

Profiling a Potato Killer:
Personal Narrative

Objective: In this activity you will compose a letter as a review of the history and epidemiology of the Great Famine in Ireland.

Homework: Write a letter as an Irish Potato farmer during the Great Famine to a relative living in the United States. Select a year from the following: 1845, 1846, 1847, or 1848. Use the information from the web quest and websites in composing your response.



THE FAMINE IN IRELAND.—FUNERAL AT SKIBBEREEN.—FROM A SKETCH BY MR. H. SMITH, CORK.

[Illustrated London News, January](#)

[30, 1847](#)

Don't forget your address and date on your letter as well as name and closing. You can use articles from the following webpage to help you: <http://adminstaff.vassar.edu/sttaylor/FAMINE/ILN/Index.html>

Make sure to include: The disease symptoms, when they appeared, how important potatoes are to your diet, what you believe is causing the spread, political issues, religious tensions, and the consequences of total crop failure to your life and that of your family.

If you need help, read the following website. It will give you a short quiz on what it was like to be an Irish Immigrant to the United States: http://pbskids.org/stantonanthony/irish_girl_2c.html

Profiling a Killer – Letter Grading Rubric

| | Level 4 | Level 3 | Level 2 | Level 1 |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Description of the importance of the potato to Ireland and to themselves. | An excellent description of the potato's importance as a major source that is engaging as well as informative in a letter format. | A good outline of why the potato is important to the Irish people. | A basic understanding of the potato, but does not relate its significance to the Irish people. | No description of the importance of the potato to Ireland and to themselves. |
| Description of the disease and how they believe it is caused and being spread. | An excellent description of the potato rot and how a person of that time would imagine its spread that is engaging as well as informative in a letter format. | A good description of the rot and how it spreads. | A basic description of the disease, but does not relate spread to disorder. | No description of the disease and how they believe it is caused and being spread. |
| Description of the political, religious and social tensions occurring in that year. | An excellent description of a political, religious or social issue that is relevant to the year chosen. Relates these issues to contributing factors of the famine. | An good description of a political, religious or social issue that is relevant to the year chosen. | A basic description of civil unrest in Ireland. The student does not specify any particular event that does not relate to any particular year. | No description of the political, religious and social tensions occurring in that year. |
| Description of the consequences of potato crop ruin for their family, country and how they are planning to cope. | An excellent description of the significance of the potato failure will have on the individual's health, family, community and country. | An excellent description of the significance of the potato failure will have on the individual, family community and country. | A basic description that the consequence will be that people starve. No information about how they were considering the implications of this fact in the letter. | No description of the consequences of potato crop ruin for their family, country and how they are planning to cope. |
| Professionalism and quality of the letter. | The letter is convincing and heartfelt in tone and execution in a letter format. There are no spelling and/or grammatical errors. The assignment was completed on time. | The letter is informative, but not convincing. There are a few spelling and/or grammatical errors in some letter based format. The assignment was on time or one day late. | The assignment Response is loosely or poorly based in a letter format with little flow between thoughts. There are numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors. The assignment was one to two days late. | There is no formatting present in the letter and sentences are unrelated and filled with spelling and/or grammatical errors. The assignment is very late (3 days or more) |

Total Points = _____

Percentage score = _____%