



Me, Mollser

LEARNING PACK



Principal Partner
BANK OF AMERICA

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CULTURE COMPANY

14
Henrietta
Street

abbeytheatre.ie
#MeMollser

PREFACE

Welcome to The Digital Learning Pack, a blended learning resource we have created to accompany the filmed version of *Me, Mollser* by Ali Joy White with additional material by Sarah FitzGibbon.

Me, Mollser (and *Mise, Mollser*, the translation by Caitríona Ní Mhurchú) is the first of our Priming the Canon series, a growing collection of specially commissioned monologues that introduce the classics of Irish theatre to younger audiences. The Priming the Canon Programme was co-created by The Abbey Theatre and educational drama specialist Sarah FitzGibbon, who directed the first play and has designed the learning resources for all the shows.

Me, Mollser introduces pupils to the world of Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and the Stars* through the compelling story of its most vulnerable character. We learn about tenement life, the position of children, the tumultuous historical context (the Lock-Out and Easter 1916) as well as the vivid language O'Casey used to tell his story.

Originally designed to be performed in-school or at local arts venues, *Me, Mollser* has been touring since 2012 and has been seen by thousands of pupils all over the country and abroad. It accompanied the Abbey's 2016 production of *The Plough and the Stars* to Boston and Philadelphia and was performed in local libraries.

We're delighted our Priming the Canon project can continue to reach people. We believe this new version will make it accessible and available to even more children and has forced us to find creative ways of making the story even more engaging.

In the introduction director Sarah FitzGibbon outlines in more detail how our new approach works.

Phil Kingston

Community and Education Manager, Abbey Theatre

INTRODUCTION

Me, Mollser started its life in development 10 years ago and has been engaging children, young people and adult audiences since then. This longevity is always a surprise and delight as theatre is ephemeral and it can be hard to pin down what will and what won't work. The move to the digital space was not one that was taken easily as the actor to child encounter, within their familiar school space, touches on that ephemeral magic and stays in the mind, long into adulthood. I have lived with *Mollser* and for a long time her character is optimistic, charming and determined. She always will out and this way we get to bring her to more classrooms and educational contexts than before. *Mollser* wants and needs to be heard as all children should be.

Usually facilitated by The Lamplighter, the pre-drama contextualisation of the piece is now done by Nadia, a young Dublin mother with a love of history borne of a personal connection to the Tenements. We were also lucky and grateful to be gifted to film in one of my favourite buildings in Dublin, 14 Henrietta St., The Tenement Museum. *Me, Mollser* being recorded in that particular building was very special for the cast, crew and myself and I hope that comes across.

This time we have given you more tangible resources to assist you and your pupils to engage with the programme. We hope that using these and our adapted lesson plans will maximise our digital offering of *Me, Mollser*. The lesson plans are based on ones that have been done within educational contexts and adapted for working in pods. They can be further adapted for virtual contexts too. They have been designed by myself and Phil Kingston, with a combination of over 50 years experience at delivering educational and educational drama programmes to young people. We would really value your feedback on them. We would also love feedback and critiques from your pupils as this helps us adapt and develop new work that interests them.

We are grateful for the continuing support of the Arts Council of Ireland and Bank of America who continue to champion our work for children and the disenfranchised. I am also grateful to the Abbey team for working so hard to keep us safe while we created the digital version of *Me, Mollser*. I am particularly grateful to Phil Kingston as co-designer of the Priming the Canon programme, advocate for participation within our national theatre and champion for theatre for young audiences nationally.

I hope you enjoy *Me, Mollser* 2021.

Sarah FitzGibbon

Director of *Me, Mollser*

Lead Writer of the Learning Pack

Co-Designer of Priming the Canon

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BEFOREHAND



TELLING SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY

A creative writing and drama lesson by Phil Kingston. Please note that this session can be done as a pre-drama lesson or post drama lesson. It is not required to engage with the piece though it will enhance your class's engagement.

Session 01

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- photos of the tenements and tenement children from Appendix Two
 - pens
 - paper
-
-

STEP 1 Introduce the idea of monologues, explaining this is what they are going to be seeing in the film.

"Monologues are long speeches by one person. They are used in the theatre to let us into a character's thoughts which help us understand them and the story better. Monologues are different from simply telling stories because you also have to act the character who is doing the telling.

In this lesson we are going to look at how we can use monologues to explore what it's like to be someone else, especially someone from Ireland's past."

STEP 2 Look at the photographs that are in Appendix Two. Look at the children.

Ask the class what sort of jobs do you think these children's parents had and make a note of their answers.

STEP 3 You can add the pupils' answers to this list of occupations of people living in Dublin tenements from the 1911 census:

- » Charwoman
- » Domestic servant
- » Labourer
- » Porter
- » Messenger

- » Painter (of houses not paintings)
- » Carpenter
- » Postman
- » Tailor
- » Shop worker
- » Factory worker
- » Stevedore (who works in the docks)
- » Tailor

In groups (or breakout rooms) choose one of these jobs and talk about what this person's life was like.

- » *What time would they get up?*
- » *Would they travel to their work?*
- » *How would they get there?*
- » *How long would they work for?*
- » *How much would they see their family?*
- » *How much would they see other people?*

[N.B. we're not going for strict historical accuracy here, that can come in later projects. We're looking for a more general sense of empathy and an understanding that workers would have started early and finished late. Also tease out the fact tenement life meant very little privacy, overcrowding meant a community spirit was more a necessity than an aspiration and that basic comforts in terms of warmth, food and cleanliness were a luxury].

STEP 4 Ask the groups to

- » Show some of the actions associated with their jobs. *[encourage a full bodied involvement in these actions]*
- » Show us how they would say hello to other people they met while working *[a chance to explore class hierarchies, a work mate is talked to very differently from an employer]*
- » Show us how they would use the tools of their job or any objects they would use daily *[look for a sense of detail and accuracy]*

Ask the pupils to pick one of those tools and objects and tell the rest of the group what it is.

Ask some of them to say why you chose it.

Ask them to try saying it 'in character', as if they actually are the person who uses it everyday.

