

Young Annalists is a workbook-style introduction to the Irish Annals through history, heritage, storytelling and art. The session is designed for upper-primary.

The aim is simple: help students understand what the Irish Annals were, get excited about how history is recorded and remembered, and give them the opportunity to become part of that tradition themselves.

This is not intended to be a formal history lesson or a test of what students already know. It is an opportunity to explore an important and often overlooked part of Ireland's cultural heritage, and to have a go at being an annalist.

Start with the Annals

Begin by reading the first section of the workbook together: What Were the Irish Annals? and The Irish Annals Project.

This gives students some background on the Annals, what they recorded and why they are interesting, before introducing the idea of the Annals as a living tradition that can continue into the future.

Become an Annalist

Read aloud Colum's story of his Uncle Dan. Then talk about the story together. What do you remember? Which details stood out? What would you include if you were recording the story? Would everyone in the class tell it in exactly the same way?

Activity

As a class, choose a shared story for the first activity. This could be a story from school, something that happened locally, a recent event or something you introduce. The important thing is to let the students discover how differently the same story can be remembered and recorded. Write your own Annals.

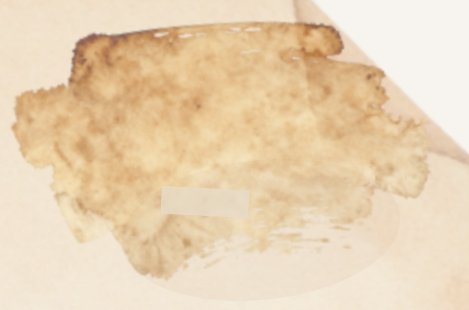
Students can then work through the three writing activities:

Record the story chosen by the class.

Write an annal about an event of their own choosing.

Take the workbook home and ask a family member, friend or someone from their locality for a story worth recording.

Encourage students to ask questions and listen carefully. The aim is not to produce a "perfect" piece of writing, but to think about what is worth remembering and how a story changes when someone records it.



Try your hand at calligraphy

The calligraphy section is an opportunity to have a go at something that was once an important part of Ireland's manuscript tradition.

Don't worry about getting the letters perfect.

Let students experiment with the shapes, practise the alphabet, and then use the space provided to write their own (this could be one from the first exercise).

They can also illustrate their entry. This is an art activity as much as a handwriting exercise — the aim is to introduce students to the physical and visual world of manuscripts and give them the chance to make something of their own.

*made with
love*

What's next?

This workbook is just the beginning. With support from Creative Ireland (Sligo), we have been able to take the first steps towards creating resources that bring the Irish Annals into classrooms and invite a new generation to become part of this living tradition. We hope to develop the project further and, subject to funding, facilitate Annals workshops in schools around the country.

If you would be interested in having your school take part in future workshops, or would like to hear more about the project, please get in touch:

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Thank you for taking the time to explore the Irish Annals with your class. We hope you and your students enjoy this opportunity to discover, question, create and add your own voices to Ireland's story!

*...no longer only the purview of rabbits,
restrial, crypto-terrestrial or non
of ultimate origin*