

## What do you know about Northern Ireland?

**Topic:** Life and change in Northern Ireland

**Aims:**

- To develop students' ability to take information from quite a difficult reading text
- To develop students knowledge of Northern Ireland
- To practise asking and answering questions

**Level:** Intermediate and above

### Introduction

This is a challenging text which combines reading with listening. There are also some internet research tasks for those with access to the internet. The text included in this lesson touches on some sensitive issues, so it may be better to look carefully at it first and decide whether it is suitable for your students.

Before you use this lesson, you might want to check up on some of the background to the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. You can find more information about this on the BBC website at:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/troubles/the\\_troubles\\_article\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/troubles/the_troubles_article_01.shtml)

For more general information about Northern Ireland you can look at this entry on Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern\\_Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Ireland)

### Procedure

#### Lead in

- Ask your students what they know about Northern Ireland. They might not know very much at all so be prepared to encourage them to guess.
- If you have a projector in your classroom go to this link on Flickrriver.com and show your students some images of Northern Ireland (scroll down the page and more images will appear)  
<http://flickrriver.com/search/northern+ireland/>
- Ask your students to make sentences about each image as they appear (You can make this competitive and give points for the best sentences. If it helps, put the students in teams to make their sentences.)
- After the students have seen about 10 or 20 images, put them in small group or pairs and ask them to discuss which images they liked best, then get them to tell you. (This should help to activate their vocabulary)
- Ask your students if they would like to visit Northern Ireland and ask them to explain why / why not?

#### Listening and reading task

- Tell the students they are going to hear Geraldine from Belfast in Northern Ireland talking about her home.

- Tell them that she will answer these questions
  - 1) Tell me a little bit about where you're from.
  - 2) What would you say were the major changes in your area from when you were a little girl to when you were in your thirties; when you left?
  - 3) Did you lose anybody you loved in the 'troubles'?
  - 4) I was going to ask you what you're area is famous for.
  - 5) What's it like now?
  - 6) Would you say there was any special food associated with where you're from?
  - 7) Is your region famous for having a special accent?
- Give the students the matching activity below and ask them to read and match the questions to the answers.

**Matching activity**

Match the questions to the correct answers.

- 1) Tell me a little bit about where you're from.
- 2) What would you say were the major changes in your area from when you were a little girl to when you were in your thirties; when you left?
- 3) Did you lose anybody you loved in the 'troubles'?
- 4) I was going to ask you what your area is famous for.
- 5) What's it like now?
- 6) Would you say there was any special food associated with where you're from?
- 7) Is your region famous for having a special accent?

**Geraldine:** Oh god, awe. We're famous for the Irish stew – fantastic. Interesting thing is that growing up as kids, you always knew there was a bit of money in the house because with the champ we used to get. If there was no money, you only got the **champ**, which was potatoes and scallions, spring onions. If there was a bit of money, you got a bit of meat. The Irish stew and the champ.

**Geraldine:** Oh god, **everybody lost somebody**. Yeah, there was cousin – he was killed in a bomb blast. And then there were friends, just down the street that were shot by the British army. And then my young nephew, his best friend, he was riddled by a passing car full of Protestants...oh yeah. It was dreadful.

**Geraldine:** Well, I have to be honest. Anyone I've met say they love the accent. I personally think it's awful, I think it's very flat, but hey.

**Geraldine:** Well unfortunately, that would be what it's famous for. Prior to that '69, it was the loveliest community. We had neighbours, you know. Everybody had their keys in the door. You know, you just came home, your key was there, you'd turn the key, you know. My mum, god rest her – she was a single parent really, and she worked day and night. So the oldest sister, she took over the house. It was a lovely community; the neighbours were wonderful. **Everybody knew everybody**. But that's all gone now.

**Geraldine:** It was the troubles. It was **the troubles** of 1969, because we were brought up to believe that everyone was the same no matter what religion you were. But when the troubles happened, it was just **devastating**. We lost our freedom. You know, we couldn't go where we wanted to go. We were confined to the area that you lived in and that went on for many years.

**Geraldine:** I'm from a place in Belfast: Northern Ireland called Glenard. It was Glenard up until 1970. The Protestants burnt down old Ardoyne leading from the Cromwell Road and then Glenard became New Ardoyne – still is New Ardoyne, so it is.

**Geraldine:** Funnily enough, I was there in March because I go home every Saint Paddy's. My sister and my best mate, we always go away on Saint Paddy's for two or three days. But Ardoyne now is these big gaudy terrace houses. Everybody just lives in their own wee house. **Nobody bothers with anybody**.

