



Olanna's Big Day

ISBN 978-1-84717-171-9 pb

Natasha Mac a'Bháird

Teaching Guide

By PETER HEANEY

RATIONALE AND THEMES

This story emphasises the belief that everyone has a contribution to make, irrespective of ethnic circumstances and that this contribution can, given the opportunity, contribute in a lively, joyful and entertaining way to everyone's success.

The story also illustrates that while cultural and ethnic traditions may differ and seem confusing, there will always be unexpected connections if we look for them.

The themes are SPHE based and include:

- Cultural diversity
- Cultural traditions
- Friendship
- Valuing contributions
- Social interaction
- Cultural misunderstanding

SUMMARY

Olanna is from Nigeria and is in the process of integrating into the life of an Irish school with all the excitement, opportunity and diversity that this entails. Her life is a collage both of Nigerian and Irish experience; however she is confused when her experiences and perceptions sometimes overlap.

Olanna plays the tin whistle in the school band and as they prepare to take part in the St Patrick's Day parade an unexpected mishap threatens to prevent them from marching; that is until Olanna offers the scarf that her granny from Nigeria has knitted as the perfect solution to the problem.

APPROACH

Olanna's experience as part of the class and school community is rich and positive. She takes an active part in every activity while still retaining her own cultural identity and is able to contribute effectively, particularly when mishap threatens the whole group's enterprise.

The approach to using the book should illustrate how all contributions can be effective and should be valued.

The themes offer a broad range of SPHE opportunities to explore cultural diversity and the unexpected connections that sometimes occur between different traditions.

Whole class discussion activities will predominate and could include circle time, peer group discussions, debates etc.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- (*Read pp 7–10*) Olanna enjoyed being part of the school band. Why do you think it was important from her to join the band? How do you think that being in the band helped her to enjoy living away from Nigeria?
- (*Read pp 12*) Olanna is confused and thinks that the postman 'Paddy' might have his own special day. Can you think of any other days or celebrations that might be confusing for people who are not from Ireland?
- (*Read p 30*) When the parade was over, why do you think Tommy would have been pleased to be wearing a Nigerian scarf?

ACTIVITIES

1. The Parcel

(*Read p3*) Olanna looked forward to the parcels that she got from her granny Mama-Bayo in Nigeria. If you were living in a foreign country, what would you like your granny to send to you in a parcel from Ireland?

Can you draw a large box with all the things that you would like your granny to send to you? Can you give a reason why she might include each of the items?

2. Around the World to Ireland:

(*Read pp 3-4*) Olanna brought the stamps she had from around the world into school to show to the teacher.

Do we use a lot of things at home or in school that are not from Ireland?

Can you check at home or in the supermarket and make a list of some of the things we eat or use that do not come from Ireland?

You can mark where they come from on a map in class. How do you think they are brought to Ireland?

3. Practice makes perfect

(*Read pp11 & 16*) Olanna and Ciara practiced on the tin whistle as often as they could to make sure that they were ready for the St Patrick's Day parade.

Do you think it was important for them to practice?

Can you work in small groups and choose a skill that you would like to have? E.g.

- Play a tune on the whistle.

- Draw a picture of one of your friends
- Kick or catch a ball in a special way.

Practice together as often as you can for a week and then test your skill to see how it has improved.

4. The Wearing of the Green

(Read P20) Olanna is wearing the scarf that her granny knitted for her, when she discovers that green and white are the colours of both the Nigerian and the Irish flags.

- Could you discover how many other countries have the colour green as one of the main colours on their flags?
- Draw a large Irish flag on a blank sheet and around it draw the flags of all the countries that have green as a main colour. Can you find a little information about each of the countries?
- The flag of one country is almost the same as Ireland's: The Ivory Coast. Can you spot the difference?
- Try the flag matching game at tinyurl.com/FlagGame or www.britishcouncil.org/kids-games-pelmanism-flags.htm
- For a list of all the worlds' national flags see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallery_of_country_flags
- Olanna's mother and father wear shamrock on Saint Patrick's Day. Can you discover what flowers or plants are used as symbols in other countries?

5. I can help with that:

(Read p27) Olanna had a great idea. She used her scarf to replace the broken strap on Tommy's drum.

Can you think of a time when you were able to help out either at home, in class or playing with your friends?

Draw a picture and write a sentence to describe how you helped and how it made you feel.

