



MINI-STAY BOOKLET

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MINI-STAY COURSES INTRODUCTION

Future Learning is an international language school based in Dublin, Ireland. Our head office is located in Malahide, Dublin with our city centre classrooms in a prime location in Dublin City centre. Our mini-stay courses are extremely popular and designed to focus on the aspects of **Irish life, culture and society** which are of most interest to our students. Through **'learning by doing'** these courses develop language skills and promote cultural awareness while enhancing teamwork, collaborative problem solving and the use of technology.



THE PROJECTS

Future Learning programmes are project-based, technology-enhanced and use active and authentic learning activities. These projects enable our students to explore the places which they are visiting and articulate the aspects that most interest them. It is very important to us that students feel that they have travelled and encountered a different culture and all our projects are about students engaging with the world around them and are not the sort of classes that they could just as easily do at home. The projects are inspired by what they observe in the classroom as well as out on their tours and where they are staying.



THE TECHNOLOGY

Technology enhanced, which means that the students work on a digital product in which they describe their experience and what they have learned. These digital products can include: presentation slides, blogs, interactive maps, and videos. The video part of the project is either a scripted scene, which the students prepare, practice and produce, or, where the students' level is sufficient, it can include on-street interviews with locals. Over the course of their mini-stay programme students research, record and edit a video on the aspect of the topic which they have chosen to investigate. Using digital tools includes looking things up, checking ideas, and finding visual material, but it is primarily about students creating something for themselves that they can publish and show to parents and teachers back home. Internet research is targeted, time-limited and is used by students to check and add to what they already know.



THE TEAM

Students on our mini-stay programmes work with experienced project leaders who are qualified in a variety of social and cultural areas relevant to the projects, including languages, literature, drama, history, geography and sociology. All of our project leaders are experienced in working with groups of young people and working through the learner's second language as all of them hold recognised certificates in English language teaching, in addition to their primary degree. Having a team with such a variety of backgrounds enriches our programmes and allows us to give students insights into all areas of Irish life, culture, history and landscape.



THE LOCATIONS & TIMES

Our mini-stay programmes take place in the mornings or afternoons. Start and finish times vary slightly depending on the project and the number of hours you choose per day. Groups have three classroom locations to choose from; Dublin City Centre, Malahide Village, Athlone. All locations are subject to availability.

DAY BY DAY OUTLINE

Day 1

- Getting to know you questions to help break the ice.
- Etiquette quiz and discussion about the right things to do in class, online, in the street, at home.
- Find out about differences between what they think they know about the topic and what the true story is.
- Present on this to the group today or first thing tomorrow morning.

Day 2

- Examine English as spoken in Ireland and explore the differences between it and standard British English.
- Look at model videos and discuss problems that would arise whilst they were making their videos and how to avoid or overcome them.
- Brainstorm ideas for the documentary before starting the script, picking a different topic for each team.
- Getting language feedback from the teachers on their script, making sure they don't use phrases without understanding them. Teachers talk to each team helping them to upgrade their language, telling them that they needed. (Language skills)
- One teacher keeps a file with the new words or interesting facts about the topic as they arise and uses this to recap with the students, reminding them of the meaning when necessary.

Day 3

- Plan the video on a storyboard deciding what they will say when, use templates shared with their team and copy onto their document and share with teacher (Project planning skills).
- Teachers explain how to approach people to ask for an interview with some extra work on appropriate register, making sure that they address people correctly in their video. (Intercultural communication skills)
- Selfie scavenger hunt to help discover their surroundings, discover locations for filming and work together. (Collaboration skills)
- Look over the pictures taken, choose one to show to the group and discuss what you notice about people, places, activities.

