

the ARTICLE (for instructors)

Danny Boy Banned

On March 17th of each year, every person enjoys honorary Irish heritage for a day. It's St. Patrick's Day, and from north to south and east to west across the globe, in New York City and Buenos Aires and Tokyo, people watch parades, imbibe green beer, and tuck into a plate of corned beef and cabbage. The lead up to the festivities throughout the month sees a spike in all things Irish, too, especially Guinness purchases and Irish songs played on jukeboxes. But at a bar in Manhattan, the owner has nixed one thing particularly Irish for the whole of March, regardless of the holiday - the song "Danny Boy."

"Danny Boy," ranked as one of the twenty-five most depressing tunes of all time, seems far more appropriate for a funeral than a holiday celebration. It symbolizes the exodus in the 1800s, when Irish fled starvation and bleak economic conditions for more optimistic opportunities elsewhere. A number of other Irish songs offer similarly depressing fare, though, such as "Cockles and Mussels." The song relates the story of a young and beautiful fishmonger who dies of fever. Yet "Danny Boy" has gotten the axe.

The bar owner griped that the song simply gets far too much playtime during the month, and he was frankly sick of it. In fact, he promised that participants at the pre-St. Patrick's Day karaoke party would receive a Guinness on the house for singing any traditional Irish song but "Danny Boy."

Although some patrons are pleased with the decision, others consider it tantamount to blasphemy. A fair comparison would be the banning of "Jingle Bells" or "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" during December - something that just isn't done.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in **red typeface** may be vocabulary unfamiliar to the students.

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Notes:

STEP ONE

Brainstorm: Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "St. Patrick's Day" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

STEP TWO

Discuss: Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | St. Patrick's Day is one of my favorite holidays. |
| b. | I want to drink green beer and sing Irish songs on St. Patrick's Day. |
| c. | It's okay if a bar wants to ban St. Patrick's Day celebrations. |
| d. | It's okay if a bar wants to ban certain songs on St. Patrick's Day. |
| e. | It's okay if a bar wants to ban certain customers on St. Patrick's Day. |

STEP THREE

The Article: Read the article, and work with a partner to understand it. Lastly, summarize in your own words.

STEP FOUR

Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

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| a. | What was your general impression after reading this article? |
| b. | Is it fair that the bar owner has banned "Danny Boy?" Why/not? |
| c. | What do you think would happen if someone started to sing "Danny Boy" at the bar in Manhattan? |
| d. | Do you think it's illegal to ban the song from the bar? Why/not? |
| e. | Are there any songs you particularly hate? Would you consider banning those songs? Why/not? |
| f. | What will you do for St. Patrick's Day this year? |

STEP FIVE

Discuss: You have the power to ban anything for a day all across the world. What would you ban? Discuss with a partner and decide on three things together. Share your answers with another pair of students or with the class.

#1:

#2:

#3: