7-Day Course

Outdoor and Context-Based Learning in Ireland: Teaching Through Place, People, and Culture

Dublin (IRELAND)

WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

This course is designed for teachers who would like to explore active and experiential approaches to learning that extend beyond the classroom and connect students to local heritage, cultures and landscapes as a foundation for learning. The course will help participants to find new perspectives and ways to connect diverse curricular areas, while developing the skills and attitudes that support their students' active and responsible participation as European citizens in an increasingly complex, interconnected world.

Language of communication: **English**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Taking the city, the people, the culture, and nature as our textbook, we will engage in practical activities that promote curiosity, meaningful interaction with the wider learning environment, and learning by doing. The course integrates pedagogical approaches such as Outdoor Learning, Place-Based Learning, and Social and Emotional Learning to demonstrate how extending learning beyond the confines of the classroom can enhance both academic achievement and students' physical and emotional wellbeing.

As part of the course, we will explore European heritage through English Matters' unique *Contexts4Content* approach, strengthening values such as sustainability, inclusion, democratic participation, and respect for diversity, through context-based learning experiences. Participants will reflect on how connecting learners with their local and European environments can cultivate ecological awareness, cultural understanding, and a sense of belonging to the European community.

Objectives:

- To develop understanding of outdoor learning principles and strategies through practical application, exploring how place-based and experiential education enhance student engagement and wellbeing.
- To connect learning with European heritage and citizenship education through our *Contexts4Content* approach, fostering students' environmental responsibility, cultural awareness, and active participation in democratic society.
- To explore effective approaches that connect holistic teaching and learning to real life contexts in Europe.
- To engage in transnational exchange with European colleagues to share innovative practices, build professional networks, and gain diverse perspectives on inclusive and sustainable education.

Methodology:

This course focuses on a practice-based, experiential approach where participants learn *through doing* rather than learning *about* outdoor education. The natural and human-made environments become content and context, with each day focusing on a field experience (*Contexts4Content*) with reflection and pedagogical analysis. In a safe and open-minded space participants will explore places as real-life textbooks where curiosity encourages meaningful and spontaneous learning.

An effective combination of training formats (e.g. *Contexts4Content* field learning projects, interactive workshops, collaborative tasks) will allow participants to explore connections between local environments and broader European heritage and values. Using context-based learning as an integrated cross-curricular approach, teachers will discover how local-to-European connections can be applied in their own teaching contexts.

Assessment will be carried out prior to the course by analyzing participants' interests. During the course, frequent oral and written reflection will enhance the learning process. After the course, prospective partnerships might develop from the themes raised by the programme.

LOCATION OF THE COURSE: Dublin (IRELAND)

Dublin, IRELAND, is an old medieval Viking city that displays a fascinating panorama on its streets through a pleasant mix of historic buildings and sites, monuments and street art. Trinity College and the unique Book of Kells, Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin's Viking Castle, the remarkable Chester Beatty Library, or the Samuel Becket Bridge, can be discovered at the same time as the Sweny's pharmacy (immortalized in Joyce's Ulysses), where a surprising mix of second-hand books and the famous lemon-scented soap can be found together.

There is no question that **Dublin** is also a warm and welcoming city. Its enjoyable "craic" has attracted visitors for centuries. Traditional music is extremely popular in Ireland and is so easy to find a pub where a band is playing some good drinking music while customers happily join in the chorus.

DURATION OF THE COURSE

7-day course: **40 hours, a Sunday to Saturday course.**

CERTIFICATION AWARDED

A Certificate will be awarded and will include the name of the participant, description of the course and its learning outcomes, dates and course hours.

DATES

Outdoor and Context-Based Learning in Ireland: Teaching Through Place, People, and Culture
Country of Destination**: Dublin, IRELAND**
Duration (days): **7 training days (from Sunday to Saturday)**
Language of communication: **English**

Dates in 2026	Dates in 2027
	28 February - 06 March · 7 training days
	23 - 29 May · 7 training days
	20 - 26 June · 7 training days
	04 - 10 July · 7 training days
	11 - 17 July · 7 training days
08 - 14 November · 7 training days	24 - 30 October · 7 training days

Note: The information included in this document might be subject to amendment. You should check our website www.englishmatters.org for any updated information about our programmes.

Programme of the 7-day Course:

Outdoor and Context-Based Learning in Ireland: Teaching Through Place, People, and Culture

7-day Course in Ireland

(from Sunday to Saturday)

Sunday
Registration.
Fundamentals: principles, structure, framework
Tools for reflection on learning & Professional Development
Field learning "Contexts4Content" approach
International Dimension

Monday
From Local to Global Europeans
Contextualizing Outdoor and Context-based Learning: Guidelines and Principles
Learning Beyond the Classroom I: Field Learning Project “Contexts4Content”

Tuesday
Cultivating a Sense of Place for Deep Learning
Curriculum Integration
Learning Beyond the Classroom II: Practical application

Wednesday
Contextualized Social and Emotional Learning
Rationale and Evidence
Learning Beyond the Classroom III: Field Learning Project “Contexts4Content”

Thursday
A Mind map for a Sustainable Future
No Walls Education: Bridging People and Community
Learning Beyond the Classroom IV

Friday
The Environment as a Textbook: Nature Lab
Finding Inspiration Outdoors: Multi-sensory approaches
Learning Beyond the Classroom V: Field Learning Project “Contexts4Content”

Saturday
Presentation of participants' learning portfolios
Final reflection on learning acquired
Reflection about Dissemination Strategies
Evaluation of the programme

NOTE: This Programme may be subject to amendment. Such amendment, if necessary, would be kept to a minimum, consistent with the quality and balance of the programme.

THE IRISH AMERICAN EDUCATOR INITIATIVE

Culture. Connection. Professional Learning.

The **Irish American Educator Initiative** gives teachers from across the United States the opportunity to learn beyond the classroom, gain meaningful experiences and fresh inspiration, and return home with new perspectives to share with their students. Based in Ireland, our courses connect American educators with Irish history, heritage, literature, art, and culture through engaging learning experiences inspired by Irish writers, artists, educators, and cultural representatives.

Whether you have Irish roots or simply want to discover a new culture, our programmes provide fresh ideas, meaningful connections, and practical inspiration for the classroom. Explore Ireland, deepen your professional knowledge, and bring new stories and perspectives back to your students.

As part of the initiative, teachers also have opportunities to take part in study visits to Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Estonia, Portugal, and Spain. These visits allow participants to see teachers at work, visit schools, meet local educators, and explore different approaches to teaching and learning.

By sharing ideas across cultures, American teachers can discover fresh perspectives and practical inspiration to bring back to their own classrooms.