Day 4

- Shooting outdoors, interviews, re-enactments, presentations to camera, background footage.
- Most filming done at this time, but some groups record indoor scenes back in the school.
- To start editing teachers instruct each step moving on when all are ready. Groups then work away on it. (Technology skills including file management and video editing)

Day 5

- Each team prepares a presentation to explain the process of making it, saying what they did, what problems they solved, what they learned and what they would do differently.
- Students on intercultural programmes prepare and ask detailed questions about each other's schools and then write an email saying why they want / don't want to study there. Ask about; school rules, timetables, holidays, languages and how they learned them, subjects, homework, teachers, activities.
- All the videos are presented and shown. Prizes are given for best videos based on the interesting topics chosen, the natural usage of the language, editing and structure, performance and collaboration. Comments from teachers to explain.
- Individual awards are given for best participation, collaboration, intercultural communication, and use of English and use of technology.

Group Needs

In order to prepare to best meet your students' needs, the more information we have about them and their interests, the better.

- Where is your school located?
- What type of school do your students attend?
- What year are your students in?
- What is the level of English of your students? (*Where this varies it helps to have a list*)
- Do they have experience in using technology for school work?
- What do you hope they will gain from the experience of coming to Ireland?

Pre-Course Task for Students

To help prepare for their trip, ask your students to look up the place they are visiting, or where the visitors are coming from intercultural programmes, and find out five of these things:

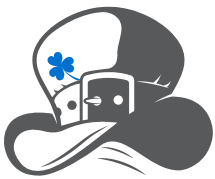
- How many people live there?
- What province is it in?
- What language(s) do they speak?
- How do you pronounce the placename?
- What is the major local monument?
- What sort of food do they like to eat there?
- What is on TV at the moment?
- What music is popular with them?
- What the weather is like at the moment?

MINI-STAY PROJECTS

Each teacher supervises up to five small groups when they are doing the project work, normally three students per group or sometimes four. In terms of technology students use applications such as [Google Docs](#) (shared documents - writing & feedback), [Google slides](#) (for presentations), [Word reference](#) (online dictionary), [WeVideo](#) (video editor). Teachers work together on the main instruction and presentation stages of the project.

We offer a range of projects suitable for different ages, levels and interests, and all types of students find our approach engaging and stimulating. We recommend that students undertaking these projects have a [minimum level of A2](#). Those at A1 level we will need to do a simplified version of the project, with less use of technology, as the time will be needed to develop the necessary language for each activity.

These programmes have proven very successful in all of our locations. In addition being equipped for motivating project work in the mornings, they are all within easy reach of the main attractions for their afternoon activities, which makes for a very positive overall experience from both an educational and a cultural perspective.



ANIMATED STORIES

The aim of this project is to introduce students to Irish people, their unique way of communicating and the landscape that they live in. The students express their understanding of the people and places they are visiting through an animated story based in this place, which has Irish characters, and which they create, record and edit in teams.

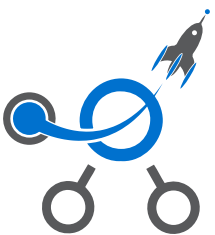
[Designed for A1 - B1, 10 - 13 years](#)



IRISH LEGENDS

The aim of this project is to introduce students to Irish culture through its most famous legends. The students learn about the famous characters of Irish folk tales, their attributes and their exploits. They express their understanding of it through a video interpretation which they plan, record and edit in teams.

[Designed for A2 - B1, 11 - 15 years](#)



FUTURE WORK

The aim of this project is to explore the skills and qualities which the students will rely on in the future when they enter the worlds of work and higher study. They will do this through completing a range of challenges in teams, including building a tower, promoting an invention, and teaching someone else something they know. They show their understanding by including in their final presentation an explanation of the skills and qualities the team members and what they each contributed to the project.

[Designed for B1 - B2, 15 - 17 years](#)



IRISH HISTORY & IDENTITY

The aim of this project is to explore the historical and the social factors that make up the Irish identity. Students pool and check what they know about Ireland and then choose a topic which they have more questions about. They explore this topic through internet research, interviews with local people and their own observations and express their understanding in the form of a TED-style talk which they make about the topic, illustrated with photos and videos that they took.

