

PASTPORT

Background Pack

PastPort is a play that deals with periods of huge **migration in European history**. Across the world today, in 2017, the issue of migration is always in the news. Brexit, the American Presidential Election, the Refugee Crisis, migration from Africa, migration across Asia – all these things seem very new, and it seems like our world is changing very quickly.

But if we look at different periods in history – even going back only 200 years, we see that maybe these changes aren't so 'new' after all. **How do periods in our history relate to what is happening now? How can history help us consider the modern world?**

We want to raise questions about **cultural identity**. **Language, clothing, food and music** all have a role to play in shaping our cultural identity, but is there something more that makes us who we are? What makes Irish people 'Irish', or Germans 'Germans', or Swiss 'Swiss'? What are the differences that separate us, and what similarities bring us together?



THEMES to think about and discuss

Im/Emigration

Refugees

Borders

Cultural Identity – does it change?

Nationality vs. Culture

Language

Music and Identity – why is the accordion used in *PastPort*?

Globalisation – how is it good, how is it bad?

Scene 1: 2050

*In this scene, we imagine a world in the future in which the European Union does not exist. Instead, when you go from country to country you must **speak the national language, and wear the national clothes.***

The Train

Trains are a 19th century invention, and have now become a feature of everyday life. With the invention of the steam-powered train by James Watt, it became possible to travel long distances in a short amount of time. By the mid-19th Century, most of Europe's main cities had become interconnected and it became possible to travel from Paris to Berlin in a matter of hours, not days. Britain and Germany were particularly invested in trains. After the **unification of Germany** by Bismarck, the new Empire used railways to connect and modernise every region. **By 1880, Germany had 9,400 locomotives pulling 43,000 passengers and 30,000 tons of freight a day.** Despite this interconnectedness, Europe still plunged into two World Wars. During this time, train lines became a central focus of the war, and were used to transfer arms, supplies, and people.



Soldiers leaving for the African front kiss goodbye to their lovers



Children being evacuated by from London during the Blitz

After the Second World War, millions of **displaced** people followed train-lines all across Europe to get home to their native countries. Nowadays, with free movement of people, you can travel from London to Milan to Munich to Warsaw by high-speed train. Of course, for international travel most people choose to fly.

Will trains be as popular in the 2050s, or will there be other modes of transport?

The Accordion – International Instrument



The sound of the accordion may make us think immediately of Paris during La Belle Époque, a time when you could sip coffee on the Champs-Élysée and go to the Moulin Rouge at night. However, the accordion may make us think also of Bavarian folk music, or of Cuban Cajun, or even of the **busker** on the train!

In the 19th Century, the **reed accordion** as we know it now was invented in Berlin. It became incredibly popular due to Eastern European '**polka**' music, which spread from Dubrovnik to Paris to London, and by the 1840s to New York City (of course, this was a time of great emigration from Europe and Ireland to America!).

The accordion's sound was incorporated into many European folk traditions, such as Italian **tarantella**, English **Morris Dancing**, Czech polka, Irish **ceol**. Nowadays there are many different types of accordion. Although you can study it at a conservatoire, it still remains the instrument of the common people.



Une accordéoniste on a train outside Paris

La Vie En Rose

Edith Piaf ('The Sparrow') was a French ballad singer who was extremely popular in the 1940s and 1950s. Her signature song, 'La Vie en rose', is a love song written in 1945 with a world-famous melody.

Des yeux qui font baisser les miens
Un rire qui se perd sur sa bouche
Voilà le portrait sans retouche
De l'homme auquel j'appartiens
Quand il me prend dans ses bras
Il me parle tout bas
Je vois la vie en rose

The eyes which make me lower mine
A laugh which is lost on his mouth,
This is the painting without embellishment
Of the man to whom I belong.
When he takes me in his arms,
He speaks to me in a low voice,
I see life **in rose-tinted glasses.**



Piaf

'The Irish Rover'

This is a traditional Irish song about emigration. As with many traditional songs, no one knows who wrote it. **The Dubliners** and **The Pogues** made it popular with their versions. It includes references to Irish place-names (Cork, Tyrone, the River Lee, the Bann River, Westmeath) and to Dover in England. 'Rover' is a word which means 'traveller', and is also a popular name for a dog; listen to '**The Wild Rover**' if you can. 'The Irish Rover' is a nonsense song, describing the incredible cargo and actions of the crew of a fictional boat.

