
B: Did going there help her English?
A: Yes, definitely. She said it was hard to understand their accents at first but she got used to it pretty quickly.



Ireland is	famous for	having	beautiful countryside.
			great beer.
Irish people are	known for	being	lucky.
			funny.



- A:** Hi! How have you been?
B: I've been good. Thanks! I just got back from Ireland.
A: Ireland?! What were you doing over there?
B: Well my family is Irish so I wanted to see what it was like.
A: That's awesome. How was it?
B: It was beautiful. I stayed at a little hotel in Dublin.
A: That sounds so nice! How were the locals?
B: They were so funny. I went to a pub near my hotel and met some of the most interesting people.
A: I always thought Irish people talked really fast.
B: Some people do I guess. But the people I met were easy to understand. It was awesome.
A: Nice! I haven't gone anywhere for a while. Maybe I'll go there!

íreland

Erin: The ancient name of Ireland.

Leprechaun: Ancient faery or sprite, typically mischievous. They work as miners or shoe makers.

Shillelagh: A thick stick of blackthorn or Oak used as a weapon in the past but now often sold as a walking stick or souvenir.

Fir and Mna: Fir means men, and Mna means women. These are often the labels on public restrooms so they're good to know!

Slainte: A toast, like cheers.

Failte: Welcome. (Cead Mile Failte = A thousand welcomes.)

Garda: Like the word guard it is used to denote the police.

Craic: Fun. "I like you, you're good craic."

Arthur Guinness: Creator of world famous Guinness Beer.

James Joyce: Author of Ulysses, widely considered the most influential and important novel of the 20th century. It retells the Odyssey in the events of a single day.

Cuchulainn: Ancient mythological hero of Ireland, similar in some ways he's similar to the Heracles myth of ancient Greece.

Tuatha De Danann: the legendary ancient ancestors of the Irish who appear in Celtic mythology.

History: In 1921 six counties were partitioned as the Irish Free State and part of Britain. This divide sparked off decades of terrorist activity, in-fighting and political unrest in Ireland often called "the troubles." Though much of this activity has finally come to rest there are still occasional incidents in the news and the topic has been extensively covered in news and popular culture in films.

Common festivals include: Seasonal holidays, religious holidays such as Easter, as well as a number of secular holidays such as the Adare Jazz Festival.

Sources:

Irishfestivals.net

wikipedia.com

Cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/

About the worksheet

I tried to keep these conversations a bit general. If you're using them in class with ESL students the most important thing is general language they can apply to their own conversations. If you set up a discussion about Ireland one of three things will happen:

- A. Students won't know anything about it will stumble to try and talk about it and then change the topic. Totally ok.
- B. They'll know a little about it, talk about it in a general way and then move on.
- C. They'll know a lot about it and get into a really deep conversation.

In any situation the only language they'll use that's specific to Ireland will be place names or cultural terms that are going to be low frequency for most ESL students. That being said I've included a number of them here because if they are interested it's a nice chance to explore that culture.

Using the worksheet

The conversations are pretty general.

1. Give the topic of study-abroad or homestay programs. See what people come up with on their own.
2. Read the first conversation for listening comprehension. If it seems too tough just read part of it. If it seems a bit easy, read fast, at natural speed so they are more challenged.
3. Confirm some of the language and move on to your next topic.

If for some reason you really want the students to talk about one aspect of Irish culture etc. introduce it as your second topic.

If I were talking about the IRA bombings, the history of the church in Ireland or an Irish festival I'd likely use an article about that as homework to set up for the next lesson.

About Ireland

I love Ireland. As a kid I was fortunate enough to have Irish kids doing home stays with us and it really opened my eyes to their cultures. Although I'm culturally American I'm ethnically Irish and having visited it just completely fell in love with it. The people were beautiful, the land was unbelievable. Thick rich turf and beautiful pastures like I've never seen anywhere else.

Getting into a really deep conversation about Ireland, the troubles, the social issues, the history and mythology is absolutely brilliant. But for ESL students it may be most valuable to just focus on the travel or general experience of the place first, and then go deeper.