

Famine in Ireland

A four-week cross-curricular unit

By

Ann Brown

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School
Liverpool

Based on

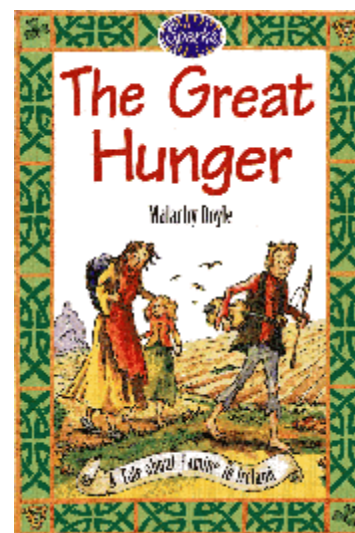
The Great Hunger

A Tale about the Famine in Ireland

by

Malachy Doyle

Franklin Watts, 0-74963-447-2



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A play script based upon Malachy Doyle's *The Great Hunger*



1. About this unit

In the first half of the winter term in 2005, Year 3 at St Hugh's Primary School, Liverpool, learned a lot about healthy eating. In the following half term, we spent four weeks thinking about what it would be like if we did not have enough to eat.

To address this issue, we studied, along with Year 4, the Irish Famine in the 1840s. Then successive failures of the potato crop caused the death of some one million people through disease or starvation and another one million left Ireland to settle in North America, Britain and Australasia.

Literacy Hour

The topic was firmly based in the Literacy Hour when we enjoyed a book called *The Great Hunger. A Tale about Famine in Ireland* by Malachy Doyle, Franklin Watts, 0-74963-447-2. The story is illustrated with effective line drawings and there are helpful notes on the Famine and traditional Irish music.

Art and his family - his grandfather, father, mother and sister - lived on small, rented farm, relying on potatoes and their pig for food. When the potato failed, they faced starvation and eviction. They sold the pig and then Art's father went in search of work to Belfast and Liverpool. When the landlord demanded the rent, Art and Maggie had no choice but to leave home and find their father, with only Art's fiddle-playing to support them.

Beyond the Literacy Hour

Other two subject areas included Science and History. The children particularly enjoyed the latter, finding out about the history of the Famine by using an interactive resource on the internet published by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland: www.irishpotatofamine.org.

They supplemented this engaging resource with evidence sheets in an 'Ireland in Schools' Year 3 unit, *Victorian Liverpool*, based on the treatment of the Famine in *Divided Ireland* edited by V. Kelly *et al.*, Colourpoint, 1-89839-218-8.

NC Key Stage 2 Science	NC Key Stage 2 History
Children will a. develop skills of predicting, asking questions, making inferences, concluding and evaluating based on evidence and understanding (Sc1.2); b. use these skills in investigative work (Sc1.2); c. read non-fiction and extract information from sources such as reference books or CD-ROMs (Breadth of study 1c & d); d. develop a respect for the environment and living things and for their own safety (Breadth of study 2b).	Children will a. find out about people and important events and developments from recent and more distant times (1a); b. discuss why things happened or changed and the results (2c); and c. carry out historical enquiry using a variety of sources of information (4).

Performing a play

The climax, at the end of term, was the public performance of a play, 'The Great Hunger', based upon Malachy Doyle's novel.

The children rose to the challenge of the richness and range of the resources and the issues raised, while the shock that some of their ancestors had confronted death and starvation in the Irish Famine, so close to Liverpool, heightened their awareness of the suffering caused by famine in parts of the world today. As a result, the money raised from the play, £50, was given to famine relief in Africa, Tanzania.

* *Victorian Liverpool* can be downloaded, along with a wide variety other study units and resources, from the 'Ireland in Schools' web journal, 'History, citizenship & the Irish Famine', at: <http://journals.aol.co.uk/iis04/Famine>.

Teacher: Mrs Brown	Class: 3/4	Year group: 3/4, using Year 3 NLS objectives	Week beginning: 31/10/05
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Objectives: For children to: a. enjoy the story and become aware of the Irish Famine. b. improve use of verbs and speech marks.	Learning outcomes: For children to know how to use: a. correct form of verbs b. speech marks.	Speaking & listening: 25, 26, 27
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Narrative: Dialogue	Assessment opportunities:	G & T:
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		Whole class	Whole class	Guided work	Independent group work			Plenary
					Pumas	Tigers	Lions	
Reading & analysis	Mon	Ch will listen to first chapter of <i>The Great Hunger</i> . T2	We will look at common vocabulary for introducing and concluding dialogue, eg, asked, replied, etc. W19	GR Lions	Ch will think of alternative vocabulary for concluding dialogue in a few pages of the story. S2; I	Ch will highlight all the speech marks in a few pages of the story. S2; I	Ch will highlight all questions and exclamation marks. S2 Will play sound snap or similar. EAL; I	Will look at work of Tigers and Lions. Emphasise how dialogue is presented - through questions, etc.
	Tue	Ch will listen to the next two chapters of the story. We will look at speech marks. T2	Will use big word and punctuation cards to physically make speech. Ch hold up cards. S2	GR Pumas	<i>Letts Sentence Level</i> , Challenger, p. 2. Ch will fill in missing speech marks in a story. S7; S8; T	<i>Letts Sentence Level</i> , Practice, p. 23. Ch will fill in missing speech marks in some sentences. S7; S8; I	<i>Letts Sentence Level</i> , p. 22. Check it out. Ch make list of who is speaking and what they say. S7; S8; TA Will use 5-10 sounds to make CVC. EAL; I	Will take turns to add speech marks to sentences on board.
	Wed	Ch will listen to the next two chapters of the story. How does my voice sound for each character and narrator? T3	We will look at some verbs with -ing on the end. Spelling depends on root of word (<i>Spelling Bank</i>). W8	GR Tigers	<i>Letts Word Level</i> , Challenger, p. 9. Adding -ing to words in sentences. Correcting wrong spellings of words with -ing. W8; I	<i>Letts Word Level</i> , Practice, p. 9. Ch will add -ing to verbs and write root words. W8; I	<i>Letts Word Level</i> , p.8. Check it out. Do some word sums. W8; TA Make some sounds out of play dough. Write in books. EAL	We will practise what we know about adding -ing on big whiteboard.
	Thur	Ch will listen to penultimate chapter of story. How will the story end? T3	I will point out some verbs that are in the past tense. Why is this tense used? S4	GR Lions	<i>Letts Sentence Level</i> , Challenger, p. 17. Ch will change verbs into past tense and include them in sentences. S4; I	<i>Letts Sentence Level</i> , Practice, p. 17. Ch will choose the correct form of the verb in sentences. S4; I	<i>Letts Sentence Level</i> , p. 16. Check it out. Ch match verbs with past tense. S4; TA Will pick out CVC words in New Way book. EAL; T	I will say a verb and ch will give me the past tense.
	Fri	Will read final chapter of the story. Was it what we predicted? T2; T3	I will read an extract about frogs in the past tense. Does it sound right? S4 (Not history so should use present tense.)	GR Tigers	Ch will change past to present tense in short extract about frogs. S4; I	Ch will classify into a list past tense verbs that have -ed and a list that does not. S4; T	Ch will change some simple verbs into past tense. S4; TA TA will also check if this group know sounds. EAL; I	We will give our final thoughts about the story. Did we enjoy it?