*On the fourth of July, 1806, we set sail from the sweet cove of Cork,
We were sailing away with a cargo of bricks for the grand City Hall of New York!
'Twas a wonderful craft she was **rigged fore and aft,**
And oh! How the wild winds drove her!
She stood several blasts, she had **27 masts,**
And they called her The Irish Rover!*

*There was Barney McGee from the banks of the Lee. There was Hogan from Co. Tyrone,
There was aul Mick Macgurk, who was scared stiff of work, and a man from Westmeath called Malone!
There was Slugger O'Toole, who was drunk as a rule,
And fighting Bill Tracey from Dover,
And your man, Mick McGann, from the **banks of the Bann,**
The captain of The Irish Rover.*

*We had sailed seven years when the measles broke out and the ship lost its way in the fog,
And this whale of a crew was reduced down to two: just **meself** and the captain's **aul** dog.
Then the ship struck a rock – oh Lord, what a shock!
And the bulkhead was turned right over.
Turned nine times around and the poor aul dog was drowned
I'm the last of The Irish Rover!*

Scene 2: 1945

*In this scene Rover meets Vincenza, a **partigiana** from Vicenza in Italy. He also meets Donatello, a dog-breeder and **pacifist** from the Dalmatian coast.*

The Italian Resistance/La Resistenza

When **Benito Mussolini** gained power in Italy in the 1920s, the Fascists repressed the media and began to arrest and murder their political enemies. When the War broke out in 1939, many resistance groups formed to battle the Fascists in the 'civil war'. After the German invasion of Northern Italy in 1943, this became known as the '**War of Italian Liberation**'. In many cases, the resistance colluded however they could with the Allies, but often they were undersupplied and undermanned. Outside **Vicenza**, in Veneto region of Italy, many *partigiani* set up camps in the mountains. **Women were an important part of the Resistance**, often acting as soldiers or bringing messages by bicycles to different camps.



Italian partisans in the streets of Milan after the War



Vicenza's Piazza dei Signori, with the basilica designed by Palladio

Dalmatia

Dalmatia is a region of modern-day Croatia. It is a popular tourist destination on the Adriatic Sea, but has a chequered past. Conquered by many different cultures throughout history, including the Romans and the Croats, it was for a long time **under the yoke** of the Republic of Venice (15th – 18th Century). Until the Great War, it was 'The Kingdom of Dalmatia', a province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was split between many different countries, including Italy, after the First World War, only to be conquered by Croatia, Italy, and Germany in World War Two. Afterwards, Dalmatia was taken over by **Yugoslavia**. Yugoslavia disbanded in 1992. The Dalmatian language was influenced by many other languages – including Venetian. **Tuone Udaina**, was the last native speaker of Dalmatian: he had no teeth, a poor memory, and was accidentally killed in an explosion on June 10, 1898.



Dubrovnik on the Dalmatian coast



A Dalmatian Dog. As a puppy, they have no black spots!

'Bella Ciao'

Bella Ciao (*Goodbye, Beautiful*) is an Italian resistance song from the Second World War. It now is an international **anti-fascist anthem**, often translated into different languages. In *PastPort*, we have given it new lyrics. Here are some of the original lyrics:

Una mattina, mi sono svegliato,
O bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao ciao!
Una mattina, mi sono svegliato,
E ho trovato l'invasor!

One morning, I woke up,
Goodbye, beautiful!
One morning, I woke up!
And I found the invader (fascist)

E se io muoio da partigiano,
o bella, ciao! bella, ciao! bella, ciao, ciao, ciao!
E se io muoio da partigiano,
tu mi devi seppellir.
E seppellire lassù in montagna,

And if I should die as a partisan,
Goodbye, beautiful!
And if I should die as a partisan,
You must bury me.
You must bury me in the mountains.

Scene 3: 1901

*In this scene, Rover meets two opera singers, Tristan and Isolde. They are travelling to Berlin to become 'cabaret' singers. Isolde is a fan of Wagner, and a militant **nationalist**.*

Richard Wagner

Wagner was a German composer and dramatist. His operas are great works of German nationalism, composed around the time of Unification, dealing with **Germanic myths** and legends. He designed his own opera house in **Bayreuth** where impressive performances of his operas are staged every year. He and many members of his family were **anti-Semitic**, and his music became extremely controversial after the Second World War.

Giuseppe Verdi

Verdi, born the same year as Wagner, was an Italian opera composer. His operas such as *La Traviata* and *Otello* are still widely enjoyed today. More information about their rivalry can be found here: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/jun/20/glyndebourne2013-roger-parker-verdi-falstaff-wagner-meistersinger>

Cabaret/Kabarett

Cabaret was a popular form of entertainment, originating in Paris in the 1880/90s. It consists of songs, dances, funny sketches, and **bawdiness**. The most famous establishment for cabaret – then and now – is the Moulin Rouge, but cabaret quickly became popular the whole world over. In 1901, the first German cabaret club opened in Berlin.



Early 20th Century cabaret dancers

The Great War (1914-8)

We are currently commemorating the centenary of the First World War, the first truly modern war in human history. Due to growing **nationalist and military tensions in Europe and Britain**, war broke out in 1914 after the assassination of **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**. The German Empire, Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and Austro-Hungarian Empire were all destroyed by the War. Germany bore a large responsibility for the war, but nowadays **most historians agree that Britain, France, and the other victorious nations have an equally large responsibility for the carnage between 1914 and 1918.**

Scene Four: 1852

In this scene, Rover meets a US Immigration Officer in Bremerhaven. A German peasant woman is trying to emigrate to join her husband in the New World.