STEP 5 Ask them how they would you feel if:

- » *You lost it?*
- » *Someone stole it from you?*
- » *You broke it accidentally? Or through carelessness?*
- » *Someone bought you a new one?*

Tell them to make sure they feel those emotions in the whole of their bodies when they're telling us.

Ask them to write down the name of their character, what their work is and some for the feelings they had about their tools.

TELLING SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY

A creative writing and drama lesson by Phil Kingston. Please note that this session can be done as a pre-drama lesson or post drama lesson. It is not required to engage with the piece though it will enhance your class's engagement.

Session 02

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- an old coin to represent the one used by Mollser in the film
 - the 'character notes' they pupils made in the last session
 - pens
 - paper
-

STEP 1 Introduce the idea of props explaining that a prop is "a portable object other than furniture or costumes used on the set of a play or film".

Ask them what props they might have seen in something they've recently watched.

Ask them if film and theatre are different in how they use props.

Ask if they think you need to have all the objects in someone's life on stage if you are telling their story.

Ask them what they would choose as a prop if they were telling the story of their life?

[You can include the following section if you think it will help]

Explain that when an actor uses an object in a play they have to make it mean as much to them as it does to their character. Actors often use props to help them imagine parts of the life of their character: Here's a quote from the British actor Adrian Lester about how he used a prop (a blanket) in a play to remind him of his relationship with his wife:

'I stare at the blanket and imagine different scenarios linked to the life Ani and I have lived. I briefly imagine the moment she bought it. The times I've wrapped it around her shoulders when she has been cold. I've always been there, keeping her warm, making sure she's ok. It becomes an emblem of my love for her.

Only in my mind, though. Just in my mind. I don't tell the director or the actress playing my wife. This is for me. It's the invented memory that I place into my performance that sustains me on a long run. So many times during the shows that I have done, my mind has wandered off onto other things and been caught and pulled back into the life of the play by the imagined life of an inanimate object.'

STEP 2 Ask the pupils what props they might need if they were going to make a play about their characters from the last session.

STEP 3 Explain we are going to introduce a new object into their character's life

For our next exercise have a look at an old coin. Explain the actress Hilary Bowen-Walsh uses a coin like this in the film.

Ask them to imagine their character has that coin.

How did they get it and where do they keep it?

[Extra Material - To get a sense of how much this is worth you could ask the class to work out what you could get for a penny by looking at this chart of past prices in Appendix One

To get a sense of how much this was the annual income of a teacher was £70 2 shillings 3 pence]

STEP 4 Explain that they are going to use the coin to help them write a monologue like the one in the film they are going to see. Tell them that the play *Me, Mollser* is about 30 minutes long and that the playwright Ali Joy White had to spend a lot of time imagining what it was like to be a 15 year old girl living in the tenements.

Explain that acting is like writing because they can both be ways to imagine being someone else. In this lesson we are using acting to help us do the writing.

Ask them to get a pen and paper ready and go back to being the character you were before. Get back into the feel of their body and now think about the coin they just looked at.

You can adapt the following prompts to guide the exercise:

Imagine what time of day it is, where you are, if there are other people around, if you are hungry, what the temperature is like, what your clothes feel like.

Now imagine something connected with the coin has made you angry. For three minutes write as if you are that character without stopping.

Ask them to look at their writing and choose a couple of sentences where they discovered something that hadn't thought about before or something that surprised them. Or just choose the best two sentences.

Ask them to read a few out. Remind them to be angry when they're reading.

Now ask them to write again for three minutes but this time imagine something has made them frightened. It can be connected to the coin or not.

As above, review the work and choose one or two sentences.

Repeat the above for something that makes their character feel worried

As above review the work and choose one or two sentences.

And finally something that makes them feel hopeful.

As above review the work and choose one or two sentences.

Prompt them to keep writing even if it's hard. You can say sometimes it helps to not think too much, just write.

STEP 5 Ask them to look back over the four pieces of writing and collect the sentences they picked out from each one.

Ask them to put these sentences together and read through this new piece of writing.

You can tell them this is their monologue. It moves through a journey that starts with the coin. First the character is angry, then frightened, then worried and finally hopeful. Usually our emotions don't move so quickly but they do in drama. Ask them to look at their monologue as if it is one story.

Maybe invite some of the class to read them there and then. Or have some volunteers learn their pieces and perform them the following week.

ON THE DAY YOU WATCH



INDIVIDUAL PRE-SCREENING SHEET

We would really like to know what you think of our work so we would like you to write a short review and these worksheets might help.

Please write on this sheet and keep it so you can use it to write a review of *Me, Mollser* after you have watched it.

My Review

Look at the old photographs.

What is happening in these photographs?

What does it make you feel?

What do you think might happen in the film?

Look at the trailer video: What is in it?

Look at the trailer video: What did it make you feel?

JUST BEFORE YOU WATCH *Me, Mollser*

What are you expecting to see?

What are you expecting to hear?

What are you expecting to feel?

INDIVIDUAL POST-SCREENING REVIEW SHEET 1

We would really like to thank you for watching *Me, Mollser*.

Now what do you think of our work? We would like you to write a short review and these sheets will help but you will also need a fresh piece of paper to write out your final review.

Please look at your Pre-show sheet and look at what you were expecting to see.

What had you been expecting?

Was it what you expected?

Was there anything that you were not expecting?

What did you see during it?

What did you hear during it?

What did you feel during it?

Was there any moment that you can remember clearly?

Would you watch it again?

INDIVIDUAL POST SCREENING REVIEW SHEET 2

Think of the lines that you see on movie trailers given by critics, so it is a good idea to give your overall opinion in one sentence e.g. Box Office Gold! A Must-See! Or Five Rotten Tomatoes.

Start with your expectations, say what you saw, heard and felt. Then finish with whether you would watch it again and your one liner.