Evaluation/comments:	Handwriting: r ri tr	Resources: <i>Letts Sentence Level</i> ; <i>Letts Word Level</i> ; <i>Grammar for Writing</i> ; <i>Spelling Bank</i> ; <i>The Great Hunger</i> by Malachy Doyle, Fanklin Watts, 0-74963-447-2.
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Teacher: Mrs Brown	Class: 3/4	Year group: 3/4, using Year 3 NLS objectives	Week beginning: 7/11/05
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Objectives: For children to understand behaviour and feelings of characters in the story.	Learning outcomes: For children to: a. do first person account for one of the characters b. write a letter to a character.	Speaking & listening: 25, 26, 27
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Narrative: Dialogue	Assessment opportunities:	G & T:
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	Whole class	Whole class	Guided work	Independent group work			Plenary	
				Pumas	Tigers	Lions		
Writing	Mon	<i>See Thursday's and Friday's planning for last week.</i>						
	Tue							
	Wed	Will consider characters in story this week Mindmap for Mum. (I will model this.) T5	Ch work with partners - post-it notes. How is Art feeling? T5	GW Lions	Ch will complete a worksheet on Art's feelings and whether he should have sold the fiddle or not. T5	Ch will complete worksheet on how Art helps his family. T5; TA	Ch will complete worksheet on what Art looks like. T5; T	Will look at worksheets and recap what we have learned in the lesson. (Traffic lights.)
	Thur	Will do some hotseating today. Ch will take turns to be characters in the story and will be asked questions by class.		GW Pumas	Ch will write about what is said when Art and Maggie discover that the potato crop is rotten. How do they tell their parents? St; T	Ch will write a letter to Art, asking him questions. T20	Ch will begin to retell the story in pictures. T7; TA EAL ch can also do this activity	Will assess work of Pumas as a class. <i>Afl:</i> 2 * and a wish.
	Fri	Will model 1 st person account of how Mum is feeling. She is worried about the children, etc. T3	Will look at agreement between pronouns and verbs - I am, etc.	GW Tigers	Ch will write 1 st person account as if they are a character in the story, eg, Art, Dad, Maggie, etc. T3; S3: TA	Ch will write about what might happen when Art comes to Liverpool. T10; T	Ch will finish retelling the story in pictures. T7	Will look at work of Tigers. Do we agree with what they think?

Evaluation/comments:	Handwriting: <i>g gr p pr</i>	Resources: <i>The Great Hunger</i> ; Prepared worksheets
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Teacher: Mrs Brown	Class: 3/4	Year group: 3/4, using Year 3 NLS objectives	Week beginning: 14/11/05
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Objectives: For children to: a. understand the difference between prose and a playscript b. be able to perform a simple playscript.	Learning outcomes: Children will understand: a. that prose can be used to produce playscripts b. the layout and the use of stage directions.	Speaking & listening: 25, 26, 27
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Narrative: Plays	Assessment opportunities:	G & T:
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		Whole class	Whole class	Guided work	Independent group work			Plenary
					Pumas	Tigers	Lions	
Reading & analysis	Mon	We will read again first chapter of <i>The Great Hunger</i> and the first scene of the play. T5	I will point out one difference and one similarity between the two. Theme is the same. Do not need narrative in story T5	GR	Ch will work in mixed ability groups to fill in a sheet of What is the same? What is different? One child will be the scribe and the others will give their ideas, such as stories and plays split into sections, no stage directions in the story, etc. T5; T & TA			We will recap what is the same and what are the differences between prose and playscript.
	Tue	Read scene 2 of the play 'The Great Hunger' with verbs blanked out. S3	Ch in pairs will use white boards to write what they think the verb is. Discuss suggestions. S3	GR	Ch will highlight all the verbs in Scs 3 and 4 of the play. S3; T	Ch will look at the verb 'to be'. <i>Support for Basic Grammar</i> . 3, p. 5. S3	Ch will do an activity on verbs. <i>Support for Basic Grammar</i> . 2, p.2. Can they match correct verbs to sentences? S3; TA	What do we notice about sentences if they do not have a verb?
	Wed	Look at end of Sc 1, Sc 2 and beginning of Sc 3. Point out words 'fiddle', 'terrible' and 'horrible'. W9	What do children notice about the spelling? Will classify these and some other words in a table. W9	GR	Ch will use dictionaries to hunt for words with -le on the end. How many can they find and classify? W9	Ch will sort words into sets depending on spellings. Then they will write them on a sheet provided. W9	Ch will do p. 10 of 'Check it Out', <i>Letts Word Level</i> , adding -le to make words. W9; T	Will go over some spellings of -le words and what we have noticed.
	Thur	Will look at the work of 2 children that has direct speech. <i>Afl: 2 * and a wish.</i> S7	Will practise inserting speech marks into direct speech with class. S7	GR	Ch will also work on direct speech - <i>Support of Basic Grammar</i> 8, p. 3. They will rewrite a conversation correctly. S7	Ch will fill in gaps in direct speech - <i>Letts Sentence Level - Practice</i> , p. 25. S7	Ch will do some work on nouns, choosing the correct noun for the sentence. TA	What have we learned about direct speech?
	Fri	Will look again at -le words. Can children give me any examples? W9	Use white boards to spell some -le words. W9	GR	As a class we will practise our play again. We will concentrate on speaking in a loud, clear voice. We will also practise moving props and positioning ourselves for each new scene. T4; T & TA			How could we improve our play? Any suggestions?

