St Patrick's Day

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

Name _____ Date _____



St Patrick's Day is on 17 March. In 2027 it is on a Wednesday. It is a special day for the people of Ireland.

Ireland is an island. It has green fields, hills and a long coast. Its capital city is Dublin.

Long ago, a boy called Patrick was taken to Ireland. He looked after sheep for six years. Then he ran away and went home to Britain. Later he came back to Ireland to teach. Today he is called St Patrick.

On St Patrick's Day, people go to parades. They play music, dance and wear green. Many people wear a shamrock. A shamrock is a little plant with three leaves.

1. When is St Patrick's Day?

2. What is the capital city of Ireland?

3. What job did Patrick do in Ireland for six years?

4. How many leaves does a shamrock have?

5. Why do you think people wear green on this day?

St Patrick's Day and Ireland

A non-fiction text for Years 3 to 5 (Grades 2 to 4)

Every year on 17 March, people in Ireland and all over the world celebrate St Patrick's Day. In Ireland it is a national public holiday, so schools and many offices close. In 2027, St Patrick's Day falls on a Wednesday.

Who was St Patrick?

Patrick lived about 1,600 years ago, in the fifth century. He was born in Britain. When he was about sixteen, raiders captured him and took him to Ireland, where he was made to work looking after sheep. After six years he escaped and returned home. Years later he went back to Ireland as a Christian teacher and bishop, and he became Ireland's patron saint. Patrick wrote about his own life, and two of his letters still survive. Many other stories about him are legends that were written down long after he died, so nobody can be sure they are true. 17 March is thought to be the day he died.

The shamrock and the harp

The shamrock is a small plant whose leaves are split into three parts. A famous legend says Patrick used it to explain his beliefs, and today people wear it on St Patrick's Day. The shamrock and the harp are Ireland's official state emblems. Ireland is the only country with a musical instrument as its national emblem, and a harp appears on Irish euro coins.

The island of Ireland

Ireland is an island in the Atlantic Ocean, west of Great Britain. The island is shared by two places: Ireland, whose capital is Dublin, and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom and whose capital is Belfast. The River Shannon is the longest river on the island. In the census of 2022, about 5.1 million people lived in Ireland.



Celebrations around the world

Irish people who moved to other countries took St Patrick's Day with them. New York City has held a St Patrick's Day parade since 1762, and since 1962 the city of Chicago has dyed its river green for the day. Today it is a celebration of Irish music, dancing, sport, food and history, and famous buildings around the world are lit up in green.

Sources: ireland.ie (Government of Ireland); National Museum of Ireland; Britannica; enterprise.gov.ie (state emblems); CSO Census 2022.

St Patrick's Day and Ireland: questions

Use the text to answer. Look back to find the evidence.

Name _____ Date _____

1. Why do schools in Ireland close on 17 March?

2. How old was Patrick when he was captured?

3. Find a word in the part "Who was St Patrick?" that means "got away".

4. Why can nobody be sure that every story about Patrick is true?

5. What are Ireland's two official state emblems?

6. What is the capital of Northern Ireland?

7. How did St Patrick's Day spread to other countries?

8. Find one fact about Patrick that we can be fairly sure of, and say how we know.

Answers: St Patrick's Day reading

Years 1 to 2

1. When is St Patrick's Day?

17 March

2. What is the capital city of Ireland?

Dublin

3. What job did Patrick do in Ireland for six years?

He looked after sheep.

4. How many leaves does a shamrock have?

Three

5. Why do you think people wear green on this day?

Any sensible answer: for example, the shamrock is green, or Ireland has green fields.

Years 3 to 5

1. Why do schools in Ireland close on 17 March?

St Patrick's Day is a national public holiday in Ireland.

2. How old was Patrick when he was captured?

About sixteen

3. Find a word in the part "Who was St Patrick?" that means "got away".

escaped

4. Why can nobody be sure that every story about Patrick is true?

Many of the stories are legends that were written down long after he died.

5. What are Ireland's two official state emblems?

The shamrock and the harp

6. What is the capital of Northern Ireland?

Belfast

7. How did St Patrick's Day spread to other countries?

Irish people who moved to other countries took it with them.

8. Find one fact about Patrick that we can be fairly sure of, and say how we know.

For example: he was born in Britain, or he looked after sheep in Ireland. We know because Patrick wrote about his own life and two of his letters survive.