Review

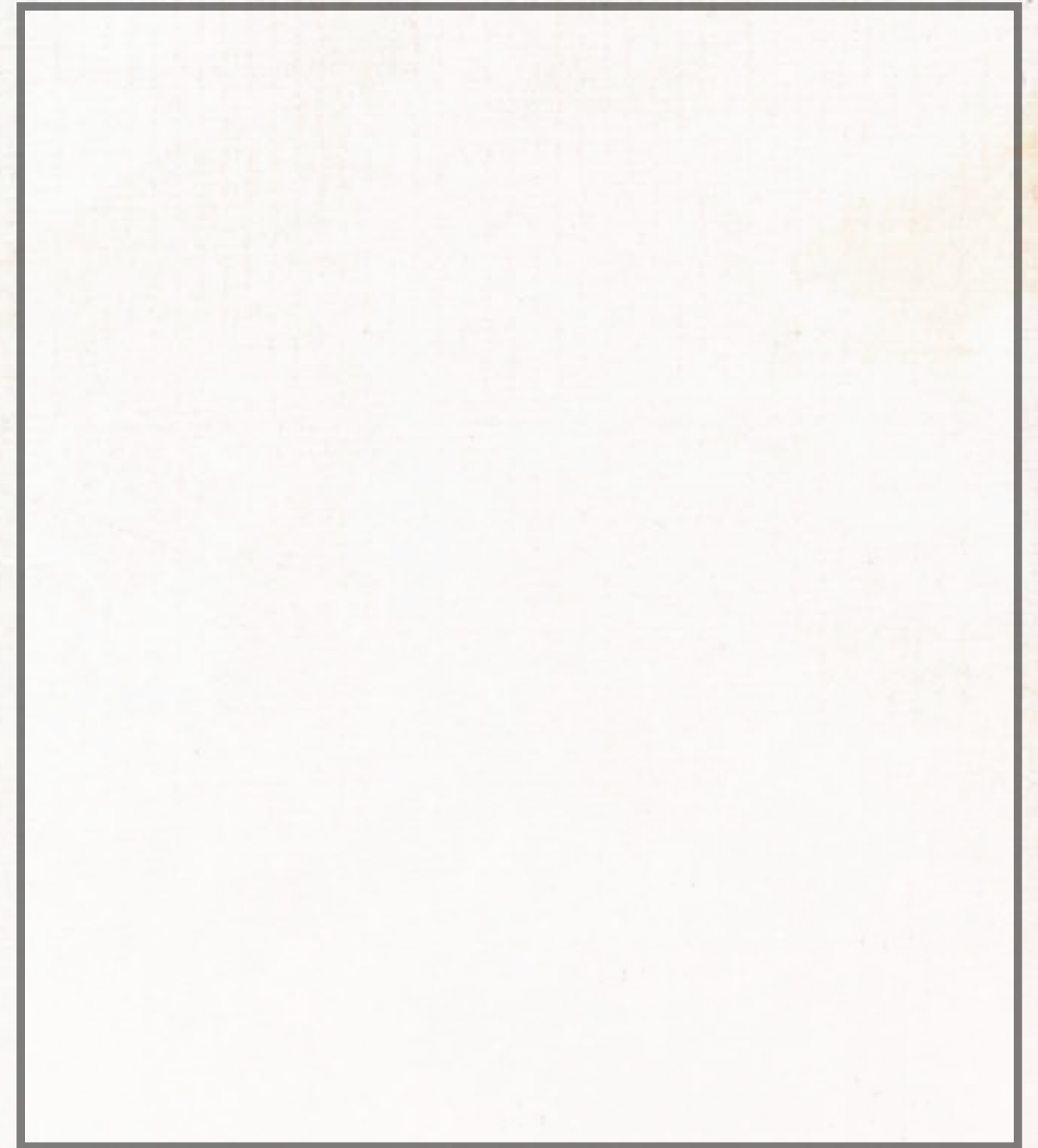


Send this sheet to us at the Abbey Theatre.

INDIVIDUAL POST SCREENING REVIEW SHEET 3

Think back to the film of Nadia and Mollser. What images come up? An image can mean a picture but it can also have a feeling as well. We tend to remember stories in images because the picture carries a feeling for us too.

Draw something you saw or felt while watching the story. Don't worry about words or descriptions, just draw and colour how you want to.



Send this sheet to us at the Abbey Theatre.

AFTERWARDS



Photography: ROS KAVANAGH

YOU ARE WALKING ON HISTORY

*A creative writing and personal history lesson by Sarah FitzGibbon.
A scheme linking SPHE, history and English.*

Session 01

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- Access to Nadia's Monologue also known as *The Charwoman's Granddaughter* by Sarah FitzGibbon. (not compulsory but available on the Abbey's website on the Me, Mollser page)
 - A current map of where your school is situated or Google Maps street view of the same
 - A current map or Google Map of the City Centre of Dublin
-

STEP 1 Watch *The Charwoman's Granddaughter* again. Ask the class to record the street names that she mentions.

Nadia talks about where she walks every day. She walks through the city from Markievicz Flats on the south quays, over the river, up O'Connell St., The Rotunda, Dominic St., Bolton St., Henrietta St., and finally to King's Inns where she works. After work she walks back, collects Lexi from City Quay National School and they go to the Grand Canal Basin or The Docks for a walk.

STEP 2 Put up Dublin City Centre on Google Maps and as a class map her journey. Note all the places of historical significance she passes.

STEP 3 Ask the class to think of their own commute every day and what they might pass or walk on. Pull up a current map of your school location and pull it out. Ask each pupil if they can look at the map and figure out their own route to school every day.

STEP 4 Look for any sites of interest in terms of local history. See if the class can identify the oldest structure in the area. If you are in a newly built up area look for signs of what was there before and like Henrietta St. Think about who decided to build there, why and where did the people come from who live there now. Discuss what is around them, the weather they experience and their most and least favourite part of their commute.

STEP 5 Let the pupils draw their commute on a print off of the map.

STEP 6 Ask them to write up 8 short sentences describing their commute on a particular day pointing out their least or most favourite bits and why, the weather and the smells.

Keep these for the next session.