Evaluation/comments:	Handwriting: <i>f fr fry frown free</i>	Resources: <i>Support for Basic Grammar</i> , 2, 3, 8; <i>Letts Sentence Level</i> ; <i>Letts Word Level</i> ; <i>Spelling Bank</i> ; 'The Great Hunger' play.
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Teacher: Mrs Brown	Class: 3/4	Year group: 3/4, using Year 3 NLS objectives	Week beginning: 21/11/05
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Objectives: For children to: a. be able to perform a simple playscript b. to punctuate speech correctly.	Learning outcomes: Children will: a. perform a play b. consistently punctuate speech correctly.	Speaking & listening: 25, 26, 27
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Narrative: Plays	Assessment opportunities:	G & T:
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		Whole class	Whole class	Guided work	Independent group work			Plenary
					Pumas	Tigers	Lions	
Writing	Mon	We will read the first part of our book <i>The Great Hunger</i> . We will look at the direct speech. S7	Ch will use direct speech cards to stand in line and make sentences. S7	GW	Ch will punctuate speech and continue the conversation, using direct speech (<i>Password English</i> , pcm 49) S7	Ch will put into speech bubbles and then write the spoken words. (<i>Password English</i> , pcm 48) S7	Ch will complete speech bubbles for 3 characters. (<i>Blueprints</i> , p. 75) S7; TA EAL will role play a CVC game.	Will choose ch to punctuate some speech on the board.
	Tue	We will assess the work of 2/3 ch from Monday. <i>Afl: 2 * and a wish..</i> S7	Ch will work in pairs to assess each other's work. Reminder about direct speech. S7	GW	Ch will rewrite a short conversation, including punctuation and speech marks. (<i>Reasons for Writing</i> , p. 56) S7; TA	Ch will write down the spoken words from a conversation. (Who said what?) S7; I	Ch will make up a story to go with speech bubbles. (<i>Bigbook of Grammar</i> , p. 28) S7; T EAL will plan a game.	Traffic light cards. What have we learned about direct speech?
	Wed	I will act out the first scene of the play twice with the help of three children. T4	We will talk about expression and using a loud voice. T4	GW	Ch will be put in groups to act our one scene of the play. They will be given time to read their parts and to practise their acting roles. We will then, as a class, assess each group using <i>Afl: 2 * and a wish</i> . T4; T			What have we learned about performing a play?
	Thur	Looking at 'ar' and 'oy' (<i>Teachers' Book for Guidance</i> , p. 6) Get ch to help spell sentence. W6	Read 'Star Puzzles' in <i>Big Book of Grammar</i> . Discuss catch-you-outs. Look at rhyming words. W6	GW	Ch will make some word up using the 'ar' phoneme'. (<i>Searchlights for Spelling</i> , p. 13) C	Ch will make up and solve some 'ar' word puzzles. (<i>Searchlights for Spelling</i> , p. 13) B	Ch will complete some 'ar' words. (<i>Searchlights for Spelling</i> , p. 12) A; TA	How many different ways can we spell the sound 'ar'?
	Fri	Will learn about 'oy' and consolidate 'ar' today. Look at rules for 'oy'. W6	Will say some 'ar' and 'oy' words. Ch will spell on white boards.	GW	Ch will make up some sentences with 'ar' and 'oy' words in them. W6; T	Ch will write a short story about children called Mark and Joy. W6; TA	Ch will work on 'ar' words from <i>Jolly Phonics</i> . W6; I EAL will do medial vowel work.	Practise spelling 'oy' and 'ar' words on board.

Evaluation/comments:	Handwriting: <i>pl plan</i> <i>play please</i>	Resources: <i>Bigbook of Grammar</i> ; <i>Jolly Phonics</i> ; <i>Password English</i> ; <i>Searchlights for Spelling</i> ; <i>Reasons for Writing</i> ; <i>Teachers' Book for Guidance</i> ; <i>The Great Hunger</i> book; 'The Great Hunger' play.
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1. How do you think Art is feeling about the famine?

