



Background

Saint Patrick died on March 17, 492 A.D. As a boy, he had been captured by Irish raiders and taken to Ireland as a slave. Later, he became a priest and spent years in an English monastery. He then returned to Ireland to preach Christianity and thereafter was made a bishop. After his death, he was declared the patron saint of Ireland. The anniversary of his death is celebrated all over the world, wherever immigrants have settled.

Making It Work

Show a film or video of the Irish countryside or read the book *St. Patrick's Day in the Morning* by Eve Bunting (Houghton Mifflin, 1983). The illustrations will help students picture the setting of this green country.

Day 1—Ireland

Materials

- classroom wall map of the world
- individual outline maps of Great Britain for each student (See below.)

Activity

Have students find (or help them locate) Great Britain on the world map. Note its position in relation to the United States. Then find Ireland and note its position in relation to the rest of Great Britain. Have students label England and Ireland on their outline maps and mark some of the principal cities.





Day 2—Irish Immigrants

Materials

- encyclopedias or other illustrated reference materials

Activity

This is designed to be an oral exercise to establish a general base of information. See what the students already know and tell them the answers they don't know. Repeat some of the questions and answers for reinforcement.

- The United States is home to millions of people who either were born in Ireland or are descendants of people who were born there.
- During the potato famine of the 1840s, hundreds of thousands of people left Ireland.
- Some early Irish immigrants moved west as pioneers.
- Many Irish immigrants settled on the east coast and entered politics and public service.
- Other Irish immigrants worked on the transcontinental railroad.

Day 3—Wearin' of the Green

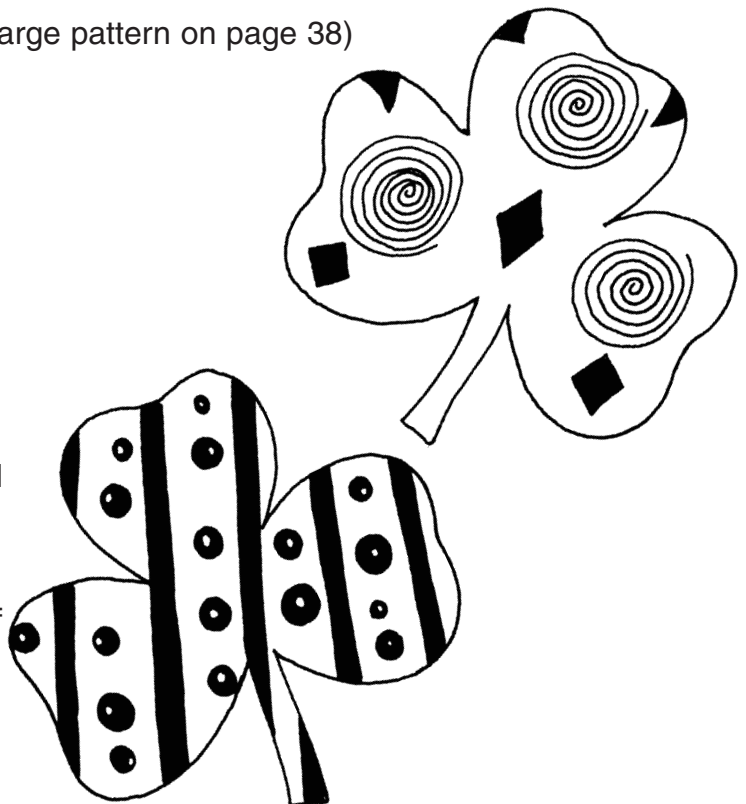
Materials

- white or manila drawing paper
- shamrocks cut from heavy paper (enlarge pattern on page 38)
- crayons in all shades of green

Activity

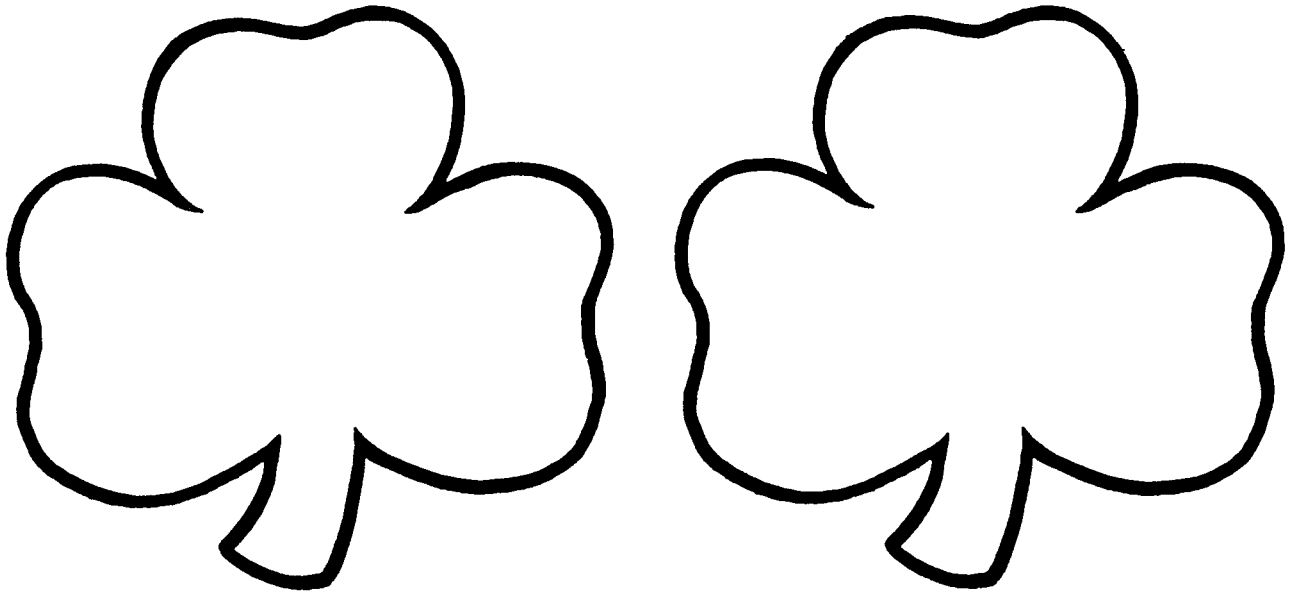
Tell students that green is Ireland's color. For many years, the Irish were forbidden by English law to wear green, and now they are very enthusiastic about wearing it. As a matter of fact, lots of people wear green on St. Patrick's Day, even if they aren't Irish. The shamrock with its three green leaves is another symbol associated with St. Patrick.

Trace shamrocks in overlapping patterns on drawing paper. Color with all shades of green. Or shape shamrocks out of paper and decorate each one differently—stripes, dots, swirls—in shades of green. Display them on a bulletin board.





Day 3—Wearin' of the Green *(cont.)*



Day 4—Leprechauns

Materials

- writing and drawing materials

Activity

Tell students about leprechauns, the imaginary “little people” of Ireland. According to legend, each leprechaun has a pot of gold hidden somewhere. If you can catch a leprechaun, he will give you his pot of gold in exchange for his freedom. But leprechauns are very tricky and hard to catch!

Have students write or dictate stories called “How to Catch a Leprechaun.” Ask students to illustrate their stories.

Day 5—St. Pat's Party

Materials

- party supplies
- green cupcakes or cookies and punch

Activity

Have a St. Patrick's Day party. Let each student share his or her leprechaun story and illustration as part of the entertainment.