YOU ARE WALKING ON HISTORY

*A creative writing and personal history lesson by Sarah FitzGibbon.
A scheme linking SPHE, history and English.*

Session 02

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- The 8 sentences from the previous session
- Access to a white board
- Paper

STEP 1 Ask the class if they remember the song Mollser sings at the end of *Me Mollser*. The original was called 'Maggie' but in Mollser's world Jack Clitheroe sang it to Nora and changed the words from Maggie to Nora.

Like this:

The violets were scenting the woods, Nora
Displaying their charm to the bee
When I first said I loved only you, Nora
And you said you loved only me
The chestnut blooms gleamed through the glade, Nora
A robin sang loud from a tree
When I first said I loved only you, Nora
And you said you loved only me

The writer has taken two lines (10 and 8 syllables) and repeated them at the end of every verse. The top two lines are different and are 10 to 8 syllables so that creates the pattern.

Tell them that they can change the repeated lines slightly to highlight something on their commute; a point where they want to return to bed or forgot some part of their homework; or they may remember that there was something they were excited about going to school that day, but they cannot change the 10/8 syllable pattern.

They might use some of their sentences from the previous session to create a poem about their area. The poem does not have to be chronological with the journey.

STEP 2 To loosen the pupils up for their writing task, ask them in their pods to appoint a scribe. Give each pod a descriptive challenge of collecting all the adjectives, reactions, adverbs and descriptive sounds around the following phrases

- » *Emptying a bucket of rainwater*
- » *A marble falling from a great height*
- » *Dropping an egg on the floor*
- » *A bee getting stuck at a window*
- » *Opening curtains on a bright day*
- » *A tomato in a roller coaster*

Share some of the words on the whiteboard. Tell the class if they think any of those collected might fit in with their commute poem they can use them.

STEP 3 Ask the pupils to get their 8 lines and a fresh sheet of paper and just note of what lines could rhyme with each other, or how they could be adapted to rhyme with each other; or how you might use some of the words from the last exercise to create new lines to capture the sensations experienced on the commute. They will not use all the lines and words in their poem but they will be selecting from them.

STEP 4 Explain that this will take a few attempts but this is part of the process of writing a poem. Remind the pupils that it is 4 lines per verse, with 10 syllables in line 1, 8 in line two and the last two are 10 syllables and 8 syllables and are repeated at the end of every verse. Ask them to try and create three verses.

STEP 5 In their pods, ask the pupils to share their first drafts and help each other if they need support through collaboration.

STEP 6 Ask each person to consider what sound effects they might like to accompany their work e.g. the sound of the rain, the wind or the hum of an engine. Allow those who wish to share their work.

STEP 7 Ask the pupils to share the poems about their commutes with an older relative like a grandparent. Ask the pupils to collect what these people said about their commute to school and their experiences when they were younger. This could be material for another poem.

LIFE IN THE TENEMENTS

*A Drama Scheme to unlock life at the time of 1916 by Sarah FitzGibbon.
Drama scheme linking Drama with History (the context for the 1913 Lockout and the 1916 Easter Rising), SPHE (The Rights of the Child) and English.*

Session 01

(Please note that this session is to build the context for the Rising)

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- *Cleared desks or a hall*
 - *The Royal Society of Antiquarians Ireland images from Appendix Two.*
 - *Any resource history material you wish them to use from the History Curriculum or [The National Archives of Ireland: Poverty and Health](#)*
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-

STEP 1 Ask the class what do human beings need to survive and thrive. Collect their answers on your whiteboard and store the image as you will need it later. It will be referred to later as the Survival Sheet.

STEP 2 Explain to the class that you wish to explore life in a Dublin Tenement about 105 years ago. Just gather their initial thoughts about what Dublin would have been like 100 years ago?

STEP 3 You can show them the images we provided to illustrate the living conditions, taking time to fully appreciate the interior images for clues to how people ate, slept, toileted, cooked and washed. The National Archive site has a dedicated section on poverty in Dublin this era and it illustrates the development of the tenements and the density of population.

STEP 4 Inform the class that in their pods for the next few sessions, they will create a family from the tenements around 1915. Give each group a sheet of paper to record the following:

» *Their names*

On the other side of the page ask them to record the name of their created family and the roles that the members of the group will play in that family.

In each family there has to be:

- » Grandparent – a person who still takes an active part in family life
- » One 16 year old
- » Father and/or Mother

Other characters can be

- » Any remaining children should be over the age of 8
- » If you feel the group can manage it, you can use a prop baby.

Each member of the group must give their character a name. Allow each group to record their family's information.

As a family group they must decide who is responsible for the following:

- » Who fetches the coal?
- » Who fetches the water?
- » Who works? At what?
- » Who washes the clothes?
- » Who cooks the dinner?
- » Who minds the money?
- » Who tidies the tenement?
- » Who empties the chamber pot?

Keep a record of all of these for use in the next session.

STEP 5 Ask each Family (pod) to create a family photograph or frozen image of them on the steps of their tenement like those they looked at earlier. Who is sitting? Who is standing?

LIFE IN THE TENEMENTS

*A Drama Scheme to unlock life at the time of 1916 by Sarah FitzGibbon.
Drama scheme linking Drama with History (the context for the 1913 Lockout and the 1916 Easter Rising), SPHE (The Rights of the Child) and English.*

Session 02

(Please note that this session is to build the context for the Rising but is one in which we recreate the tenements. Within our current context adapt this session to your needs, with desk bound activities or moving the session to the yard).

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- *The family sheets from the previous session.*
 - *Lots of masking tape*
 - *Metre stick*
 - *A camera*
 - *The images from Appendix Two*
-

STEP 1 Inform the class that you are about to measure out the tenements. Show them the interior shots again. Ask them to list the common features in the rooms i.e. fireplaces; windows and a bed. Ask them about how a family might decorate their place. Give them their family information sheets to refer back to.

STEP 2 As every classroom is different and with the current restriction, you can gauge yourself how much space you allocate to each family, around their desks should be adequate. Post restrictions, I would suggest that you create a grid with 6 boxes about 1 metre by 2 metres.
The main object of the exercise is to allow the class experience a simulation of the lack of personal space, privacy, poor hygiene but also the sense of community that came with life in a tenement.
Each family can have one space each and the final space is a communal space like the entrance hall. Mark out the door and the front steps.

