

# Reading Comprehension — The Story of Saint Patrick

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## The Story of Saint Patrick

Every year on the seventeenth of March, people around the world celebrate Saint Patrick's Day. But who was the real Saint Patrick, the man behind the parades and the green clothes?

Surprisingly, Patrick was not Irish at all. He was born in Britain, more than fifteen hundred years ago, when it was still part of the Roman world. As a teenager, his life changed forever: raiders sailed across the sea, captured him, and carried him to Ireland as a slave. For six long years, he was forced to work as a shepherd, alone on the cold hillsides.

Eventually, Patrick escaped and made the long journey home. But he could not forget Ireland. He felt a powerful calling to return — not as a slave this time, but as a teacher of the Christian faith. He spent the rest of his life travelling across Ireland, sharing his beliefs and setting up churches.

Many famous stories are told about Patrick. The most well known says that he drove all the snakes out of Ireland. This is only a legend — in truth, Ireland never had snakes, because it is an island that was cut off by the sea long ago. Another story says he used the three leaves of a shamrock to explain his ideas, which may be why the shamrock is still a symbol of Ireland today.

Whatever is fact and whatever is legend, one thing is certain: a boy who arrived in Ireland as a frightened slave became the most famous figure in all of Irish history.

## Questions

1. On what date is Saint Patrick's Day celebrated? (1 mark)
2. Where was Patrick actually born? (1 mark)
3. How did Patrick first come to Ireland? (2 marks)
4. Find and copy a word in paragraph 3 meaning "a strong feeling that you must do something." (1 mark)
5. Why does the text say the story of Patrick driving out the snakes "is only a legend"? (2 marks)
6. Why do you think Patrick chose to return to Ireland after he had escaped? (2 marks)
7. Give one fact and one legend about Patrick from the text. (2 marks)
8. Summarise Patrick's life in order: childhood, capture, escape, and what he did next. (4 marks)

## Answer Key / Mark Scheme

1. The seventeenth of March (17 March).
2. In Britain.
3. Raiders captured him and carried him to Ireland as a slave.
4. "calling."

**5.** Ireland never had snakes — it is an island cut off by the sea — so he could not have driven them out.

**6.** He felt a powerful calling to return and teach the Christian faith.

**7.** Fact: born in Britain / taken as a slave / set up churches. Legend: drove out the snakes / used the shamrock to explain his ideas.

**8.** Childhood: born in Roman Britain. Capture: taken to Ireland as a slave, worked as a shepherd. Escape: fled home. Next: returned to Ireland to teach and set up churches.