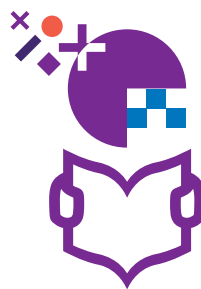


That's Interesting!



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NALA

A worksheet for adults to practise reading, writing, spelling and numbers.

Symbols of Ireland



Saint Patrick's Day, on 17 March, when everyone claims to be a little bit Irish, is now one of the most celebrated events in the world. Apart from Saint Patrick's Day what are the symbols that people from other parts of the world most associate with Ireland?

The Irish flag, also known as the Tricolour because of its three colours, green, white and orange, was first flown in Waterford in 1848 by a young Irish rebel, Thomas Francis Meagher. Meagher was leader of a group called the Young Irelanders who held a rising against the British during the famine in Ireland, when over one million Irish people died from hunger.

Meagher was arrested and sent to Tasmania, an island off the coast of Australia. At the time, prisoners were sent to faraway places such as Australia and America, never to return or see their families again.

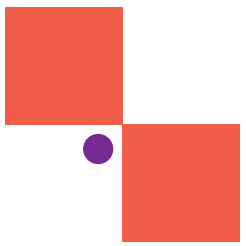


The Irish Flag

Image source:
Michal Osmenda from
Brussels, Belgium,
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The Tricolour was not seen again until it was raised above the General Post Office (GPO) during the 1916 Rising. It became the official Irish flag in 1937. It is said that the green of the flag represents the Catholics of Ireland, the orange is for the Irish Protestants and the white is a symbol of peace between the two. Before this, the Irish flag was green with a gold harp in the middle.

As for Thomas Francis Meagher, he escaped from Tasmania to America, by hiding on an American ship. He later joined the American army where he was made a general and he fought in the American civil war. He never returned to Ireland.



When former United States (US) president John F Kennedy visited Ireland in 1963, he presented the flag of the brigade Meagher led during the American Civil War, to the Irish people and today it hangs in the government buildings in Dublin.

The Shamrock. It is said that Saint Patrick, in the 5th century, used the shamrock with its three leaves on one stem, to explain to the Irish people the Christian belief of three persons in one God.

The shamrock is the symbol that most people immediately associate with Ireland. Many organisations, such as Aer Lingus and the Irish Rugby Union, have a shamrock in their emblem. In years gone by, Irish people would post shamrock to relations in other parts of the world for Saint Patrick's Day so they could wear it on the day.

It has become the tradition every year for the Taoiseach to visit the White House and present the US president with a Waterford Crystal bowl full of shamrock. This year President Donald Trump received the bowl of shamrock from Taoiseach Micheál Martin.



Bowl of shamrock

Image source:
The White House
from Washington, DC,
Public domain, via
Wikimedia Commons

The Irish Harp. This is the official emblem of Ireland. It is printed on all government official documents, on Irish coins and on Irish passports. Many Irish businesses, such as Guinness and Ryan Air, use it as a logo.

The Irish harp has a long tradition in Irish culture. Over 1,000 years ago, all wealthy families had their own personal harpist to entertain them. It is said that the once high king of Ireland, Brian Ború, who was killed in 1014, played the harp.

In 1531 the King of England, Henry VIII, declared himself king of Ireland and loved the sound of the harp so much that he made it the emblem of Ireland and stamped it on all coins where it has remained since.



Irish harp

Image source:
From Image: Flag of
Leinster.svg, CC BY-
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The Claddagh ring is the most popular ring sold in Ireland today and is loved by tourists who visit the country.

The ring is made up of a heart with a crown held by two hands. It is said the heart represents love, the hands represent friendship, and the crown is for loyalty.

Tradition says that if the ring is worn on the right hand with the heart facing out, then the person wearing it is looking for love. However, if it is worn with the heart facing in, then the wearer has already found love.

It is believed that the ring was first made by a man from the Claddagh area of Galway, Richard Joyce, who left Galway and the girl he loved to go abroad to make his fortune. However, the ship he sailed in was captured by pirates and Joyce was sold into slavery in Africa. Here, he began working for a craftsman who taught Joyce how to make rings and other jewellery.

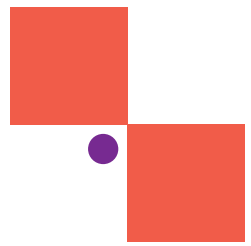
When Richard Joyce became free, he returned to Galway, married his sweetheart and made her a ring that we now know as the Claddagh Ring.



