

CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY LESSON PLAN FOR GRADES 3-6



Book/Text Set:

*Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Samantha and Lola /
What is St. Patrick's Day?*

by Alma Flor Ada and F. Isabel Campoy

Content Overview: Lola learns Irish dancing from her friend Samantha, one step at a time. Every day she learns a little more until one day, Samantha surprises her with the opportunity to perform a solo dance at the St. Patrick's Day celebration show. The non-fiction section introduces St. Patrick as Ireland's patron saint, presents several St. Patrick's Day customs, and gives background on shamrocks and leprechauns.

Materials and Preparation

- chart paper and markers
- writing paper
- assorted picture books about St. Patrick's Day and related topics

Standards Covered

NCSS Social Studies Strands

- I. Culture: c, e
- III. People, Places, and Environments: a, e
- IV. Individual Development and Unity: a, b, d, f, h
- IX. Global Connections: a

National TESOL Standards

- Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings.
Standards 1, 2, 3
- Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas.
Standards 1, 2, 3
- Goal 3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.
Standards 1, 2, 3

NCTE/IRA English Language Arts Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12

Vocabulary

- F: step / time / admire / skip / goal / talent show / practice
imitate / program/ solo/ nervously
- NF: generous / Ireland / Irish / custom / countryside / bagpipe / leprechaun
instrument / shamrock / fantastic / mischievous / treasure / rainbow / gold

Pacing Guide 3 days; 30-45 minute sessions, plus optional extensions

Reading and Activities

DAY 1

Explore the Topic: St. Patrick's Day / Achieving Goals

Start a discussion about setting goals and accomplishing new things. Have a few students recall times when they wanted to learn something new. Then tell students you are going to be reading a book about a little girl who learns how to do Irish dancing by watching a friend who is preparing for a St. Patrick's Day show.

Vocabulary Introduction

On a large piece of chart paper, start a vocabulary list. Write the vocabulary words for the fiction section in a column. Read the words aloud with students, and ask if anyone knows any of the meanings. As students respond, add to their responses as appropriate to give clear definitions. Note that in this context, the word "step" refers to an increment, and "time" refers to a period of time rather than the time of day. Tell students they will hear these words in the story.

Fiction Read-Aloud & Discussion

In this session you will read aloud only the fiction story, *Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Samantha and Lola*. Before reading the story, show students the cover and read the title aloud. Ask students to describe the cover and predict what they think the story might be about.

Read the story aloud. As you read, stop and have students help you use context to define new words. Help students recognize Lola's determination in practicing the dance steps, and what she does to learn more and more steps each day. Have students predict what they think will happen next, and also infer how Lola is feeling at different points during the reading.

When finished, ask students to tell you about the story. Ask the following questions, using the illustrations in the book whenever appropriate to help students with their responses:

Beginning	1. What does Samantha like to do? 2. What would Lola like to do? 3. Tell how Lola practices her dancing.
Intermediate	1. What does Samantha like about Irish dancing? 2. Why does Lola admire Samantha? 3. Who does a solo dance at the talent show?
Advanced	1. How does Lola feel about Samantha? Why? 2. What does Lola need to do to be able to dance like Samantha? 3. What is Lola's surprise for the talent show?

When discussion is over, return to the words “practice” and “goal” on the vocabulary list. Have students describe what Lola did to practice her dancing. Have students connect to their own lives by giving examples of times when they had a goal and needed to practice in order to achieve that goal. Refer back to some of the earlier responses as reminders.

DAY 2

Vocabulary Activity

Review the words on the previous vocabulary list by having students reread, define, and use them in sentences. On a new piece of chart paper, create a second vocabulary list with the words from the nonfiction section. Write “St. Patrick’s Day” at the top of the list. Read the words aloud with students and ask if they know the definitions of any of the words. Add to student responses as appropriate to give a clear definition of each word. Note that in this context, the word “gold” refers to treasure or coins. Tell students they will hear these words in the next story.

Introduce St. Patrick’s Day symbols and customs with individual photographs or pictures from books or the internet. Include photographs of shamrocks, the Irish countryside, Irish dancers, bagpipe players, and rainbows, along with illustrations of leprechauns and pots of gold.

Display all the pictures and ask students to make observations based on their prior knowledge. Give additional information when necessary, referencing the vocabulary list when appropriate. Leave the pictures on display.

Show students the cover of *Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day with Samantha and Lola* and ask them to recall the story. Tell them that the dance Lola learned is a traditional Irish dance often performed on St. Patrick’s Day and that you are going to read them a story that tells about the St. Patrick’s Day celebration.

Non-Fiction Read-Aloud & Discussion

Open the book to pages 16–17 and have students read the section title with you. Before reading the story, ask students to tell you a few facts they already know about St. Patrick’s Day.