2. Why do you think Art didn't sell the fiddle?

3. Do you think that was a good or bad idea and why?

1. What does Art do to help his family when their house is knocked down?

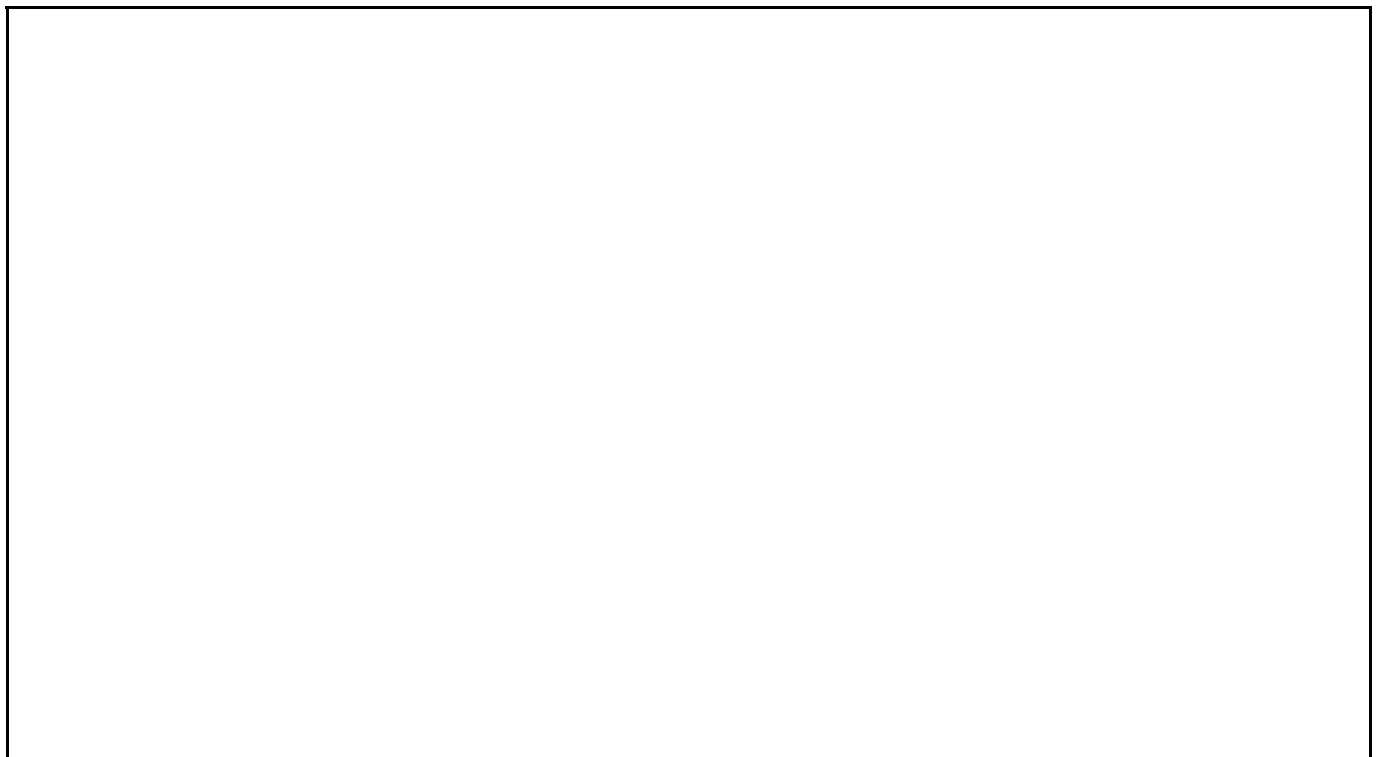
2. Can you think of some adjectives to describe how Art is feeling?

3. Why do you think Art tries to play the fiddle when Grandad won't eat?

1. How old is Art?

2. What does he look like?

3. Draw a picture of him.



History worksheet: the Irish Potato Famine

1. What was an Irish cabin like?

2. Why did Irish people eat lots of potatoes?

3. Why didn't farmers do anything about potato blight?

4. Why did so many people die?

5. How did people leave Ireland and where did they go?

Science worksheet 1

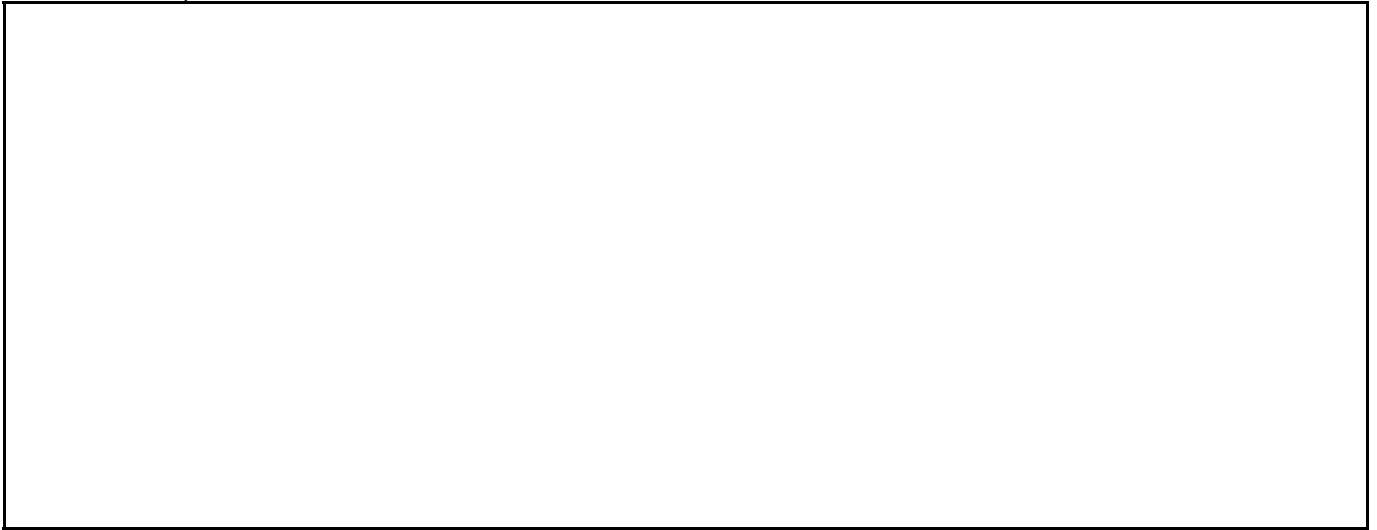
1. What we will do.

