

Activity Book for Schools 7

Far From Home



Have you ever been away from home? Do you know anyone who has taken a trip away from Ireland? Did your friend mention things that were different from here at home? **Today** many Irish soldiers travel to other countries to serve in peacekeeping forces and, like other travellers, they have to adapt to unfamiliar circumstances.

My Name:

In the past, Irish soldiers and their families have lived all over the world, in many climates and countries. Come on a tour of some of the places they lived, and find out what it was like.

You can follow the travels of Irish soldiers by marking on your maps the places where the army sent them. As you learn about their experiences, you can imagine what they might have seen and felt. There are no right or wrong answers for many of the activities.

Hint: At each stop you will be able to fill in one of the circles on the maps with a small sign or symbol.



Enter the first room and keep walking straight through the next room until you reach a narrow corridor with a row of helmets.

1

Stop at the row of six helmets.

Each of these hats stands for the Irish soldiers who served in a particular kind of landscape far from Ireland. Look at the picture and read the label. On your map of the world (pages 10-11), either write the word **hat** or draw one of the hats in the country or area where it was worn.



2

Enter the next room and stop at the soldier who stands behind the model of a battlefield.

Your tour of the world begins in **France**, where 'The Wild Geese' flew. (Irish soldiers escaping English rule of Ireland were known as 'The Wild Geese'.)

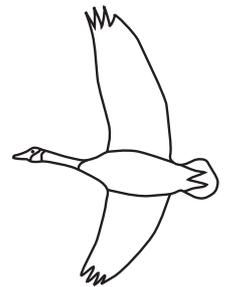
Find France on the map of Europe (page 9). Either write the word **bird** or draw a flying bird there.

What do **you think** the biggest challenge would be for Irish soldiers – such as this soldier from Walsh's Regiment – living there for a long time (ten or twenty years)?

learning a new language

or

being lonely for their friends and family?

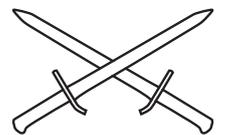


3

Stop at the framed pictures.

Now let's move to **Russia**. Find the portrait of Joseph Kornilovich O'Rourke (wearing a red and black uniform). O'Rourke was born in this country far from Ireland because his father left Ireland to join the Russian army. Joseph fought many battles in Russia.

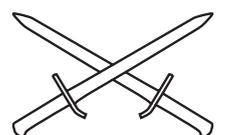
Find Russia on the map of Europe. Either write the word **swords** or draw crossed swords (symbols of battle) on that country.



4

Enter the next room and stop at the red jacket on the wall to your left.

Where did Ferguson, who owned this uniform, serve as a soldier? Mark this place on your map of the world with either the word **swords** or a drawing of crossed swords.



Do you think there could have been any other Irishmen in that army?

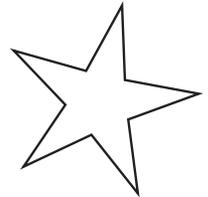
5

Enter the next room and stop at the seated soldier.

The main story in this gallery is about Irishmen in **America**, such as this soldier. He is writing a letter to the family of another Irish soldier killed in battle. Imagine you were a young man who left Ireland to live in America. In 1861, at the beginning of the American Civil War, you joined the Union Army. Put a tick beside the three problems you would **not** have to worry about.

- Getting enough to eat
- Understanding the language of the commands
- Getting killed by the enemy
- Finding a way to get news back to Ireland
- Meeting other people from Ireland

Find the United States of America on your map of the world. Either write the word **star** or mark it with a star symbol.



Look at the letter in the box for two dates: when John Sweeny wrote the letter and the date that McCarthy sent his reply.

Do you think the letter was sent from Ireland or from America?

Ireland

America

6

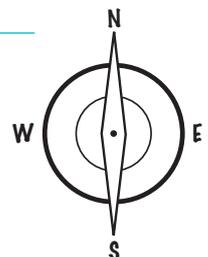
Walk toward the exit and stop at the map of the world beside the doorway.