- Once the students have had time to read and match the questions, ask them to listen to the interview and check their answers.
- Get the students to compare their answers after listening and play it again if they are struggling. Ask the students if they found the accent difficult.

### Vocabulary task

- Now ask the students to look at the text again and find the expressions that are underlined. Tell the students to try to guess what the expressions mean.

### Answers

- **champ** = food
  - **everybody lost somebody** = everybody had a friend or family member who was killed
  - **everybody knew everybody** = people were very friendly
  - **the troubles** = the political problems
  - **devastating** = very bad
  - **nobody bothers with anybody** = people don't care about each other
- Once your students have tried to guess the meaning of the words check their answers.

### Reading task

- Now ask the students to read again and find 4 memories in the text that make Geraldine happy.
- Once they have found 4 things ask them to compare what they have found in pairs.

### Possible answers are:

- Neighbours and friends in her community
- Her mother
- The food
- Saint Patrick's day

### Speaking task

- Ask the students to think of five questions they would like to ask Geraldine. Get the students to work in pairs and write the questions.
- Once the students have written their questions, pair them with a new partner and tell one person in each pair to imagine that they are Geraldine and imagine how she would answer the questions. Ask the other person to interview Geraldine and ask her their questions. If the students enjoy this they can swap roles and repeat the interview.

### Research task

- If your students have internet access ask them to go to an image sharing website such as [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) or <http://www.google.com/imghp> and find images of the following things.

Find images of:

- Saint Patrick's day
- Irish Stew
- Belfast
- Scallions
- Ardoyne
- Giant's Causeway
- Dunluce Castle

Ask the students to write a few sentences about each image.

### Follow up

- If your students have access to the internet, give them this website address. Ask them to go to the site and look at the place they can visit in Northern Ireland. Tell them to plan a 3 day holiday there and think about the places they would go and the things they would do. In the next lesson ask the students to tell each other about the 3 day holiday they planned.

**Plan a holiday** <http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/>

**Interview Script**

**Interviewer:** So Geraldine, just tell me a little bit about where you're from.

**Geraldine:** I'm from a place in Belfast: Northern Ireland called Glenard. It was Glenard up until 1970. The Protestants burnt down old Ardoyne leading from the Cromwell Road and then Glenard became New Ardoyne – still is New Ardoyne, so it is.

**Interviewer:** Right, and what would you say were the major changes in your area from when you were a little girl to when you were in your thirties; when you left?

**Geraldine:** It was the troubles. It was **the troubles** of 1969, because we were brought up to believe that everyone was the same no matter what religion you were. But when the troubles happened, it was just **devastating**. We lost our freedom. You know, we couldn't go where we wanted to go. We were confined to the area that you lived in and that went on for many years.

**Interviewer:** And did you lose anybody you loved in the 'troubles'?

**Geraldine:** Oh god, **everybody lost somebody**. Yeah, there was cousin – he was killed in a bomb blast. And then there were friends, just down the street that were shot by the British army. And then my young nephew, his best friend, he was riddled by a passing car full of Protestants...oh yeah. It was dreadful.

**Interviewer:** I was going to ask you what your area is famous for.

**Geraldine:** Well unfortunately, that would be what it's famous for. Prior to that '69, it was the loveliest community. We had neighbours, you know. Everybody had their keys in the door. You know, you just came home, your key was there, you'd turn the key, you know. My mum, god rest her – she was a single parent really, and she worked day and night. So the oldest sister, she took over the house. It was a lovely community; the neighbours were wonderful. **Everybody knew everybody**. But that's all gone now.

**Interviewer:** What's it like now?

**Geraldine:** Funnily enough, I was there in March because I go home every Saint Paddy's. My sister and my best mate, we always go away on Saint Paddy's for two or three days. But Ardoyne now is these big gaudy terrace houses. Everybody just lives in their own wee house. **Nobody bothers with anybody**.

**Interviewer:** Would you say there was any special food associated with where you're from?

**Geraldine:** Oh god, awe. We're famous for the Irish stew – fantastic. Interesting thing is that growing up as kids, you always knew there was a bit of money in the house because with the champ we used to get. If there was no money, you only got the **champ**, which was potatoes and scallions, spring onions. If there was a bit of money, you got a bit of meat. The Irish stew and the champ.

**Interviewer:** And the last thing – is your region famous for having a special accent?

**Geraldine:** Well, I have to be honest. Anyone I've met say they love the accent. I personally think it's awful, I think it's very flat, but hey.