



Talking about *The Table*

Warm Up Discussion 10-15 minutes

Let's take a moment together in silence to think back on our visit to see *The Table*

Suggested Questions ⁱ

- What was going on in *The Table*? [Open the discussion]
- What did you see or hear that makes you say that? [Encourage the children to back up their comments with evidence]
- What more did we observe? [Invite various/differing opinions]

Tips to encourage conversation

- Nothing encourages participation more than being heard and respected. Keep eye contact with the pupil that is speaking. Nod and smile.
- Listen carefully to each pupil and paraphrase what each child says back to the class. Ensure that your paraphrase does not change the content of the child's comment, however there is room here to expand vocabulary through using alternative words.
- Keep track of the various strands of thought and draw links between them acknowledging differences of opinion and shifts in ideas.

ⁱ Yenawine, Philip. "Visual Thinking Strategies" Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press 2013



Thinking about *The Table*

During the play there is a disagreement. Liam, Peg and Seamus don't want to sing *The Landlord's Song* whereas Bridget, Siobhán and Mick think they should sing the song.

The Landlord's Song (You may wish to show [Example 1](#) on the whiteboard)

*We are the proud people of Dickensonstown.
Our landlord is a great man of renown
He gives us his Table to use every day
Oh the great table of Dickensonstown
To allow us have it shows us his great ways
He is Wonderful Generous and Greaaat.
Ohhhh The great, great, great, great, great
Landlord of Dickensonstown.*

Activity: Walking Debate This exercise encourages critical thinking, active listening, and confident expression of opinions.

Debate Motion: They should sing "The Landlord's Song"

Preparation:

- Clear a space in the room for the children to move freely
- Pin three signs on the wall leaving space between: Disagree / Agree / Not Sure

The activity:

1. The teacher reads out the motion for the debate
2. Pupils move to the sign that aligns with their opinion
3. Pupils are called on individually to explain/justify their opinion
4. If a pupil has a change of mind based on another's opinion they move toward that person

Follow-up Written Exercise: [See Activity Sheet 1](#)

After the Walking Debate take a moment for the pupils to summarise their responses [Activity Sheet 1](#).

You can learn more about walking debates with lots of tips here:

<https://www.jct.ie/perch/resources/english/walking-debate-strategy-sheet-2.pdf>



The Landlord's Song

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Ohhhh The great, great, great, great, great

Landlord of Dickensonstown.



Thinking about *The Table*

During the play *The Table* there is a disagreement. Liam, Peg and Seamus don't want to sing The Landlord's Song, Bridget, Siobhán and Mick think they should sing the song.

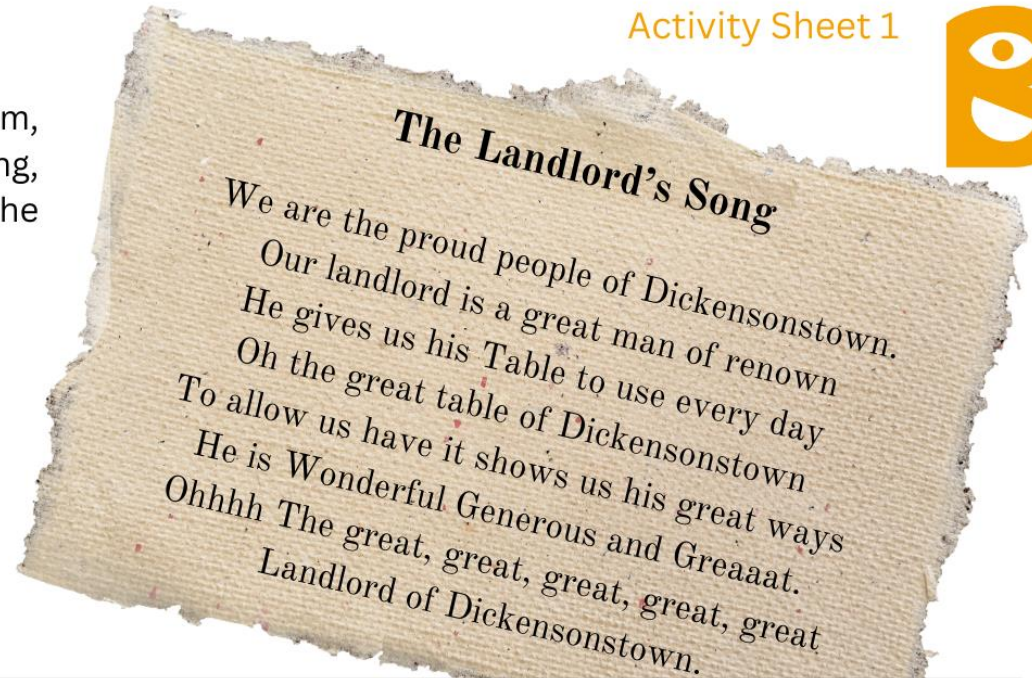
Which side would you take?

