

CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY LESSON PLAN FOR GRADES K-2



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
- unlined white 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 / nervous
- NF: country / generous / Ireland / Irish / custom / bagpipes / leprechaun
instrument / shamrock / fantastic / mischief / 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 learning how to do new things. Have a few students tell about new things they've learned from friends, such as dances or songs. 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 to students, have them repeat each word, and ask if anyone knows what any of the words mean. As students respond, add to their responses as appropriate to give a clear definition for each word. Have students give examples from their own lives to help give personal meanings to some of the words when possible. Note that in this context, the word "step" refers to increments, 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 what they see, using as many details as possible.

Read the story aloud. As you read, stop and use the context to help children define any words that they may not know. Also, point out how Lola keeps practicing the dance steps, and how she learns more and more steps each day. Have students predict what they think is going to happen.

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. Point to Samantha. Point to Lola. 2. What are the children doing (pages 6-7)? 3. Who teaches Lola how to dance?
Intermediate	1. What does Samantha enjoy doing? 2. What does Lola want to do? 3. How does Lola practice dancing?
Advanced	1. Why does Lola admire Samantha? 2. How does Lola learn to dance? 3. How does Samantha surprise Lola?

When discussion is over, return to the words “practice” and “goal” on the vocabulary list. Have students describe how Lola practiced her dancing. Then have students connect to their own lives by giving examples of times when they really wanted to do something and had to practice in order to do it. 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 and define them, and by using them in sentences. On a new piece of chart paper, create a second vocabulary list. Write “St. Patrick’s Day” at the top, then write the vocabulary words for the nonfiction section in a column. Read the words aloud and have students repeat them. Ask if anyone knows the meanings 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 to students with a picture walk using 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.

As you show pictures one at a time, have students describe what they see. Elicit prior knowledge from students and give them additional information as appropriate, including naming the items in reference to the vocabulary list. Leave the pictures on display during and after the reading.

Show the cover of *Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day with Samantha and Lola* and ask students 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 other St. Patrick’s Day customs.

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 what they know about St. Patrick’s Day.

Read the story, *What is St. Patrick’s Day?* Stop to point out and discuss St. Patrick’s Day symbols, and use the context to help define and discuss any words students 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 experience.

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

Beginning	1. Point to the bagpipes. 2. What is a shamrock? 3. What is the color of St. Patrick's Day?
Intermediate	1. What are bagpipes? 2. What plant grows all over Ireland? 3. Tell what a leprechaun looks like.
Advanced	1. What do bagpipes look like? 2. What do shamrocks stand for? 3. What is a leprechaun? Do leprechauns really exist?

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

DAY 3

Vocabulary Review

Review all vocabulary words orally. Have volunteers each read one word, give a definition, and use it in a sentence. After all the words have been reviewed, have students work on the [St. Patrick's Day Things worksheet](#).

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

Writing Activity

Explain to students that they are going to write a book about things they can learn to do if they practice. Ask students to tell you things they would like to learn to do and write their responses on the board. Try to get a wide variety of responses so that students who don't have an idea will be able to choose from the list.

For older and more advanced students, write the following prompts on the board:

If I practice, I can _____ .

Then I will feel _____ !

Hand out five half-sheets of unlined white paper for the book pages to each student. Make sure students understand that they will write four different pages using the first prompt, and then use the second prompt for the last page.

For younger and beginning students, write the prompts yourself and make copies. Students can fill in the blanks themselves or an adult helper can write for them.

Review the vocabulary list. Ask students what additional words they might need in their writing and add related words to the list. Write any unrelated words on the board next to the list of ideas.

When students have finished their writing, encourage them to illustrate each page. Staple the completed pages into a construction paper cover for students to decorate with a title. Write the following title on the board for students to copy onto another half sheet of paper and then glue onto their book cover:

I Can Do It!

by _____

Extensions

Writing

Have students invent, name, and draw a fantastic character. Remind them to think about where the character lives, how it looks, what kind of clothes it wears, what it does for a living, etc. Students can write words or phrases about their character and share their drawings and writing with the class.

Art

Make bell pepper “shamrock” prints. Cut several bell peppers crosswise, press into green and/or yellow paint, and stamp onto white construction paper repeatedly to make a pattern. Try to use different sized peppers.

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 Trace, cut, and glue assorted sized pairs of shamrock shapes onto construction paper to create a symmetrical design.

Science Do an observation project with three or more varieties of plants, including shamrocks. Observe leaf size and color, width and height of the plant, bloom size, shape, and color, and any other distinguishing attributes. Record and chart data.

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. Learn about Irish history, geography, government, language (Gaelic), flag, currency, and symbols:

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

Play an online memory game with Irish symbols:

<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/st-patricks-day/games/concentration/index.html>

Read about Ireland and print out coloring pages of Irish maps and symbols:

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/world/ireland/index.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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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.