Near the entrance to 'Irish in the British Service' you will find a map with medals shown in different places around the world. Each place marked with a medal shows where Irishmen fought in the British Army between 1815 and 1914.

Which place shown on the display with the map is the furthest from Ireland? _____

Find this country on your map of the world. Either write the word **compass** or draw a compass symbol there.

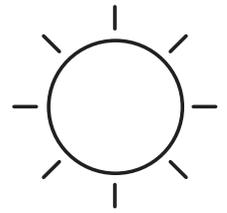
Irish soldiers in the British Army also fought in a country very close to Ireland – Belgium.



7

Enter the next room, stay to the right and stop at the display in the corner.

Now find the panel on 'Garrison Duties Overseas'. Imagine you were sent to **India** for ten years, as some Irish soldiers were. **Either write the word sun or mark India with a sun symbol on the map of the world.**



How easy would it have been for you to get used to life in India? Rank this list from 1 to 7, with number 1 for the easiest thing to get used to, and number 8 for the hardest.

- Indian food
- The heat
- Insects and snakes
- Having Indian servants
- Time it takes to get news from home
- Dangerous wild animals such as tigers
- The foreign landscape

There are no right and wrong answers about getting used to foreign countries. Some soldiers would have felt the same as you, others would have felt differently.

Have you ever been homesick? Do you think you would have been homesick in this situation?

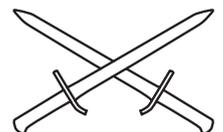
Yes

No

8

Turn around and stop at the panel on the end of a long display.

Find the **Crimea** (it used to be part of Russia) on a map in the gallery. Use the pull-out Background Briefing at the case beside 'Redcoats and Muzzle-loaders'. **On your map of Europe either write the word swords or draw the battle symbol of two crossed swords.**

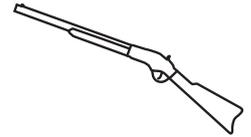


The Irish soldiers sent to the Crimea thought the war would end quickly, but it stretched into the winter. Their clothes and supplies were only suitable for warm weather. It was hard to find water to shave and they grew beards to stay warmer. **What word would you use to describe how they probably felt?**

9

Follow the arrow on the floor to the last display panel in this room.

The last stop in this room is **South Africa** at 'With the Boers'. On your map of the world either write the word **rifle** or draw a rifle symbol on South Africa.



Find the section on the Boer War near the exit, and open the Background Briefing on the left side of the case. In this war, some Irishmen fought in the British Army against the Boers; others served with the Boers.

Read this list of possible feelings about being in South Africa, and use ticks to assign each feeling to Irish Soldiers of either the British Army or Boer Army side; if you want, you can put some feelings on both sides.

	British Army	Boer Army
Homesick for Ireland		
Tired of the heat and dust		
Enjoy the company of fellow Irish soldiers		
Feel out of place in the unfamiliar landscape		
Feel cut off from events and people at home		



Leave this room, cross the bridge, walk past the aeroplane, and enter the next room.

10

Walk past the three shadow figures and stop at the display along the wall facing you.

Open the pull-out Background Briefing to find the location of **Gallipoli** (in Turkey). Mark Gallipoli on your map of Europe using either the word **cap** or the flat cap symbol.



11

Walk further down this room to the displays along the same wall, but with the date 1918 above them.

Another place where Irish soldiers fought in the First World War was the Western Front in northwest France ('War in the Mud'). Find Philip Smith's 'Personal Story: Escape from Holzminden'. He was captured in 1918, and put in a prisoner of war camp in **Germany**. Either write the word **wire** or draw a barbed wire symbol in **Germany** on your map of Europe.



Read about Philip Smith's attempt to escape. Imagine you are Philip Smith, imprisoned behind barbed wire. Tick the boxes that you think describe how Philip might have felt.