STEP 3 Allow the families to decide where elements of the room are, such as the fireplace and the door. Decide whether they have a curtain for privacy and where it might be. Where does everybody sleep?
I found it useful for them to mark these with more tape.
Once you feel that there is consensus within each family, move to the next step.

STEP 4 Tell the families that using the information they have about their family's life and their tenement room, you wish to create a 'stop animation' or sequence of picture of tenement life over a 24 hour period. In preparation for this, you would like each family within the tenement to create a series of frozen images of the tenement at different points of the day.

Remind them that some people welcome others into their space while others did not but at the moment there will be no visitors.

Also, say that if a character leaves the tenement during the day for work or occupation, the student playing that character should just sit to the side and wait for their time to re-enter. It is important to check in with these students about where they are working and what they are doing.

Tell them that you will go through these images once in order to practice before you will use your camera.

Call out the following times of day and allow them to create their images:

- » Dawn about 6 o'clock
- » 10 o'clock
- » 1 o'clock

Put in a break here for further conversation and exploration. If you feel the group can carry on straight through; but I found that the action got too 'high' and focus started to dissipate.

- » 4 o'clock
- » 6 o'clock – the angelus
- » 8 o'clock
- » Midnight

STEP 5 Giving the group a count of ten to get from one image to the next and start the day at 6am and work your way through the images for the last time, photographing each one as you go. I find it helps to remind them about their facial expressions before you start.

STEP 6 Once done ask the pupils what they discovered about life in the tenement from the exercise. Ask them if there are things that we miss by living the way we do now from the way we did then?

STEP 7 Ask them to fill in any new facts about the families that they discovered during this session, e.g. who was working and at what? Where was the family's money coming from?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Create a slideshow of the images in sequence to see the day in the life of the tenement.

LIFE IN THE TENEMENTS

A Drama Scheme to unlock life at the time of 1916 by Sarah FitzGibbon.

Drama scheme linking Drama with History (the context for the 1913 Lockout and the 1916 Easter Rising), SPHE (The Rights of the Child) and English.

Session 03

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- Print off the role cards (provided at the end of this session)
- A sheet of paper

STEP 1 Draw a line down the length of the page or on your whiteboard and tell the class that this is your timeline. It will go from 1900 – 1916. Ask them to think of any events they know fit in or happened in that period of time. While they may discuss The Rising for the drama purposes, it hasn't happened yet. You may need to help them identify the variety of political events and forces during this time-frame in Ireland. It would be great to include the Gaelic League; the Abbey Theatre 1904: Home Rule; the Ulster Covenant in 1912; the Dublin Lock Out 1913 and the First World War 1914-1918.

Ask the class to think about and talk about what effect these movements and events would have had on our families before Easter 1916

STEP 2 Tell them that each family is going to have a meal together. Allow each group to set up their table and figure out what each member of the family will do to prepare for the meal. In each family there is a 16 year old. Ask them to come over to you as you wish to give them a piece of information while the others set up.

They are to tell the others their news over the meal. Other members of the family try and think of other bits of information they would like the family to talk about.

Give each Grandparent a role card. Remind them that they are only to bring the information up over the meal.

Give each 16 year old their role card and remind them that they are only to bring it up over the meal.

STEP 3 Ask each group to set up for their meal and tell them that on your signal the 16 year olds will enter and the scene can begin. Allow each family to play through the scene for as long as is comfortable. Freeze the action.

STEP 4 Debrief each group about what was happening and how people are feeling. Ask each group to spend some time discussing what happened next. Allow the 16 year old say what happened in their story and invite the families to add any new information to their family's story.

STEP 5 Return to your timeline and review the events that were happening in the lead up to the Easter Rising. Ask the class that in light of their family meal, can they give you words that might describe the atmosphere in the families at this time; words that might describe the atmosphere in the Tenements of this time; words to describe the atmosphere in Dublin at this time and words to describe the atmosphere in Ireland at this time.

ROLE CARDS FOR SESSION 3

16 YEAR OLD FAMILY 1:

You are going to join the Irish Citizen Army under James Connolly. You will be called to fight and give your life if the revolution comes. When Mollser talks about Jack Clitheroe, Nora's husband she talks of him being 'out with The Citizen's Army at night.'

NOTE: The Irish Citizen Army or ICA, were trained trade union volunteers set up to defend workers during the Lockout in 1913 by James Larkin and Jack White. The Irish Citizen Army was reorganized in 1914. In October 1914, the Citizen Army was placed under the command of James Connolly. He felt that the ICA was a revolutionary organisation dedicated to the creation of an Irish socialist republic. He had served in the British army in his youth and knew something about military tactics and discipline. This organization was open to both men and women and trained them both in the use of weapons. The army's headquarters was the ITGWU union building Liberty Hall and they were almost entirely Dublin based. Other prominent members included Constance Markievicz, Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. In 1916, they took part in the Easter Rising— the armed insurrection aimed at ending British rule in Ireland.

16 YEAR OLD FAMILY 2:

Like Mollser, you have not been feeling well and yesterday you coughed up blood. TB is rife in the tenement; remember how it had killed Mollser's dad too. You don't know how you got it but you know you may die.

NOTE: Tuberculosis is a disease that was rife in the Dublin tenements. It attacks the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body. It can spread through the air when people who have an active TB infection cough, sneeze, or otherwise transmit their saliva. In many people there are no signs of infection, but about one in 10 infections eventually develops into the disease which, if left untreated, kills more than 50% of those that develops into a full illness..

The classic symptoms of active TB infection include a chronic cough with blood tinged sputum (spit), fever, night sweats and weight loss. It was also known as "consumption". Rates of TB infection among the Dublin poor were 50% higher than those in England and Scotland.