Claddagh ring

Image source:
I, Royalcladdagh,
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Quiz



Read over the story on pages 1-3 again and then answer these questions:

1. The Irish flag is known as the Tricolour. What are the three colours of the flag and what does each colour stand for?

2. Name the member of the Young Irelanders who took part in a rising in Waterford during the famine.

3. What other country did this man fight for years later?

4. How many people died in the Irish famine?

5. Name the US president who presented the American flag to the Irish people in 1963.

6. Who does the Taoiseach present a bowl of shamrock to every Saint Patrick's Day?

7. Name 2 organisations that have a shamrock on their logos.



8. What Irish symbol appears on all Irish government documents and coins?

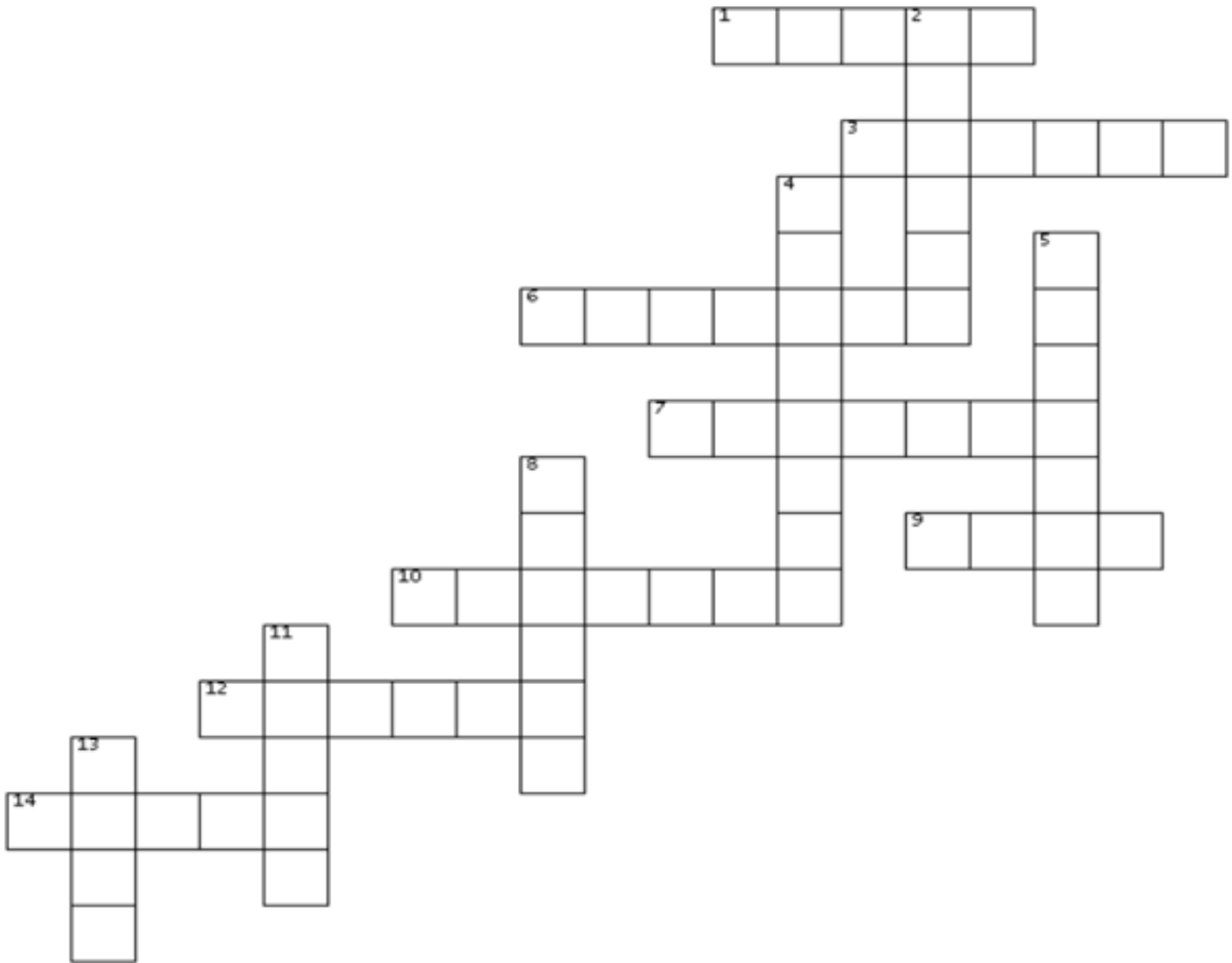
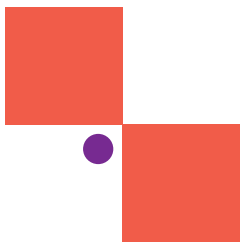
9. Name 2 organisations that have a harp on their logo.

10. Describe the Claddagh Ring.

11. What is the story of the Claddagh Ring?

12. How should you wear the ring if you are looking for love?

Crossword



Across

- Smallest county in Ireland
- The Claddagh Ring is associated with this city
- Bacon and _____, popular Irish dinner
- Irish national game
- Lead singer in Irish band U2
- Name of Irish patron saint
- Green, white and _____, the colours of the Irish flag
- First name of Irish female boxer, _____ Taylor

Down


- A festival takes place here every year, The Rose of _____
- The Taoiseach presents the US President with a bowl of this on St. Patrick's Day.
- Surname of the Irish president, Michael D _____
- Kerrygold _____
- The colour we most think about when we think of Ireland
- This Irish symbol can be found on all Irish coins.

Notes



Further help is available

If you need help with these worksheets, or with reading, writing, maths or digital skills, you can contact the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).



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