- Glad to be out of the war
- Missing your friends and family at home in Ireland
- Missing your fellow soldiers in the British Army at the front
- Angry to be missing out on helping to win the war
- Tired of the uninteresting and tasteless food for prisoners

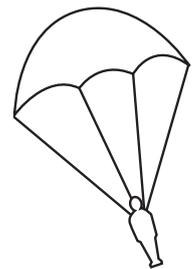


Leave this room and go down the stairs.

12

Turn right at the bottom of the stairs, walk toward the window, around the curved wall, and stop at the first display.

Look for the panel 'Irish Men and Women at War'. Find the paratrooper uniform that belonged to Samuel Garland. He was wounded during a parachute jump in **Sicily** (part of Italy) in July 1943: you can see the repair to the arm of his smock. Find **Sicily** on your map of Europe. Either write the word **parachute** or draw a parachute shape.



Imagine you are Samuel ready to board your plane to parachute into Sicily. You are writing a letter to your family in Ireland to be delivered after you have gone into battle. What kinds of things would you put in your letter?

- That you were very healthy
- That you were worried about the danger of the fighting to come
- That they should not worry, because you'll be fine
- That if anything happened to you, they should be proud
- That your fellow soldiers were a fine group of men

13**Stop at the next display along the curved wall.**

Your next stop is in **Lebanon** at the display called 'Peacekeeping in Lebanon'. Look at the map on the pull-out panel. **Then find Lebanon on your map of Europe. Either write the initials UN or draw the United Nations (UN) symbol there.**

Hint: Just draw a circle for the world and a branch with leaves on either side of it.



Find the airmail letter in the case. Based on the number of times the mail was handled, guess how long would it have taken for an airmail letter to get from Cork in Ireland to Irish HQ (Headquarters) at Tibnin in Lebanon. **Trace the path of the letter on the map.** Here's some information to help you.

- Mail from Lebanon was carried on commercial airplanes operating from Dublin to Tel Aviv, Israel.
- From there, a small UN plane carried the mail to UN HQ at Naqura, Lebanon.
- From there it would be taken by truck to Tibnin.
- Don't forget to include the time it takes a letter to get from Cork to Dublin!

14**Walk toward the exit and stop at the display beside the doorway.**

Your last stop is 'Keeping the Peace' at the map that shows all the places where Irish soldiers have served in United Nations Peacekeeping missions. Find the places where they have been recently. **Either write the initials UN or draw the UN symbol on those countries on your map of the world.**



