

What do you know about Northern Ireland?

Topic

Northern Ireland, the UK, difficult times

Lesson outcomes

- listen to and understand an authentic interview with a woman from Northern Ireland
- practise note-taking skills
- use socio-emotional skills to react personally to what someone says
- gain some basic facts about Northern Ireland

Age group and level

Ages 13-17 and adult, CEFR level B2

Time

60 minutes

Materials

Lesson plan
Student worksheet
Presentation
Audio

Introduction

This lesson helps learners practice listening to authentic interviews. Learners first learn some basic facts about Northern Ireland. They then listen to an authentic, unscripted interview with a woman from Belfast who grew up in 'The Troubles', and practise taking notes. They then give a personal reaction to the interview. An extension project to plan a trip to Northern Ireland is provided.

To learn more about the history of 'The Troubles' use the video '*How was Northern Ireland formed?*' from BBC Newsround: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geO-k8rd2o4>

Other lessons on Northern Ireland can be found here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-secondary/lesson-plans/upper-intermediate-b2/destination-uk-northern> and here <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-secondary/lesson-plans/upper-intermediate-b2/conflict-peace-northern>

Warning: This lesson contains references to war and death.

Procedure
Lead-in quiz
(10 minutes)

- This activity introduces the learners to some facts about Northern Ireland.
- Ask the learners if they know anything about Northern Ireland. Listen to any answers, but don't correct any wrong answers for now.
- Tell learners you are going to read a short text about Northern Ireland. They should listen and take notes, because later they'll do a true/false quiz.
- Read the following text twice clearly, at a slightly slower pace than your normal voice. Tell learners it's okay if they don't understand every word.

Northern Ireland is a country on the island of Ireland, and it has been part of the United Kingdom since 1920, after a civil war. The other countries that make up the UK are England, Scotland and Wales. It is different from the Republic of Ireland, a completely separate and independent country. Northern Ireland is known for its green countryside, beautiful coasts, and interesting places like the Giant's Causeway and Belfast, where the Titanic was built. The biggest city is Belfast, but there are other important cities like Derry and Lisburn too. A difficult time in Northern Ireland's history was called 'The Troubles', starting in the late 1960s. This was a period of violence, political disagreement and society was divided. The Good Friday peace agreement ended this conflict in 1998. The country is known for friendly people and for having a unique culture within the UK, with its own music and stories, for example. About 2 million people live there.

- After reading twice, put learners in pairs to compare notes.
- Then, **show slide 2** or read out the following true/false questions. Pairs should write down their answers on a piece of paper.
 1. Northern Ireland is part of the UK. (true)
 2. It's a very green country. (true)
 3. Derry is the biggest city. (false – Belfast)
 4. The Troubles ended in the 1980s. (false – 1998)
 5. About 2 million people live there (true).
- Check the answers. If using the presentation, you may show **slide 3** for learners to check what other information there was. Alternatively, read the text aloud again.
- **Optional:** If you have internet access in class, and the class seems interested in the history of 'The Troubles' you could show the video 'How was Northern Ireland formed?' from BBC Newsround:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geO-k8rd2o4>
- More information on languages and culture of Northern Ireland can also be found here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/northern-ireland>

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| <p>Listening 1- ordering</p> <p>(10 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a first listening task to help learners understand the gist (the general idea) of the audio. • Tell learners they are going to hear Geraldine, a woman from Belfast in Northern Ireland talking about her home and her life growing up in 'The Troubles'. Tell them they don't need to understand all the audio, just to focus on the questions for now. • Show slide 4 or give out the student worksheet and have learners look at task 1. Tell them to fold the page so they cannot see the script. Learners listen and put the questions asked in order. Allow them to listen twice. (Answers: 1. F, 2. E, 3. B, 4. D, 5. G, 6. A, 7.C) |
| <p>Listening 2 – note-taking</p> <p>(10 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This second listening allows learners to now focus on listening for specific information- the answers to the questions. • Tell learners they will now listen to how Geraldine answers the questions. They should take notes in the task 1 table. Show slide 5. • Learners listen twice and then compare notes with a partner. • Invite some pairs to share their answers. Correct any incorrect details and add any important missing details to their answers. It's normal for learners to have paraphrased answers, they need not have the exact words said. Alternatively, you could ask learners to read the script of the audio and compare their notes to the script. • Ask learners to say how difficult the listening was. You may want to mention that they might be unfamiliar with a Belfast accent, and that may have made it difficult. However, tell learners that listening to authentic English from a variety of accents and places will help them in future to understand the English that they'll hear in real-life/in films, music, series. |
| <p>React to the listening</p> <p>(15 minutes)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: You can choose to do either the vocabulary task <i>or</i> the react to the listening task first. • This activity gives learners the chance to read the script to fully understand what was said, and to use their critical thinking and socio-emotional skills to react to the text. Be aware that this could be an emotionally sensitive topic for some, depending on learners' backgrounds. • Show slides 6 or give out the second page of the student worksheet. • Read through the question with the class, and make sure they understand that these are not questions they answer only by reading the script - learners also need to give their own feelings and opinions. They need to 'put themselves in her shoes', to imagine they are Geraldine. • Give learners time individually to read (on slides 7-9 or on paper) and answer the questions. They may need extra paper to make notes on. • Put learners in pairs. Learners share and extend their answers. • Join two pairs to make groups of four, to again share answers. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do feedback with the whole class to find out some of their ideas. |
| Vocabulary (10 minutes) | <p>This activity works on vocabulary used in the listening. Even though these words are above the level, and not common words they help learners fully understand what was said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show slide 11 or direct learners to the words in the bold in the script. Put learners in pairs. Tell them they should try to guess the meaning of the word from context. Give time (around 4-5 minutes) to do this. Join pairs to make groups of four. Learners will hopefully be close to the meaning of many words by now. Do a class feedback where you check the answers. <i>(Answers: everybody lost somebody = in every family there was someone who died; riddled – covered in bullets; Protestant – Protestantism is a religion. One aspect of 'The Troubles' was conflict between Catholics and Protestants; dreadful – terrible; Saint Paddy's – Saint Patrick's Day – a national holiday; stew – meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid)</i> If time, elicit some short sentences from learners, using the words. |
| Reflect (5 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show slide 13 or write up the following questions on the board: <i>What will you remember from this lesson? What did you learn about your listening skills today?</i> Allow learners thinking time before putting them in pairs/small groups to share their answers. |
| Extension task (Approx 20 minutes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this extension activity, the learners plan a trip to Northern Ireland. Put learners in small groups. Show slide 14 or tell them they need to plan a 2-day trip to Northern Ireland. To give them ideas, tell each member of the group to look up two of these: Saint Patrick's parade, Gobbins cliff path, Murals of Belfast, Belsonic music festival, Titanic museum, Ardoyne, Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, The Dark Hedges. Then, they share what they found with the group and choose the activities to include in their trip. Tell them they need to think of something to do on the morning of day 1, afternoon of day 1, and so on. They can also look at accommodation, transport, etc. This could be extended into a mini-project where learners present their trips to the rest of the class, and they can vote on the best. They can use this website as a starting point: https://discovernorthernireland.com/ |

Contributed by

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