Circle your choice:

Liam, Peg and Seamus

Bridget, Siobhán, Mick

Your reasons:



1
2
3
4



PREPARATION (a day or two ahead): The Irish Civil War

Ahead of doing this activity the pupils should know a little about the Irish Civil War.

“The Irish Civil War” graphic novel by Maeve Clancy which you received when attending the show provides lots of detail. Alternatively you may wish to read with your class this short synopsis from Encyclopaedia Britannica’s Kids Britannica: <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Irish-Civil-War/487507>

Activity: Discussion in the classroom

- What is a symbol? Discuss, inviting the children to offer their suggestions and understanding of the term. [eg. Symbols are like a secret code with one thing representing another.]
- What symbols do we see every day? Invite suggestions from the class.
- Show **Example 2**. What do these objects symbolise? Discuss

Activity: One of your favourite objects as a symbol [See Activity Sheet 2](#)

Activity: Read Aloud & Discussion

To aid in sparking memories of the show read the promotional blurb for *The Table* (see below or you may want to open the website link on the whiteboard <https://branar.ie/en/shows/the-table>)

“The Table lies at the heart of the Ó Flatharta home.

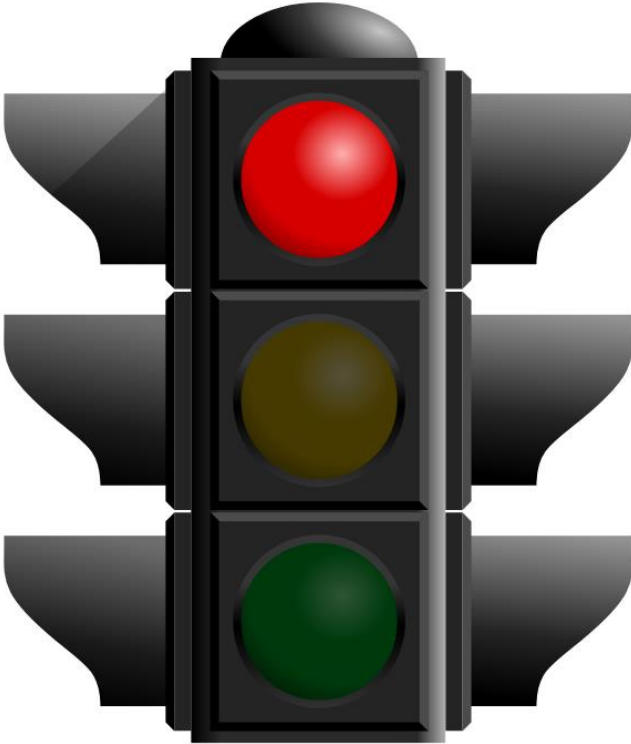
Crafted from the felled tree of their ancestors, down through the generations the family have rested cradles upon it, children played underneath it, adults rejoiced at it and goodbyes were said over it. A trick is played, a deal is made, a family is changed forever. The Table that brought them together now stands between them.

Written by Christian O’Reilly and directed by Marc Mac Lochlainn, The Table is performed by an ensemble cast. Branar sensitively explore the impact of the Civil War through this resonant story of how a family can be divided.”

Thinking about the show and reading this promotional blurb, can we identify any elements in the show which might symbolise something else. [See Activity Sheet 3](#)

Reading **Between the Lines**

Example 2



Reading **Between the Lines**



One of your favourite objects
Quick sketch here



**A: What do you like about this object,
or what is important,
about it to you?**

**B: What does this object
symbolise for you**

Tip: You might want to think
about how it makes you feel

*Think about ways you
might be able to use your
object as a symbol in your
drawings and stories*

Reading **Between the Lines**



Draw or name three things (objects, characters, events etc.) you remember from the show *The Table* that you think might be symbols for something else. On the lines below write what they might symbolise. You may also wish to give your reason for thinking this.

