



Have you seen this haunting statue next to the River Liffey in Dublin? It's part of the Irish Famine memorial created by artist Rowan Gillespie. The thin, starving people are dressed in rags. One person holds a small child and a dog trails behind as they tiredly walk in search of food.

Just imagine. How terrible it was for poor, rural families during Ireland's potato famine.

There's an excellent resource for 5th and 6th class, courtesy of Jack Stacey on the Teachnet website. It focusses on family life, telling the story of Bridget and Patrick who live in the Collatin estate, Co

Wicklow. This resource packed with links to related information. How did families cook potatoes 170 years ago? What did their houses look like? Where did they sleep?

<http://resources.teachnet.ie/jstacey/2004/>

Children of the Famine

Description	Pupils	Teachers	Links	Home
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The **potato** is a great source of food.

It has all sorts of valuable **vitamins**, grows easily, even in poor soil and in most kinds of climate.
Large amounts can be grown on a small piece of ground.

The **Byrne family** eats potatoes at every meal.



Bridget washes the spuds and **Mam** boils them in the big round pot.



Here's a short video summary on the Famine from the Scoil Net website. Do you want to find out more about the causes of famine, or read about Sir Robert Peel? The second link brings you to one-page text with embedded links.

[Kids Britannica summary video](#)

<http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/article-9603737/Irish-Potato-Famine#cite>





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Unsure of the meaning of a word? Double-click it to look it up in Merriam-Webster's Student Dictionary.

Irish Potato Famine

Student Encyclopedia

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The Irish Potato Famine (1845-49) devastated Ireland's population. Nearly one million Irish people died.



Starving Irish people raid a government potato store in 1842. The Print Collector/Heritage-Images

The worst [famine](#) to occur in Europe in the 19th century was the Irish Potato Famine, which resulted in the deaths of about one million people. The famine is also called the Great Potato Famine or the Great Irish Famine. The [potato](#) was the staple food of [Ireland](#) at the time, with most of the population relying on it for much of their diet. Poor people who lived in rural areas tended to eat potatoes almost exclusively. From 1845 to 1849 a plant disease caused the potato crops in Ireland to fail, year after year. Without potatoes to eat, the people went hungry.

The crop failures were caused by late blight, a disease that destroys both the leaves and the edible roots, or tubers, of the potato plant. The disease is caused by the [mold](#) *Phytophthora infestans*. In 1845 this mold arrived in Ireland accidentally from North America. That same year Ireland had unusually cool, moist weather, in which the blight thrived. Much of that year's potato crop rotted in the fields. This partial crop failure was followed by more devastating failures in 1846-49, as each year's potato crop was almost completely ruined by the blight.

At the time, Ireland was ruled by [Great Britain](#), and the British government's efforts to relieve the famine were inadequate. British Prime Minister Sir [Robert Peel](#) did what he could to provide help in 1845 and early 1846. In June 1846, however, Lord [John Russell](#) assumed power, insisting on the importance of total free trade. He thought the government should interfere as little as possible in the economy. The emphasis thus shifted to relying on Irish, rather than British, resources to help the Irish. Much of

More Information:

[Journals And Magazines](#)

[The Web's Best Sites](#)

For a short introduction to emigration for 5th and 6th classes, here's a very helpful summary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Inyjgmsz20>



Over 20 years ago, President Mary Robinson visited Grosse Isle in Canada, the site of the largest Irish Famine graveyard in the world. Here's how RTE news covered her visit.

<http://www.rte.ie/archives/2014/0822/638674-mary-robinson-visits-grosse-ile-famine-site/>

She had visited Somalia two years earlier, in 1992. While shocked at the suffering she saw, President Robinson also saw the work being done by Irish aid agencies. Video courtesy of Garas.

[Link to visit to Somalia](#)



Here are the first two pages of the Pixie Books activity sheets on the Irish Famine.

You can get a full set of 9 activity sheets if you purchase at least eight copies of 'The Irish Famine'

at our special discounted price. Your class will be able to work with primary source materials and boost their research skills!

We will send a tweet alert when we post new classroom materials on the website during the school year.