2. What we think will happen.

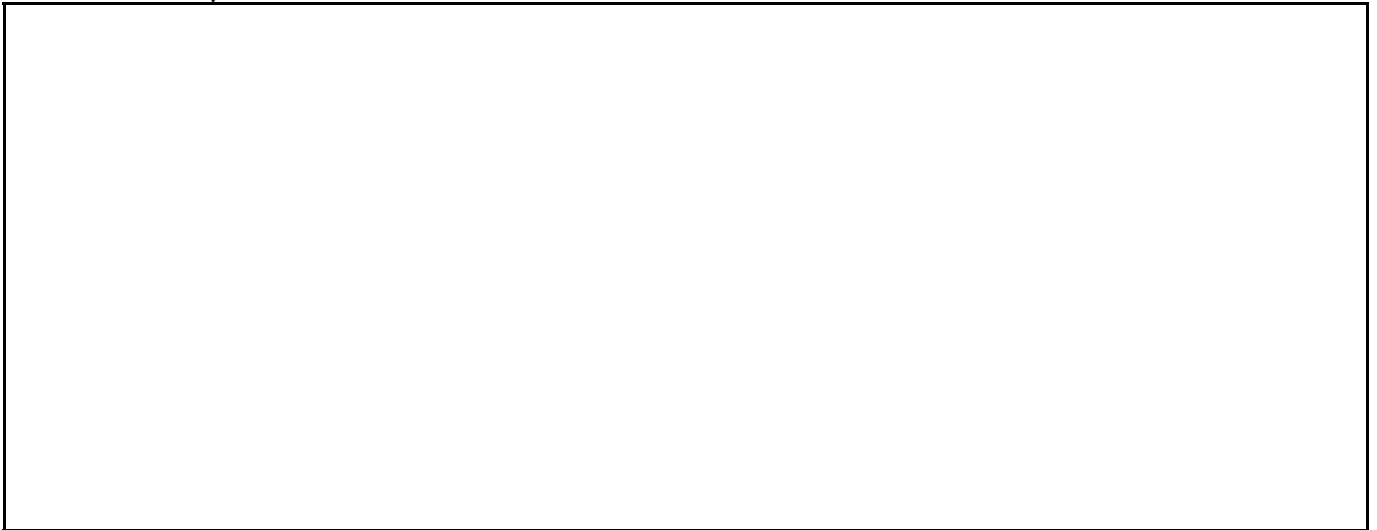
3. What did happen.

Science worksheet 2

1. Draw the potato



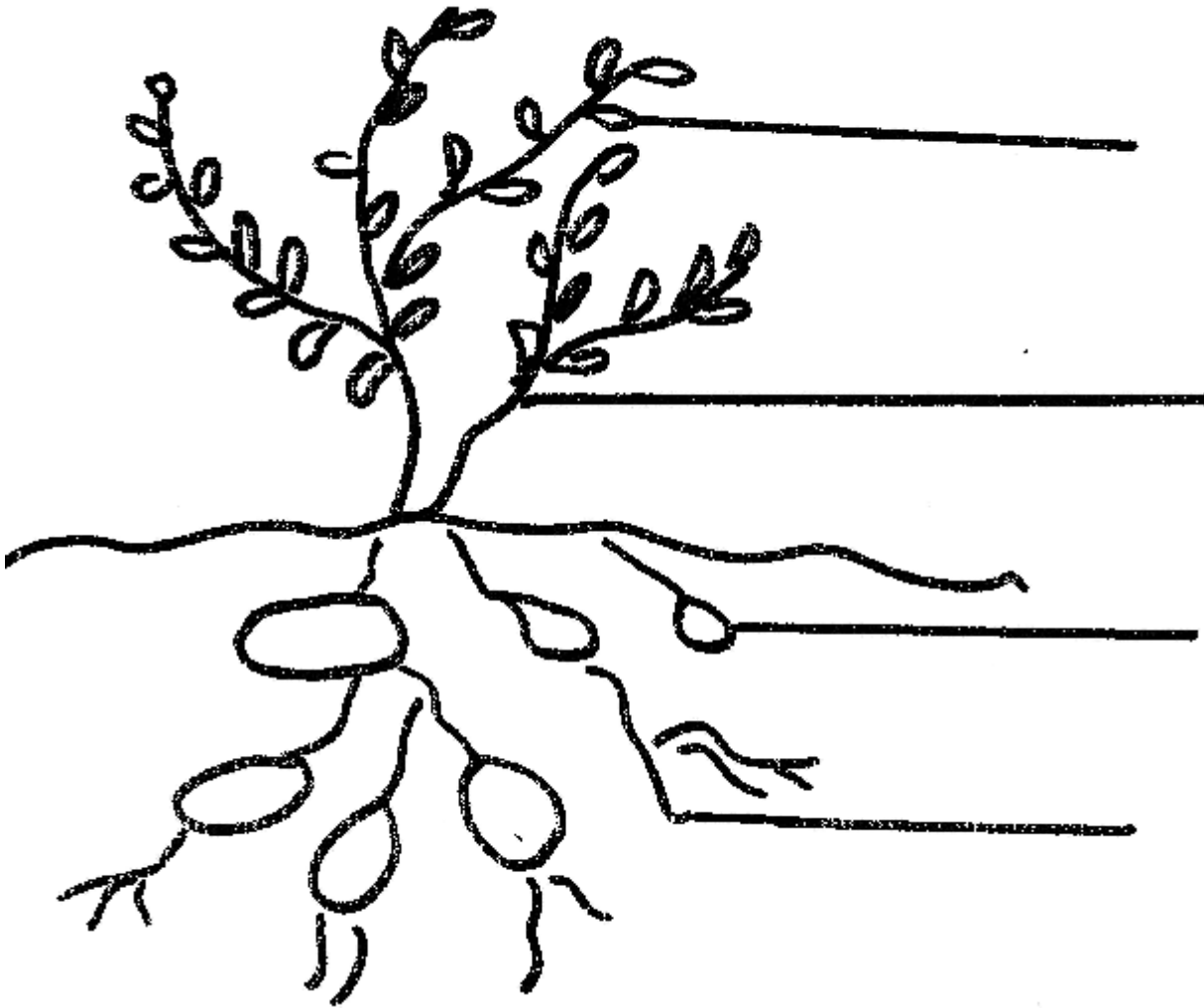
2. Draw what you think it will look like after one week.



3. What it did look like after one week.

Potatoes 1

Label this diagram, using the following words:
leaf, stem, tuber (potato), and root.