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Drawing on History

The graphic novel “The Irish Civil War” was commissioned by Branar to accompany their show *The Table*. When she was creating it artist Maeve Clancy looked at lots of photographs from the time of the Civil War. This was her visual research.

“The Irish Civil War” is a non-fiction graphic novel. It tells the real life story of the Irish Civil War.

Activity: Look at this photo from the time of the Civil War **and discuss:**

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/yournlireland/6079163342/in/photostream/lightbox/> ⁱⁱ

Suggested questions (similar to Talking about *The Table* warm up discussion)

- What’s going on in this photograph? [Open the discussion]
- What do you see that makes you say that? [Encourage the children to back up their comments with evidence]
- What more can we find? [Invite differing opinions]

Tips to encourage conversation

- Alternate looking between the picture and the pupil that is speaking. Point to the areas in the picture the pupil is speaking about. Nod and smile.
- Listen carefully to each pupil and paraphrase what each child says back to the class. Ensure that your paraphrase does not change the content of the child’s comment, however there is room here to expand vocabulary through using alternative words.
- Keep track of the various strands of thought and draw links between them acknowledging differences of opinion and shifts in ideas.

Follow-up Drawing Activity: See Activity Sheet 4

Using the activity sheet provided draw what you imagine happened 5 minutes before the photo was taken, and what happens next.

Follow-up Freeze Frames Activity:

- Divide the class into groups of five children.
- Each group recreates the photo as a live freeze frame, deciding what part of the photo they want to focus on given their number.
- Each group decides together what happened 5 minutes earlier and recreates that as a live freeze frame
- Each group decides together what happened 5 minutes later and recreates that as a live freeze frame

Continues overleaf →

- Each group then presents their three freeze frames in chronological order to the rest of the class. The teacher directs the audience to close their eyes while each frame is being set up and open them when it is ready.
- Invite the rest of the pupils, the audience, to describe the story they've seen in words

Note: The exercises above focus on the historical photograph as a creative jumping-off point, and can be linked to both the Visual art and Drama Curricula. There are many ways to work with photographs in the classroom. Relating to the History Curriculum the Professional Development Service for Teachers has developed this "Using the Photograph as Evidence" resource which may be of interest for further extension possibilities:

https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/using_photos_as_evidence.pdf

ⁱⁱ Children Play Red Cross during the Civil War, NLI Ref INDH 211

Drawing on history



1.



2. Imagine what was happening 5 minutes earlier?

Draw it here



Your drawing of this image (or part of it) here



3. Imagine what happens next?

Draw it here



Online Resources



Civil War / Life in Ireland in the 1920s:

Overview of the Civil War

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/theirishrevolution/collections/atlas-resources-for-schools/unit-7-the-treaty-and-the-civil-war/>

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Irish-Civil-War/487507>

Film from the time of the Civil War

<https://www.britishpathe.com/workspaces/page/ireland-revolutionary-period-1916-1924>

Photographs from the time of the Civil War

<https://catalogue.nli.ie/> Under 'Discover by Format' click on 'Photo' > in the right hand column under 'Online Availability' click on 'Digitised' > in the right hand column under Published/Created enter date range 1921-1923

School houses in the early 1900s

<https://endaoflaherty.com/2016/08/21/the-school-house-in-ireland-at-the-turn-of-the-20th-century-heritage-week-2016-series/>

Other Resources

Artist Maeve Clancy talks about her process creating the graphic novel "The Irish Civil War"

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/radio1/arena/programmes/2023/0210/1355999-arena-friday-10-february-2023/> scroll to 04:21 (a 14 minute segment from 04:21-18:27)

Stiúthóir an Dráma *The Table / An Bord*, Marc Mac Lochlainn & an tAisteoir Eoin Ó Dubhghail ag caint le Marcus Mac Conghail faoin dráma

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/rnag/clips/22211515/>

Using Photographs as Evidence

https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/using_photos_as_evidence.pdf

Walking Debates

<https://www.jct.ie/perch/resources/english/walking-debate-strategy-sheet-2.pdf>

Visual Thinking Strategies

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/vts/about/>

Extending engagement with a theatre experience in the classroom

<https://www.imaginate.org.uk/f/5878227c4fbd1>

Branar Website www.branar.ie

Should you wish to share your responses to *The Table* or any outcomes of work in the classroom in relation to *The Table* we'd love to hear from you. You can get in touch with Branar at info@branar.ie