16 YEAR OLD FAMILY 3:

Remember when Mollser talked about The Covey with the red tie who lives with Nora and Jack. She tells us he is a communist. Like The Covey, you have decided to join the union the ITGWU and the socialist party of Ireland. You believe the workers have been exploited long enough. True communists, like you are against organised religion as the Catholic Church. You believe that the church is used by those in power to keep the working man or woman grateful for what they have and not look or fight for more.

NOTE: The Dublin Lockout was a major industrial dispute between approximately 20,000 workers and 300 employers. The dispute lasted from 26 August 1913 to 18 January 1914, and is often viewed as the most severe and significant industrial dispute in Irish history. Central to the dispute was the workers' right to unionise and have their rights, pay and conditions protected.

Many of those who fought in 1916 were linked to the labour movement, James Connolly and the Irish Citizens Army. Many communists didn't fight as they were waiting for a global workers revolution, nothing to do with nations.

16 YEAR OLD FAMILY 4:

Mollser doesn't refer to anyone from this movement but it was part of the Gaelic revival that saw the birth of The Abbey Theatre, Conradh na Gaeilge and the GAA. You have joined Conradh na Gaeilge and you want everyone in the family to speak Irish. You think Pearse is great and you may join the Irish Volunteer Force.

NOTE: Conradh na Gaeilge was founded in Dublin in 1893 by Douglas Hyde. The organisation developed from the Gaelic Union and became the leading institution promoting the Gaelic Rival. It published the Gaelic Journal; the League's first newspaper was An Claidheamh Soluis (The Sword of Light) whose editor was Patrick Pearse. The motto of the League was Sinn Féin, Sinn Féin Amháin (Ourselves, Ourselves alone). It accepted women as equal members and they could play an active role in the leadership of the league, such as founder of the National Literary Society (later The Abbey Theatre) Lady Gregory. It didn't commit itself to the nationalist movement until 1915 but it was where people from many nationalist organizations first met. Many signatories to the proclamation were members. The Irish Volunteer Force lead by Pearse was the main fighting force in the Easter Rising.

16 YEAR OLD FAMILY 5:

Mollser talks about her neighbour Bessie Burgess who loves the British King and Queen and how her son was part of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. You want to join the British Army and join in the war effort. There are very few jobs around and this is a job with a good income. It also gets you out of home and off to a possible adventure in France.

NOTE: Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom when it went to war against the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and their military expansion across Europe. Both Nationalist and Unionist initially backed the war effort, but this changed during the course of the war. Over 200,000 Irish men fought in the war and approximately 30,000 died. Many returned to Ireland with awful injuries and many families were dependent on war wages and widow's pensions.

ROLE CARDS FOR GRANDPARENTS

GRANDPARENT 1:

You have spent too much money on a hat for yourself or your wife and have to confess it to the family.

GRANDPARENT 2:

You suspect your grandchild has TB.

GRANDPARENT 3:

You are a devoted Catholic and go to mass every day. You fear the anti-church communists and socialist.

GRANDPARENT 4:

Your family were from the countryside and remember the aftermath of the famine. Your family only spoke Irish but it was a struggle for them to get work because of their lack of English. You think Irish is a poor person's language.

GRANDPARENT 5:

You are a Republican and think that Irish people should fight for Irish causes

LIFE IN THE TENEMENTS

A Drama Scheme to unlock life at the time of 1916

By Sarah FitzGibbon

Session 04

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

-The slideshow from session 2

STEP 1 Ask them to think about Mollser's description of what she heard when she sat on the stairs of her tenement. Discuss with the whole groups, what might be the sounds in the tenement? Would the sounds change depending on the time of day? Allocate who might be doing what sounds. Don't forget the more cheerful sounds such as singing, laughing and playing. They must try to remember what they were to do as they may wish to use it later. Tell them that you will conduct them by raising your hand to indicate to increase the volume and lowering it to decrease it. Ask the class to think about and talk about what effect these movements and events would have had on our families before Easter 1916

STEP 2 Split the class in two halves.

One side is going to create a soundscape of the tenement for the other to hear. Then they will then swap around. Those on the listening side need to cover or close their eyes. Allow the other half to create the soundscape which you conduct for about 2 minutes.

When the first half has finished, ask those on the other half what they visualised during the soundscape. Collect their images and swap around.

STEP 3 Tell the class that we are going to jump forward to the end of the last century. Remind them about what Nadia said about the people in the tenements being moved out all around Dublin to Finglas, Cabra, Crumlin, Ballyfermot and Ballymun.

STEP 4 Put the pods into pairs, As and B's.

The year is 1980. A's are the remaining family members of their tenement families. They are going to be interviewed by historians gathering their stories of tenement life.

B's are the historians. Each has a minute or two to think of what information they want to get out of the interview. Ask them to think about what kind of questions they would need to ask to get that information.

Allow A's to think about their family and what they want to say. Remind them that they might old but not mentally frail. Ask them to set themselves up for the interview including a chair for the visitor.

On your signal allow B to interview A.

STEP 5 De-roling the pairs, allow them to write up their interview.

STEP 6 Inform the groups that you are about to bid farewell to the tenement families and you would like them to create a book of their family and their story. Using all the material they have gathered, allow the class time to create a folder/ book of their family. Remind them to think about how they can include their soundscape and their stop animation/ film.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Create an exhibition of their work for viewing within the school.

THE PAPER- GPO 1916 AND THE AFTERMATH

A three session Drama scheme using the siege of the GPO to explore the complexity of *The Rising* by Sarah FitzGibbon.

Drama scheme linking Drama with History, SPHE and English. If you have done The Tenement Scheme skip to Step 5 having recapped on the living conditions of the time.

Session 01

(Please note that this session is to build the context for The Rising)

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- Images from Appendix Two.
 - Any resource history material you wish them to use from the History Curriculum.
 - [The National Archives of Ireland: Poverty and Health](#)
 - [The National Archives of Ireland: Poverty and Health Gallery](#)
-
-

STEP 1 Explain to the class that you wish to explore life in Dublin about 105 years ago.

Just gather their initial thoughts about what Dublin would have been like 105 years ago.

STEP 2 Show the class the images from the Royal Society of Antiquarians Ireland in Appendix Two. If you wish you pull up the details from the National Archive links above which illustrate how overpopulated the tenements were.