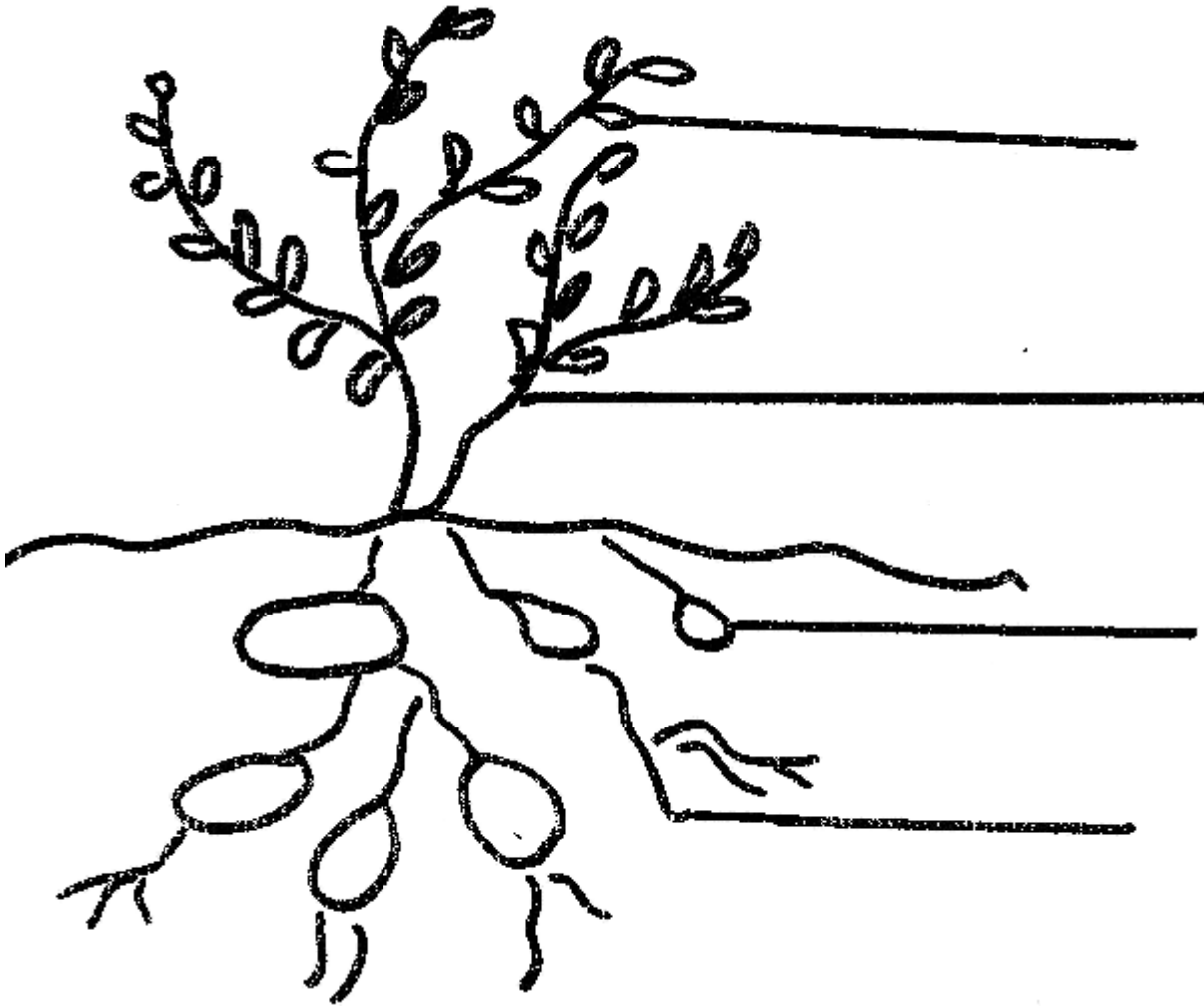
1. Who discovered the potato?

