British History
Lesson plan: Famine relief token

Aims and Objectives

1. To use different types of evidence to find out about the past eg written and visual evidence
2. To recognise that events in the past have helped shape who we are and how we live today
3. To identify continuity and change across a period of time
4. To ask and answer questions, and to select and record information about the past

Resources

- A History of the World website
- Interactive whiteboard or data projector
- The Story of the Great Famine worksheet

Teaching and learning activities

Introduction

1. As a class look at the Famine relief tokens on the History of the World website.
2. Discuss why these tokens would be important and why they are included in the History of the World object list.
3. Identify their position on the time line. Who was Queen of Great Britain and Ireland at that time?
4. Examine the picture of the Famine relief tokens closely on a large screen. Discuss what the pupils may already know about the Irish famine. Why was the failure of one crop such a disaster for so many people?

One

1. Read The Story of the Great Famine worksheet and match the questions to the answers. Discuss how and why the famine happened.
2. Make a story board for a TV documentary on the story of the Irish Famine. Identify eight main events to draw and write a short description underneath. This task could be completed as a whole class activity.
3. Then each group could investigate an aspect of the story further eg Indian meal, public works, soup kitchens etc. and report back to the rest of the class
Teaching and learning activities

Two

1. Read about the Soup Kitchen Act on the British History website.
2. The soup kitchen initiative even had some celebrity chef participation – with the class, investigate Alexis Soyer and what he did to help the famine.
3. Discuss his story with the pupils.
4. Ask them to write a newspaper report about Alexis Soyer. Begin with a catchy headline and include a photograph of Alexis Soyer and a possible soup recipe.
5. Find out if any modern celebrity chefs have taken part in a relief campaign.

Three

1. Find out more about the Quakers who provided the soup kitchens.
2. Who were they and why did they do this charitable work?
3. Find some pictures of a Quaker soup kitchen
4. Compare what the people in the pictures might be thinking with what they might be saying.
5. Use the internet to find out more about Quakers today, particularly their beliefs, charitable work and schools
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Plenary

**Continuity and Change**  
Discuss with the class what happens today when a country is hit by famine. Who helps to feed the people who are hungry? How do we know what’s happening in other countries? Compare the modern response to famine with the government’s response to the Famine in Ireland in the 1840’s. Are some elements the same?

Extension or homework

1. Find out about when food was rationed during the Second World War. How much food was each person allowed? Were there any wartime recipes for rationed food? Find out if any older people you know remember food being rationed. Does anyone still have a ration book? Is there a ration book on the A History of the World website?
2. Find out about modern famine relief. Find out where our food comes from, why people are still hungry and what the difference between hunger, starvation and malnutrition is.