Read the story, *What is St. Patrick’s Day?* On page 18, ask students to identify Ireland’s land form (an island) and to estimate its size relative to the United States. As you continue to read, have students use the context to define words they may not know. Give students the opportunity to comment on the photographs and to make any connections they might have to previously read texts and to their own experiences.

When the read-aloud is finished, have students discuss the information by answering the following questions. Use the book as a resource to help students with their answers:

Beginning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are bagpipes? 2. Tell what a shamrock looks like. 3. What does a leprechaun look like?
Intermediate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name some things you could see on St. Patrick's Day. 2. Why do people dress in green on St. Patrick's Day? 3. What does a leprechaun do?
Advanced	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some things people do to celebrate St. Patrick's Day? 2. What do Irish people believe about shamrocks? 3. Why is St. Patrick's Day celebrated in the United States?

After discussion, review learned information with students. On a large piece of chart paper, write, "St. Patrick's Day is..." Have students tell things they've learned and write their own responses. Review all responses and leave the chart on display.

DAY 3

Vocabulary Review

Review all vocabulary words orally. Have volunteers read, define, and use the words in sentences. Then have students work on the [St. Patrick's Day Nouns worksheet](#).

Set aside time for students to browse and read additional picture books about St. Patrick's Day customs and Ireland. After reading, they may want to revisit the "St. Patrick's Day is..." chart.

Writing Activity

Explain to students that they will write a short essay telling about something they would like to learn to do, and what steps they would take to go about achieving the goal. Ask students to give some ideas of things they'd like to learn, and write their ideas on the board. Try to get a variety of different types of responses.

Tell students to include the following in their writing:

- What you would like to learn to do and why
- What steps you might take to achieve your goal
- How you would feel after achieving your goal, and why

Give an example of something you would like to do and tell the steps you would take to achieve the goal, writing a short outline or list on the board using each of the prompts as a main outline bullet. Tell students that they will make a list or outline first and then do the actual writing. Students who have already learned standard essay form should write three paragraphs.

Review the initial vocabulary list and the students' list of ideas. Ask students if there are any other words they might need for their writing, and write the words on the board for easy reference.

When students are finished, have them reread and revise as needed, and draw an illustration to go with their writing if they wish.

Extensions

Writing

Have students draw a fantastic character and then write a story about it, including information about where the character lives, how it acts, what it does for a living, etc. Have them read their stories to the class.

Art

Make a collage using assorted torn pieces of green and yellow tissue paper glued onto a large tagboard shamrock shape. Students can design and cut out their own shamrock shape. Use white glue thinned down with water. Brush glue onto the tagboard base, arrange tissue paper, and brush glue over it. Cover the whole area.

Music

Research bagpipes and listen to some bagpipe music online at <http://www.celticmp3s.com/magazine/2004/07/bagpipe-music-free-music-downloads.shtml> or at http://www.geocities.com/gburke_wilson/CeudMileFailte.html.

Learn the words to "Oh Danny Boy." Lyrics and a midi file can be found at <http://www.contemplator.com/ireland/dboy.html>. Listen to the music of traditional Irish songs in midi format at <http://www.contemplator.com/tunebook/ireland.htm>.

Small video clips of "Riverdance" can be viewed online at http://www.riverdance.com/hm/multimedia/video_clips/index.htm#.

Mathematics

Create a symmetrical design with shamrock shapes. Draw several different sizes of shamrocks on green construction paper and double the paper to cut out pairs of each shape. Glue several different pairs of shamrock shapes onto black construction paper to create the design using radial or lateral symmetry.

Science

Read about rainbows and explore the use of prisms.

Social Studies Read and learn more about Ireland, Irish people, and other Irish customs. Make a “travel guide” showing what you’ve learned.

Technology

Listen to samples of bagpipe music online:

<http://www.celticmp3s.com/magazine/2004/07/bagpipe-music-free-music-downloads.shtml>

Listen to an electronic talking book about Ireland created by Irish students. Hear about Irish history, Irish geography, Irish government, Irish language (Gaelic), Ireland's flag, Ireland's currency, and Irish symbols:

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/elibrary/ireland-the-country.html>

Visit Kool Kids of Ireland to find out more about Ireland’s geography, sports, flag, and other cultural information:

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~whitechurchns/menupage.htm>

Listen to the national anthem of Ireland:

<http://www.kids-online.net/world/ireland.html>

Creative Reading

Share this book with your students using Alma Flor Ada’s Creative Reading methodology based on the principles of Transformative Education. [Suggested questions](#) to initiate the dialogue are provided for Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced levels as well as self-assessment tools for [teachers](#) and students—in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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Developed by Renee Goularte

Renee Goularte started teaching in the late 1980s. She has taught students in all elementary grades, and has worked specifically with English language learners, at-risk students, and GATE students. Renee holds a Master’s Degree in Elementary Education from San José State University. In addition to teaching, she also writes and presents workshops for teachers. Renee lives in Northern California.