2. What is a tuber?

3. Why do new potatoes need to be grown in the dark?

Potatoes 2

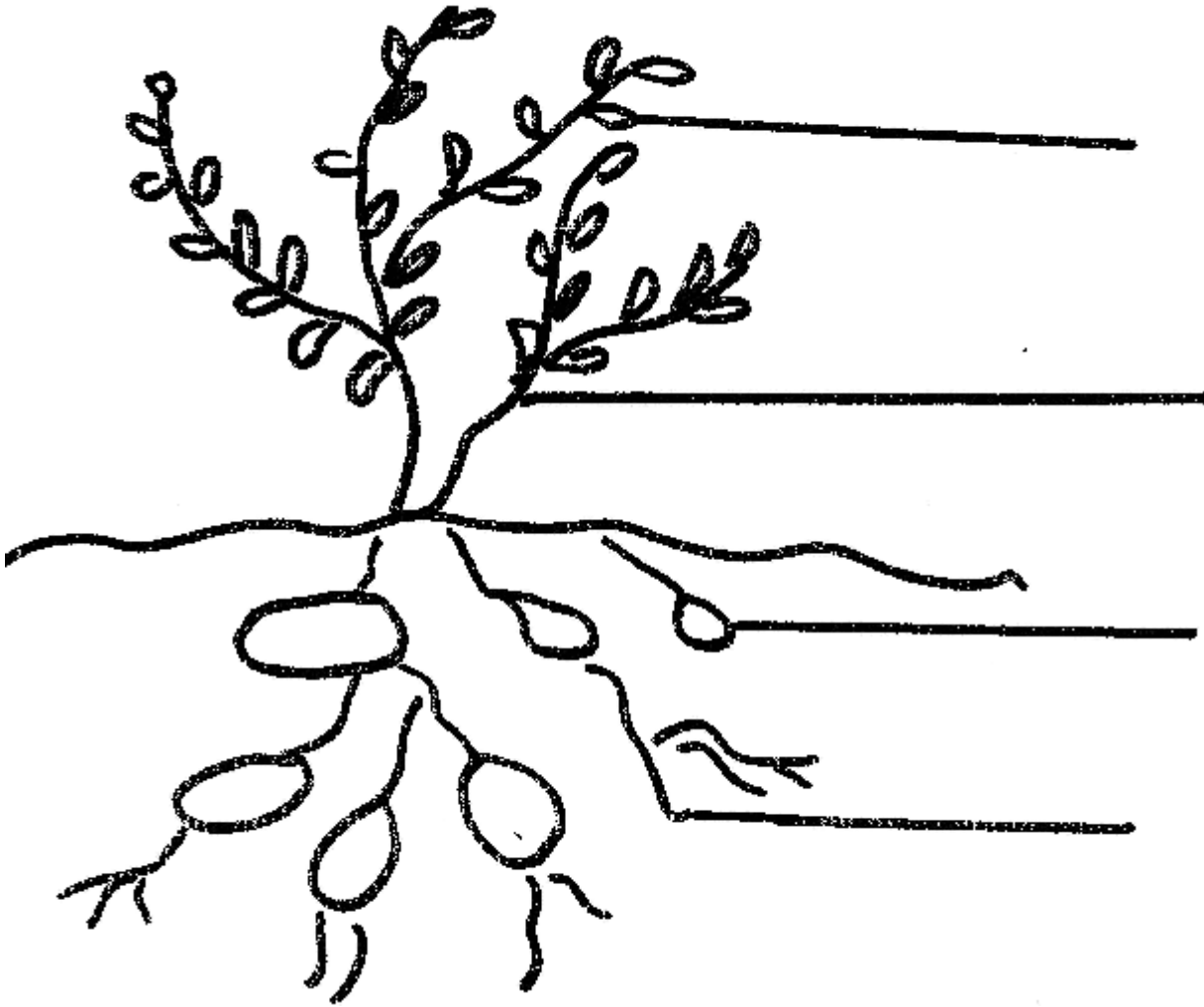
Label this diagram, using the following words:
leaf, stem, tuber (potato), and root.



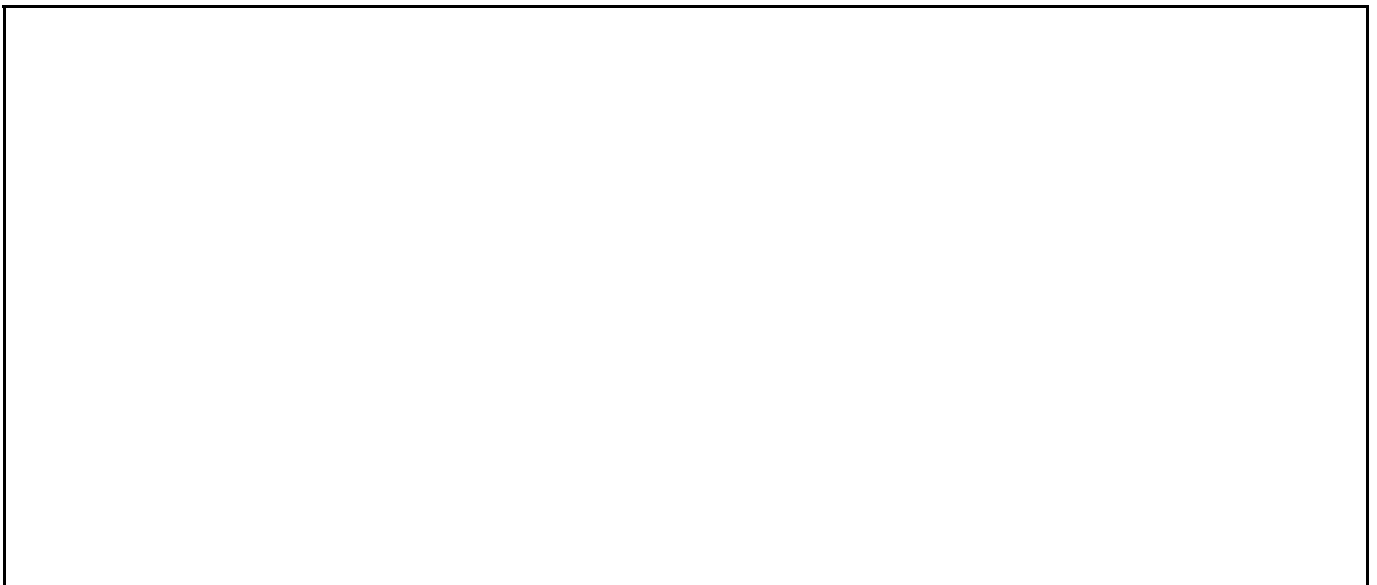
1. How many different ways can we cook potatoes?

Potatoes 3

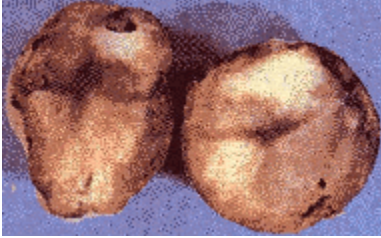
Label this diagram, using the following words:
leaf, stem, tuber (potato), and root.



Draw a picture of how you like potatoes cooked.



The Great Hunger



a play adapted from the book by Malachy Doyle

Introduction by child

Last half term Year 3 learned a lot about healthy eating. This half term we have been thinking about what it would be like if we didn't have enough to eat.

As part of our work in history, we have been finding out about the Irish potato famine. We read a book called *The Great Hunger* by Malachy Doyle, and we will now act it out for you. We hope you enjoy it.

Child walks on with sign - 'A farm in the West of Ireland in 1845.'

Narrator: The Ryan family are together at home. It is the night before potato picking.

Scene 1 (The big night - dancing at the crossroads)

(Mum, Dad and Grandad are talking, Maggie is playing with the pig.)

Art: 'Come on, Maggie, we'll be late.'

Maggie: 'Late for what?'

Art: 'The big night up at the crossroads!'

