

Blarney Talk

Have you ever tried to talk your way out of doing something? If so, you have something in common with Cormac MacDermot—lord of Blarney Castle during the mid-fifteenth century. Queen Elizabeth I of England asked MacDermot to show his loyalty by giving away his castle. For many days he offered excuses to the queen until she finally declared that she'd heard enough of his "Blarney talk" and let him keep his castle. To this day, it is believed that anyone who kisses the Blarney stone, located in the south wall of Blarney Castle, will receive Cormac MacDermot's gift of persuasive talk.

Cover a shoebox with gray paper and label it "Blarney Box." On 3" x 5" index cards, write 10–15 topics for persuasive speeches—one per card—and place the cards in the box. Include such topics as "Why schools should stay closed on Saturdays," and "Why milkshakes should be served every day at lunch." Periodically during your study of Ireland, have a student pull a card from the box. Tell the student to imagine that he has just kissed the Blarney stone and is now "full of blarney." Give him five minutes to prepare and one minute to present a "Blarney Talk" in which he tries to persuade his classmates to support the card's topic.



An Irish Getaway

Pack your bags for a journey to the Emerald Isle. Have students check out a travel guide from the library, visit a travel agency, or write to the Irish Tourist Board or Embassy (see an almanac for an address). Duplicate page 61 for each student. Instruct the student to use this page along with tourist pamphlets, brochures, and travel books to plan a trip to Dublin, Ireland. Direct each student to plan the activities and expenses for each day of his trip by writing an itinerary. In addition, have each student write a fictional journal page for each day of the trip describing the places he visited and any interesting facts he learned. Allow students several days to complete the activity. Then let each student present his itinerary, expenses, and adventures to the rest of the class. Bon voyage!

A collection of travel-related items: a green, white, and orange Irish flag on a yellow pole; a blue passport with "PASSPORT" and "United States of America" visible; a travel guide titled "Ireland" with a green shamrock; a blue suitcase; and a brown leather briefcase with a tag.

8:00	Pay for night's lodging at Inn	\$90.00
9:00	Continental breakfast	\$ 3.50
9:30	Taxi to Blarney Castle	\$ 5.00
10:00	Tour of Blarney Castle	\$ 1.00
11:30	Taxi back to Inn	\$ 5.00
1:30	Lunch—Irish pizza	\$ 9.00
2:00	Rest	
3:00	Walking tour of Dublin	\$20.00
6:00	Dinner—Lobster	\$28.00
	Monday's Expenses	\$161.50