STEP 3 In pods, give each one a research topic, double up as required:

- » Food and water
- » Living conditions and heating
- » Work
- » Family life and Health
- » Entertainment

STEP 4 Allow each group to make a presentation on their findings. Invite them to create a tableau or frozen picture of their topic based on what they have found, for example, demonstrating a family dealing with health issues. Show the images and thought-track the pupils in role if you wish, by asking them what their character is thinking at that moment.

STEP 5 Remind the pupils that the Post Office was the main point of communication between people and the rest of the world. For many it was the main source of income including receiving war pensions for family members fighting in World War 1. Ask each group to think of a list of people of all classes and backgrounds and what they might use the post office for.

YOU CAN USE SOME OF THOSE LISTED BELOW AS EXAMPLES:

A young well-dressed chap. His belly is full of a nice breakfast and you are walking down Grafton Street to be fitted for a new suit. He is popping into the post office to send a thank you card to your Aunt who is paying for it. It is a lovely day and he might wink at one or two young ladies on the way.

A hard working labourer walking home on a Saturday in the rain. In his pocket he has his meagre wages. He is trying to decide if he is going to the post office to send a bit of money home to Clare to his mother or take his wages home to his wife and kids in a big tenement house. Money is very tight and if he sends it, there might not be enough for food during the week. Either way he feels bad. He jingles the coins in his pocket as he walks through the rain.

A trainee nurse in The Rotunda waiting to pick up their results from the post office. Their father does not approve so their mother is using her savings to pay for the training and accommodation. Getting a Certificate means a wage.

A Botany student in Trinity College and one of the few women that have got to study there. She is sending her dissertation off to be printed and it has to be posted today or she will not qualify.

A war widow collecting her husband's pension. He was blacklisted after the Lockout and could not get work anywhere so he enlisted in the army and is fighting in France. It is money to keep the family going but she worries that he'll be on the list of the Missing in Action when she goes to collect the payment.

A child earning money running messages for a solicitors firm and if they can't post or collect their letters, he will lose his job and his family needs that income.

STEP 6 Ask each person to find a space for themselves to write and give them a piece of paper and a pen. Tell them that the handout might give them an idea of their character but you are going to ask them a series of questions so that they may develop their character further.

- » What is your character's name?
- » What is your character's age?
- » What is your character's favourite food? Remind them of the time frame, so no pizzas or chips.
- » What is your character's favourite colour?
- » What makes your character happy? A pastime or hobby
- » What makes your character sad?
- » What makes your character angry?
- » What makes your character proud?
- » What is their secret? It is not a big secret it is just something that they would prefer others not know about them.

Keep these for the next session.

THE PAPER- GPO 1916 AND THE AFTERMATH

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Drama scheme linking Drama with History, SPHE and English.

Session 02

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- *The character sheets created in the last session.*

- *A dry day and a yard as it would be good to do this session outside of a classroom.*

- [*The Irish Times: Easter 1916, Then and Now*](#)

Pre- Drama - Ask pupils to remind themselves of the characters they have created.

STEP 1 Ask the class to play the following game. They will walk around the yard keeping a distance from each other. Different claps will mean different things

1 clap means stop

2 claps means turn right

3 claps means go

Remind them of group safety and that they are to walk alone and avoid others. Play this once or twice.

STEP 2 Pause the game and ask them to walk about the space and imagine that they are being led by different parts of their body, i.e. their nose and what kind of character would walk that way; their chest and what kind of character would walk that way; their knees and what kind of character would walk that way. Pause them and ask them to think of their character and how they might move. Explain that they will be returning to the clapping game. Invite them to walk around the space as their characters and use the claps to stop and change between themselves and their character.

STEP 3 Depending on your pods, divide the class into A's and B's. A is part of the Republican force occupying the GPO, defending the barricades and not letting any members of the public through. B is their character trying to get into the GPO. On your signal let them play out the short scene. Ask B's how did they feel about not getting into the GPO and how did that make them feel about the Republicans. Swap roles. B's are the Republicans soldiers and A's become their character and see if they can persuade the soldier to let them through. Play it through for a few minutes and collect words about how it felt not to get through.

STEP 4 Returning indoors, allow the pupils to add in any new information they gathered on their characters, based on their improvisation, onto their character sheets.

Pull up the Irish Times (you can find this on the Abbey's website online on the *Me, Mollser* page) on your white board and talk about how the Helga was brought in to defeat the rebels and the ensuing destruction of the city. Have a conversation about what it must have been like to live through The Rising. Tell the class there was a lot of looting of shops and businesses. 485 people died in the five days of The Rising. 54% were civilians, many were trying to get to work or get food. 40 of them were children and babies.

Explain that in the fictional world of Mollser's tenement from Sean O'Casey's *The Plough and The Stars*, by the end of the play and The Rising - Mollser is dead from consumption; Mrs. Burgess is shot; Nora has had a breakdown and Jack Clitheroe is dead. Only Fluther, The Covey, Uncle Peter, Mollser's mother (Mrs. Ginny Gogan) and her baby have survived.

THE PAPER- GPO 1916 AND THE AFTERMATH

A three session Drama scheme using the siege of the GPO and to explore the complexity of the Rising by Sarah FitzGibbon.

Drama scheme linking Drama with History, SPHE and English. If you have done The Tenement Scheme skip to Step 5 having recapped on the living conditions of the time.

Session 03

Duration: 1 Hour

Materials Required:

- *The character sheets created in the last two sessions*
- [*Weekly Irish Times 13 May 1916*](#)
- *(If you can project it onto your white board)*

It would be ideal that groups can share the look and feel of the prop but only when safe and practical to do so. In the absence of this ask each child to use a large sheet of paper as a prop and a second sheet of paper to write on.

STEP 1 This is a rendition of the front page of The Irish Times Newspaper covering the week after The Rising is over. Ask them to explore the document. What does it tell you happened to the leaders? What was happening around the country? What was the lead story? What is the main image?