Maggie: 'Ok. Bye pig.'

Dad: 'I'd better go. See you up there!'

(Takes his fiddle and goes.)

Mum: 'Come on, children, are you ready?'

(Mum, Grandad and children walk to other side of stage, where people are talking.)

Narrator: The rest of the family walk up to the crossroads, where lots of other local families have met. It is a time for celebrating, and the people dance while dad plays his fiddle.

(Dad plays his fiddle and people dance.)

Narrator: When the dancing is over, the families make their way home.

Art: 'Can I play the fiddle, Grandad?'

Grandad: 'All in good time Art, all in good time.'

Scene 2 (Potato picking)

Child walks on with sign - 'The next morning'

(Grandad is in a chair.)

(Mum wakes the children up, goes back to talk to grandad.)

Mum: 'Wake up children. It's time to pick the potatoes. Dad's there already!'

Art: 'Oh, Maggie. I can't wait to taste the fresh, new potatoes.'

Narrator: The children start to get ready when Dad appears at the door. He looks very shocked.

Dad: 'Something terrible has happened! It's the potatoes. They are all rotten, every last one.'

(Art runs out and sees the potatoes are rotten. Sees other families upset.)

Narrator: As he looked at the scene before him, Art knew that he was staring at disaster.

Scene 3 (Troubled times - no food)

Child walks on with sign - 'A few months later'

Narrator: The family are beginning to starve. Dad does the best he can to help the situation.
(Maggie is sitting at a table with Art. Mum has given her a potato.)

Maggie: 'These potatoes are horrible!'

Mum: 'We are lucky to have anything at all. Now eat your breakfast while I go and wake dad.'
(Mum comes back.)

Mum: 'Dad's gone, and so has pig!' Art: 'Here he is!'
(Maggie runs up to him.)

Maggie: 'Where's pig?'
(Dad is carrying a sack of meal.)

Dad: 'I'm sorry, Maggie, but I had to sell him.'
(Maggie runs over to mum, crying.)

Dad to Art: I need to go away to look for work. Grandad is old now, so I need you to look after the family. There is enough meal to keep you going for a while, and some seed potatoes for you to plant. I promise I will be back before next harvest.

Narrator: Art did what his father had asked. He planted the seed potatoes, and looked after the family as best he could.

Scene 4 (Learning the fiddle)

Child walks on with sign - 'A few months later.'

Narrator: The family are really starting to suffer, and grandad is ill.
(Grandad is in bed Mum tries to feed him porridge. Grandad shakes his head.)
(Mum comes over to Art.)

Mum: I wish grandad would eat, but he only likes potatoes.
(Art picks up the fiddle and starts to play. Grandad sits up.)

Grandad: You are just like your dad, Art. Let me show you some other tunes.
(Art gives him fiddle and they sit together.)

Narrator: Grandad teaches Art lots of tunes, and seems to feel better.

Scene 5 (Dad returns)

Narrator: The long months past, and soon it was time for the harvest again.
(Mum is trying to feed grandad.)
(Art and Maggie are talking together.)
(Dad appears at the door.)

Dad: 'Hello everyone!'
(They all run over.)

Art & Maggie: Dad! Dad!

Dad: I promised I'd be back before the harvest.

(All hug - then move to grandad.)

Narrator: Dad was home and everyone was happy for a few days - but then something very sad happened. Old age and the last months of hunger caught up with grandad and he died. Lots of people came to his wake, to say what a good man he was.

Scene 6 (The crop fails again)

Child walks on with sign - 'A few days later - the harvest is ready to pick.'

Narrator: Art and Maggie get up early to start potato picking, but they have a nasty shock when they go into the field.

Maggie: 'What's that funny smell, Art?'

(Art picks a potato.)

Art: 'Oh no! It's happened again!' The whole crop is ruined!

(Art and Maggie go and show dad and mum the potato.)

Narrator: The next morning, Dad leaves for Belfast to find work. The next day, the landlord's agent appears to collect the rent.

Landlord's agent: 'Give me the rent money!'

Art: 'We don't have it.'

Landlord's agent: 'Well, get it by tomorrow or you will be evicted by order of the landlord.'

Narrator: The next morning the landlord's agent returned with a group of men. They had come to knock down the house. Art, Maggie and their mother just had time to leave before they saw their home turned to dust.

(Mum and Maggie start to cry.)

Mum: 'Whatever will we do?'

Art: We will go to find food in Belfast.

Mum: 'How will we get there?'

Art: 'We will have to walk. It will be a hard journey, but I will look after you.'

Narrator: And so the long march began. The Ryans weren't the only family walking to Belfast. There were many others in the same situation. People were so hungry, they were eating anything they could find including diseased potatoes from the fields, but Art would not let his family do that.

(Art, Maggie and Mum are walking along.)

Art: 'Eat some of these berries, they seem fine.'

Narrator: The family slept in ditches and doorways. They passed other houses that had been destroyed just like their own, and eventually they reached Belfast.

Scene 7 (Off to Liverpool)

(Art starts playing the fiddle.)

Passing person: 'Where did you learn that tune? I knew a man who used to play it.'

Art: 'Was he called Tom Ryan?'

Passing person: 'Yes, he was.'

Art: 'That's my father! Do you know where he is now?'

Passing person: 'He said he was going to Liverpool to look for work.'

Art: 'Thank you.'

(Art goes over to Mum and Maggie.)

Art: 'We are going to Liverpool to find Dad!'

Narrator: By playing the fiddle, Art scraped together enough money for the tickets and the family joined a boat going to Liverpool. As it pulled away from the quay, they knew they had come to the end of their life in Ireland, and were about to start a new one in Liverpool.

The End

Final thought

Year 3 could not believe that all of this trouble had been caused by potatoes, vegetables that we all take for granted. The Irish potato famine happened a long time ago, but we know that there is still famine in the world today.

We are collecting money to send to Africa to help people who do not have enough to eat. If you would like to give some money too, we would be very happy. We will send it next week.