6. You can come too:

(Read p18) Olanna wore the green and white Nigerian scarf because she wanted her granny Mama-Bayo to be part of the parade.

We can always include the people we care about in the things that we do even if they are far away.

Do you think you could create a little memory of someone that you care about to remind you of them when they are not with you?

You could draw a picture of them. You could also include:

- Their favourite colour
- What makes them laugh
- Some of the things they say



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Class Project

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In the story, Olanna and her family are looking forward to the St Patrick's Day parade and celebration; however Olanna is slightly confused about the significance of the festival.

The focus of the activities is to provide the opportunity for the children to consider how others might not be able to appreciate fully the range of celebrations that are part of our tradition and therefore be only able to experience limited participation.

The first activity uses a simple grid (*See diagram below*) and a 5 x W (*Who, what, when, where & why*) framework to focus the children's research and presentation on the major festivals in Ireland.

The activity is suited to groups and the children can be tasked to collate and present the information that they have gathered on the significant festivals in Ireland.

Once the information is collected the children can be asked

then to prioritise it; selecting and presenting only the information that they consider essential to someone being able to understand and take part in the festival.

This activity will help to develop thinking and literacy skills as they assess not only the information but also its relevance to their objective i.e. **Provide essential information on festivals in Ireland.**

The festivals can be selected to represent and reflect the diversity of those celebrated within the class as appropriate.

Information on all the festivals at an age appropriate level can be sourced on the Internet by typing key words e.g. **Hanukkah and children** into an appropriate search machine such as Google. Care must always be taken not to allow the children access to any site before you monitor it

Festivals	St Patrick's Day	Easter	Hanukkah	Chinese New Year
WHY IS IT CELEBRATED				
WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE				
WHEN IS IT CELEBRATED				
WHAT HAPPENS				
WHO CELEBRATES IT				



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Natasha Mac a'Bháird Class Project extension By PETER HEANEY

To develop the study of Saint Patrick's Day the children could have the opportunity to produce a simple one page guide on how to enjoy and take part in it.

The activity is generic and easily lends itself to any festival and indeed will work equally well as a country guide with the prompt,

"If we were to have a new pupil joining us from Nigeria; could you make a simple country guide containing all the important information about their country so that you would be able to talk to them about some of the interesting places from their home?"

The initial part of the activity should include a class discussion / brainstorm to identify as many pieces of information as possible. This information could be displayed on the blackboard and the children tasked in small groups to assess and identify the essential information to appear on the Rough Guide. These could then be illustrated.

As a peer assessment technique each group could then apply the 5 x W framework to each other's guide to check if it gives enough information. The groups could consider what type of information should be in the guide and use the framework to create a list of questions to check if the guide has a suitable level of information. E.g.

- What happens?
- Who will I see taking part?
- When does the celebration take place?
- Where is the best place to go to see something interesting?
- Why is the celebration important to so many people?

The children will have the opportunity to develop their thinking skills as they sort, assess and prioritise information and illustrations; and use a range of literacy and skills to present information that is easy to read and understand.

To develop the activity the children could be asked to consider how their guides might be used by someone who did not read English very well.

There might also be an opportunity to introduce an appropriate range of foreign language vocabulary.

ACTIVITY EXTENSION

Nigeria: The Rough Guide

Using this approach you can provide the opportunity for the children to research both factual and opinion-based information to create a simple guide to Nigeria.

For age appropriate country information on Nigeria you can try:

www.atozkidsstuff.com/nigeria.html

www.atozkidsstuff.com/africa.html

There will be an opportunity for them to develop a range of literacy skills as they attempt to make their writing brief, concise and interesting.

One classroom strategy could be to present the Internet materials as a whole class activity and ask them to make their own notes on what they found interesting from the presentation. They could then use the notes as the basis for their guide. It can be an interesting strategy to have a delay of a few days between watching the presentation and then using the notes that were made during the presentation to complete the guide. This way the children have the opportunity exercise their recall. This can be done in small groups to stimulate discussion on their recall of what they saw.

Have a class discussion on the differences between fact and opinion and the impression that these create when they are used; then gather information under the following headings.

DID YOU KNOW: (Fact and information: concise and clear)

- Country facts
- Language
- Flag
- Capital city
- Population
- etc

PEOPLE SAY: (Opinion: comment or popular myth)

- About Nigeria
- About Nigerian people
- About Nigerians in Ireland