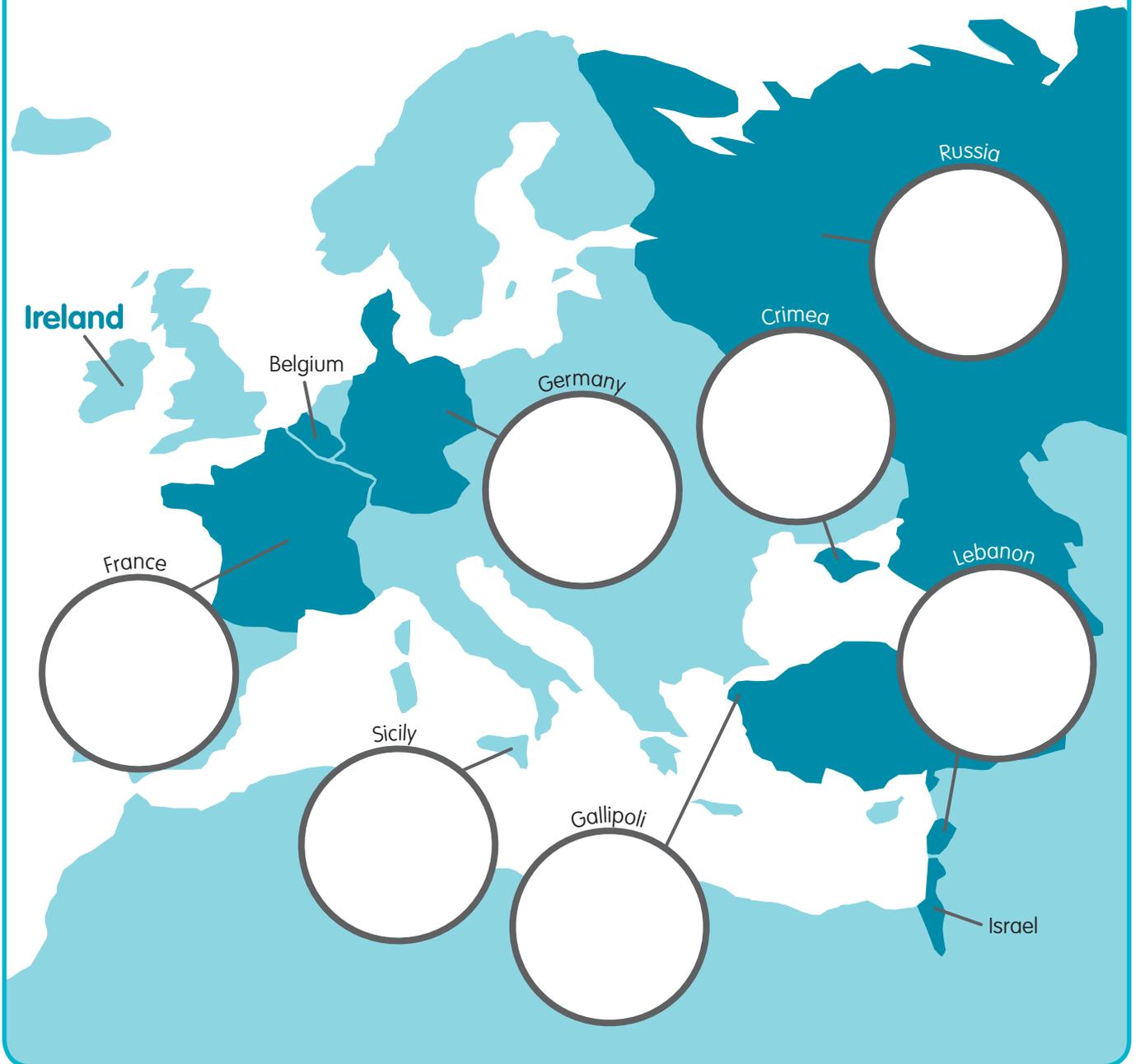
Although they are far from Ireland, soldiers today can communicate instantaneously with their families at home by using telephones and the internet.

The United Nations symbol shows the view of Earth from the top of the world – the North Pole.

Closer to Home?

Over the past 300 years, Irish soldiers and their families have lived all over the world, in many countries. Today, distant places seem much closer – soldiers can travel back and forth far more quickly, and modern technology makes it much easier to keep in touch with Ireland. However differences in culture and in climate can still make a foreign posting feel like a world away from home.

