

Lesson Plan 2 – Surnames

Activity 1 (5 minutes)

Getting to know you

What is special about you? Ask every child to write something unique, special or strange about themselves. All bits of paper the same size. Tell children not to look at their neighbour's secret. All pieces of paper will go into the same box. Facilitator will read them aloud at random and class will have to guess who owns which secret. This will help the facilitator to get to know the children better.

Activity 2 (5 minutes)

Surnames

Discuss the reasons why we have and use surnames:

- What is the importance of surnames?
- What do our surnames tell people about us?

Tell them that Ireland was one of the first European countries to use hereditary surnames.

Activity 3 (5 minutes)

Famous families

Discuss the meaning of *Ó*, *Mac*, *Ní*, and *Nic*. Use the flashcards here.

Now, choose four pupils to be characters from the famous family (The Simpsons for example). Go through the family members, character after character, talking about how their surnames change with gender and marital status.

Activity 4 (15 minutes)

Walking debate

Teacher will have found out in advance information about each pupils name.

Part One: Question: Is your surname of Irish, English, French, Scandinavian (Viking) or Scottish origin?

Put the choices in different corners of the classroom, ask the class to decide which country each of their own surnames originates from and have them go stand beside their decision. Discuss meaning and etymology of names with children.

Part Two: Using the PowerPoint, discuss the following surnames. When all pupils have chosen their answers discuss their decisions.

These are the examples:

1. Brown - English
2. Campbell – Scottish (Cam béal – Crooked mouth)
3. Connolly - Irish
4. McVeigh – Irish / Scottish (Mac Beth)
5. Smith – Irish / Scottish / English

Explain what each name means as you go along.

Activity 5 (10 minutes)

Forenames & Adjectives

Put on the PowerPoint and go through all slides. Discuss the forenames and their meanings in Irish. Forenames such as:

Orla, Rory, Aidan, Fionnuala/Nuala, Ciarán/Crónán, Bláithín/Róisín

When this part is finished, look at the slides that discuss how adjectives after forenames are used in Irish tradition to distinguish people from each other. Adjectives such as:

Óg/Mór, Beag/Ard, Dubh/Rua/Catach

When this has been completed, give each pupil a label and ask them to write their name and an adjective on the label. These adjectives will be based on what has been covered so far (hair/eye colour, size etc.) This is an opportunity to practice both colours and the phrase ‘Is mise...’

Activity 6 (10 minutes)

Family crests

Give out the information sheets on family crests and ask the pupils to find their own family crest, when this done, explain their family crests to them.

Explain the things that relate to their personal family crests; music, dance or drama and anything else of interest to them. Give the pupils a template and ask them to create their own brand new personal family crest.

Activity 7 (5 minutes)

Recap

Ask the class a couple of questions:

- What did you learn today?
- Why do we have / use surnames?
- What things influenced surnames?
- Where does your name originate from?

Resources

A4 pages cut into 4 or 5 equal sized pieces

Print outs of famous family's faces

Options for walking debate printed to stick up around the room

Family crests printouts

Power Point

Sloinnte Uile Éireann, De Bhulbh, S

The surnames of Ireland, MacLysaght, E

The Oxford Names Companion, Hanks, P; Hodges, F; A. D. Mills; Room, A