Ask them to write onto their large sheet of paper, what articles stand out to them? Allow them to fold the large sheet of paper so it resembles a newspaper.

STEP 2 Remind them of their character. Ask them to stand up and then sit down as if they are their characters in their home and in character 'read the paper'. Ask them to think about how they are feeling about what they are reading? It can be mixed emotions.

Ask them in character to write a letter to a friend about their incident at the barricade and how they feel about The Rising now.

STEP 3 Share some of the letters.

STEP 4 Remind them that the items that Mollser found in the box were wrapped in this newspaper. Ask them in their pods to decide what happened to Mollser's mother, Mrs. Ginny Gogan and the baby on the 8th or 9th of May. A week after the start of The Rising and a week after Mollser's death.

STEP 5 Remind them of the 'clapping game.' Ask them to create three still images and you are going to ask them to move from one image to the next by clapping your hands.

The first image is of Mollser's funeral. The second image is of the newspaper being used to pack up the things from the tenement and who is left and who is in the picture? The third image is of what happened to Ginny Gogan and the baby next. Allow them as a pod to decide.

Allow them to practice the images at least twice, moving from one image to the next and the next with your clap. Allow them to bring some of the images to life for a few seconds. Discuss what options they chose for Ginny Gogan and the baby.

Share the stories either through the still images, the still images becoming short improvised scenes or group storytelling depending on the class.

APPENDIX

Photography: ROS KAVANAGH



APPENDIX 1

TABLE 16 RETAIL PRICES OF FOOD IN IRISH TOWNS, 1914 AND UPDATED TO 2014 USING THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

BEEF PER LB.	8.0D	€3.67
MUTTON PER LB.	8.6D	€4.90
PORK SAUSAGES PER LB.	8.7D	€4.90
BACON PER LB.	9.2D	€4.90
BUTTER, IRISH FARMERS PER LB.	12.6D	€6.12
CHEESE PER LB.	9.8D	€4.90
MARGARINE, 1ST GRADE PER LB.	7.6D	€3.67
MARGARINE, 2ND GRADE PER LB.	6.2D	€3.67
MILK, FRESH PER QUART	2.5D	€1.22
EGGS, 1ST GRADE PER DOZEN	9.6D	€4.90
BREAD PER 2LB LOAF	3.2D	€1.22
FLOUR, HOUSEHOLD PER 14 LB.	19.8D	€9.79
OATMEAL PER 14 LB.	21.1D	€11.02
RICE PER LB. TIN	2.8D	€1.22
POTATOES, OLD PER 14 LB.	5.5D	€2.45
TEA, BEST PER LB.	30.3D	€15.92
TEA, CHEAPEST PER LB.	18.1D	€9.79
SUGAR, WHITE GRANULATED PER LB.	2.2D	€1.22
JAM PER LB.	6.6D	€3.67

Source: Retail prices in Irish towns of 500 inhabitants and upwards

Prices in 1914 are expressed in pence where 8.6d represents 8.6 pence, (in 1914 there was 12 pence in one shilling and 20 shillings in one

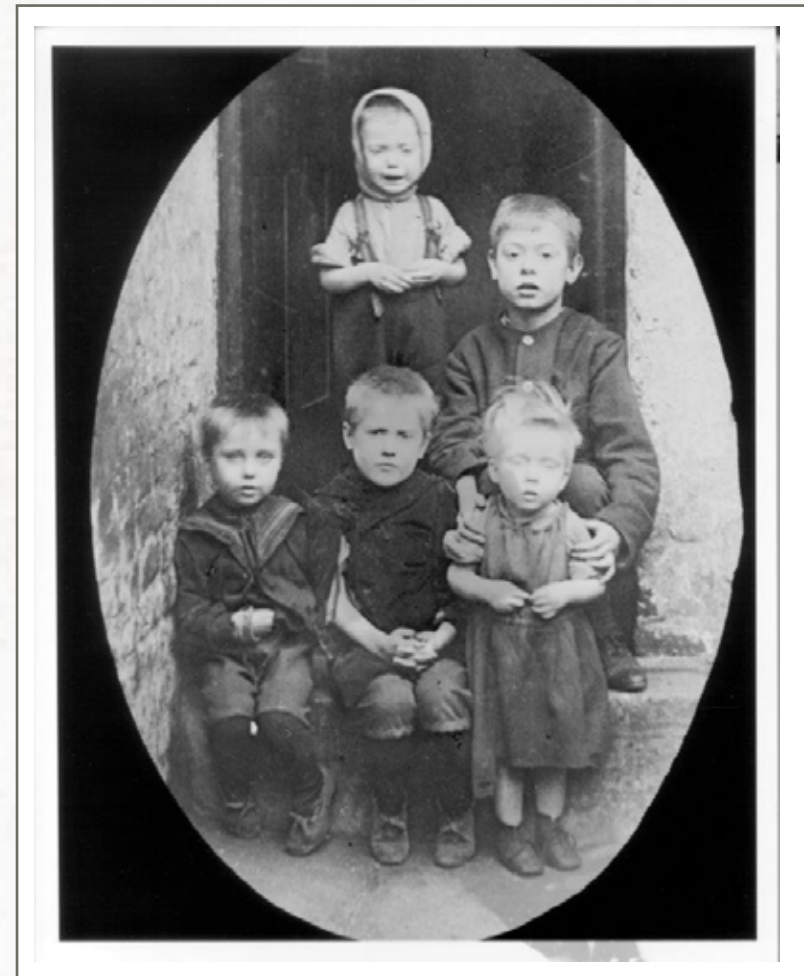
16 ounces in lb 8d so if something cost 1d bought 2 ounces

APPENDIX 2

PHOTOS OF THE TENEMENTS



007_055 ©RSAI



RSAl05 ©RSAI



RSAl29 ©RSAI

APPENDIX 2

PHOTOS OF THE TENEMENTS



RSAI67 ©RSAI



RSAI83 ©RSAI



RSAI91 ©RSAI

Please send your completed reviews and drawings to:

Phil Kingston, Community and Education Manager
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#MeMollser #MiseMollser