Europe

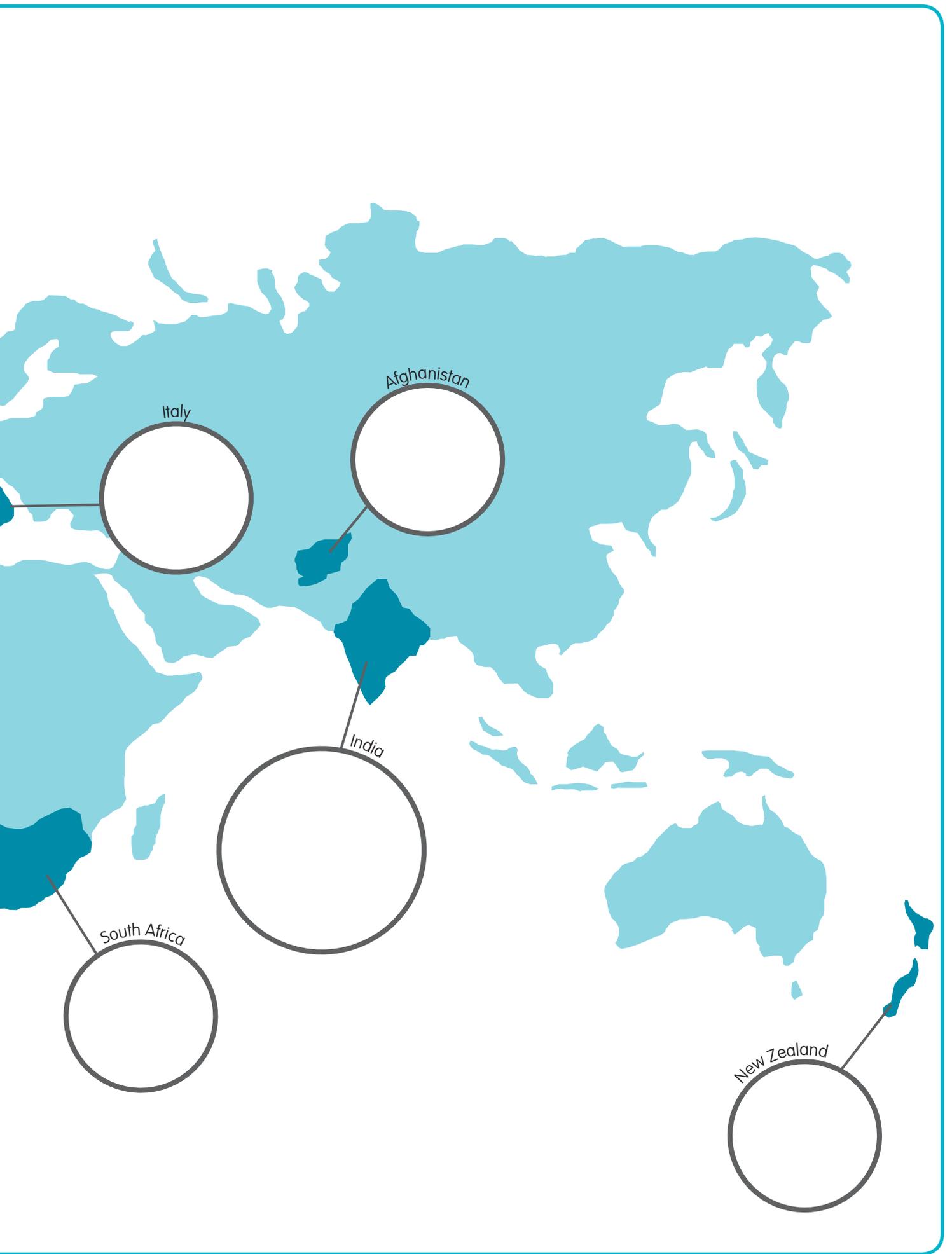


Hints: This map shows countries and places as they are today. Some of these places were different in the past.

The World



Hints: The circles for India and the United States of America have enough room for you to draw two different signs or symbols.
This map shows countries and places as they are today. Some of these places were different in the past.



Now that you have travelled around the world, check your answers to the questions.

- 1 One of:
United States of America (New York)
Mexico
Italy
India
- 2 Learning a new language would probably be their first challenge, but they would miss their family for a long time.
- 4 South America
There were many other Irishmen fighting for Bolivar; at the end of the Napoleonic Wars many Irish soldiers discharged from the British Army found their way to South America.
- 5 Getting enough to eat
Understanding the words of the commands
Meeting other people from Ireland
It was sent from America because a letter from Ireland would have taken at least three weeks to arrive by boat.
- 6 New Zealand
- 8 Words to describe their feelings: cold, dirty, angry
- 9 The Irish soldiers in both armies probably would have felt the same.
- 13 Two to three days
- 14 Liberia
Afghanistan
Congo

ANSWERS

Want to know more?

For more information on exhibitions and education programmes, contact the Education and Outreach Department of the National Museum of Ireland.

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email: bookings@museum.ie

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