



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2013 Volume II: Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City

Irish Immigration and the Power of the Visual Image

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.02.03
by Mary-Doris Devlin

Irish immigration will be used as a starting point to learn about immigration (1850s to early 1900s) through the lens of the visual image. This unit will focus on how artists used the visual image to influence popular opinion of the Irish immigrants and other immigrant groups. Students will develop a better understanding of why the Irish left Ireland, and about how the Irish were often viewed as being less than human, not only by the British, but also here in America. The unit will also cover what life was like, in terms of living and working conditions as well as education levels, when they reached America. This will give students a better understanding of why the political cartoons and other visual images would have been so effective in their ability to convey political opinions and cultural/social biases in the form of visual information. This unit will culminate in students designing their own memorial to commemorate Irish immigrants. The unit will combine visual arts, history and technology. Electronic drawing tablets will be used for creating visual images.

(Recommended for Visual Arts, grades 11 and 12)

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