Designed for B2 - C1, 16 - 18 years.



COMPUTATIONAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING

The aim of this project is to introduce students to the problem solving process. Helping them to think creatively and critically to find solutions to problems that both humans and computers can understand. Students will achieve this through solving logic problems and working in teams on the creation of a real electronic product from circuit boards and sensors. Students show their understanding by describing their team's prototype product and how they used basic programming skills to solve the problems and get it working and what their role in the process was.

Designed for B2 - C1, 14 - 18 years



IRISH LIFE & CULTURE

The aim of this project is to explore daily life in Ireland, identify the similarities and differences to what life is like back home and how these things add up to make the culture of the country. The students use their experience of living with a host family and their activities in Ireland supported by tasks which they do during the lessons to help them observe and understand what they are seeing around them. They show their understanding by planning, recording and editing a documentary in teams on the aspects of cultural similarities and differences that most interest them.

Designed for A2 - B1, 12 - 16 years



ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

The aim of this project is to explore the living landscape of Ireland's towns, cities and countryside and the impact that people have on it. The country is famous for being green and clean and the students are given tasks to help them understand where this reputation comes from and whether it is deserved. Students show their understanding by researching, preparing and presenting an action plan for a local environmental issue that interests them in teams.

Designed for B1 - B2, 15 - 17 years

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROJECTS

Our

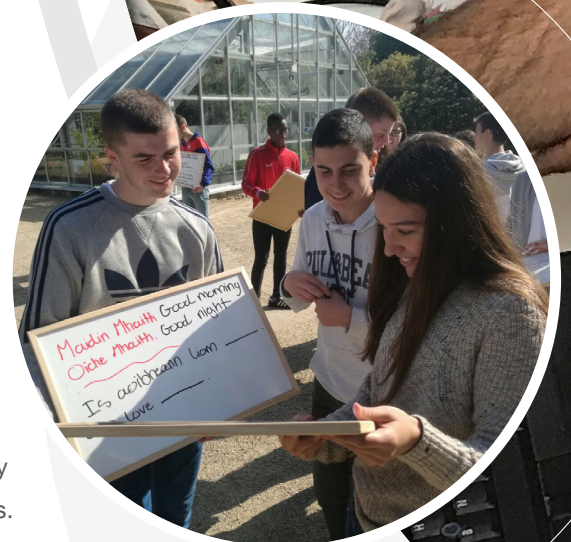
intercultural programmes bring together groups of second level students from Irish and European schools to collaborate on a cultural discovery project over three to five days. The students use what they learn to develop a multimedia product, usually a video, which they can bring back to their school and use in their end of year portfolio. A key part of these projects is that they work in mixed teams on the multimedia product, developing both their use of technology and their collaborative project solving skills. **We aim to have 2 visiting students and 1 local student in the project teams.**

Future Learning works with a range of different Irish schools to organise successful intercultural experiences with their transition year students. Some of the visitors have not had to use their English in real life conversations before while others are confident communicators. The local students learn about communicating in a second language and the need to patiently and carefully explain things. Students also learn about aspects of their cultural heritage which they may have taken for granted and discover how much they stand to learn about their own country from sharing what they know with students from another country.

Where visiting groups opt for an intercultural programme, integration with local students forms part of every day's lessons. The local students are briefed at the start of the course about their role as cultural ambassadors, welcoming the visiting students, answering their questions about Ireland especially as they relate to the project topic as well as helping them to express themselves in English.

Groups who work with an English speaker, and overcome the cultural and linguistic barriers to communication, get greater and more authentic exposure to the language and have a greater motivation to extend their own use of English. Students will get the most out of integration from B1 level. Although it can work well for motivated A2 students, it is not recommended for A1s.

At the end of the course the local students are presented with participation certificates by the visitors to thank them for their collaboration before they to say goodbye to each other. Many exchange contacts and keep in touch afterwards.







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