Bremerhaven

Bremerhaven is a port city on the Northern Sea in Germany. It is home to the **Auswandererhaus**, a museum which charts the emigration from the Bremerhaven between 1830 and 1974. During this time, seven million emigrants – most of whom were German – left Europe for the Americas. **The New Harbour of Bremerhaven was built in 1852.**



The German Emigration Centre, Bremerhaven

California Railways

The German refugee in this scene makes reference to her husband who is working on the railway in California. During the mid-19th Century, California was a place of great industrialisation, as gold miners ('Forty Nine-ers') travelled by land or sea to dig for gold there. However, this was a dangerous journey, and could take weeks to make. California became a state in 1850, and during the 1850's a **transcontinental railway** was constructed, only to be finished in 1869. This was done largely by migrant workers, including the Irish, German, and Chinese.



Migrant railway workers in California

The Johnson Reed Act (1924)

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>

This was one of several restrictive immigration acts in the late 19th century/early 20th century in the USA. Immigrants were forced to prove basic literacy before being granted entry to the States. They also faced heavy taxes. The 1924 Act introduced immigration quotas, and barred many Asians, Eastern Europeans, and Arabs from entering the country. From the above website: 'In all of its parts, the most basic purpose of the 1924 Immigration Act was to **preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity**. Congress revised the Act in 1952.'

Irish Emigration

There are more people of Irish descent in Australia and America than there are in Ireland itself! Throughout the last two hundred years, millions of Irish people have emigrated from the island – often to America, where there is a huge Irish-American population (as evidenced by **New York's St. Patrick's Day Parade**). During **The Famine** (1840s), a nationwide crisis caused by the failure of the potato crop and the cruelty of the British government, a million Irish refugees left Ireland to escape starvation.



Irish Famine Memorial, Dublin

Irishness through the years

The Irish may nowadays be seen as a fun-loving and friendly people, but this was not always the case. For eight hundred years, the Irish natives were brutally oppressed and **colonised by the British**, resulting in the **War of Independence** (1919-1921). After this War, with the creation of '**Northern Ireland**', the island of Ireland was divided in two, and a Civil War began. Eventually in 1937, the south became the modern-day **Republic of Ireland**. The North of Ireland continued to have many religious (sectarian) problems, with Catholics oppressed by a Protestant government. This led to the **1960s Civil Rights Movement**, and tragically a northern civil war, euphemistically called '**The Troubles**'. Paramilitary groups such as the **IRA** (Catholic) and

the **UDF** (Protestant) carried out killings and bombings across the British Isles: this resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, and the attempted assassination of the British Prime Minister, **Margaret Thatcher**. British troops were sent into **Belfast** and **Derry** in the North of Ireland, and treated the population very cruelly. Thatcher viewed the IRA (Irish Republican Army) as a terrorist organisation, while the IRA considered themselves **freedom fighters**. The **1998 Good Friday Agreement** put an end to the Troubles, and relations in the North of Ireland between Protestants and Catholics continue to improve today. Throughout the 1990s, with the spread of **Riverdance**, **The Pogues** and **Irish pubs**, 'Irishness' became a sellable commodity, and nowadays Ireland is a popular tourist destination.



A 'session' in an Irish bar with banjo, flute, fiddle and guitar: the 'modern' image of Irishness



Irishmen training in the Irish War of Independence (1919-21)



An IRA mural in Belfast

Donald Trump Campaign Speech, June 16th 2015

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/06/16/theyre-rapists-presidents-trump-campaign-launch-speech-two-years-later-annotated/?utm_term=.6ed286d8c9ee

TRUMP: Wow. Whoa. That is some group of people. Thousands. So nice, thank you very much. That's really nice. Thank you. It's great to be at Trump Tower. It's great to be in a wonderful city, New York. And it's an honor to have everybody here. This is beyond anybody's expectations. There's been no crowd like this. [...] **Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore.** We used to have victories, but we don't have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say, China in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time. All the time. (APPLAUSE)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We want Trump. We want Trump.

TRUMP: When did we beat Japan at anything? They send their cars over by the millions, and what do we do? When was the last time you saw a Chevrolet in Tokyo? It doesn't exist, folks. They beat us all the time. When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us economically. **The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems.** (APPLAUSE) Thank you. It's true, and these are the best and the finest. When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. **They're not sending you. They're not sending you.** They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with

us. **They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. But I speak to border guards and they tell us what we're getting.** And it only makes common sense. It only makes common sense. They're sending us not the right people. It's coming from more than Mexico. It's coming from all over South and Latin America, and it's coming probably — probably — from the Middle East. But we don't know. Because we have no protection and we have no competence, we don't know what's happening. And it's got to stop and it's got to stop fast.

The Statue of Liberty: 'Give Me Your Poor, Your Tired...'



The **Statue of Liberty** is a colossal sculpture on Liberty Island in New York Harbor in New York City, in the United States. It was a gift to the United States from the people of France in 1886. The statue is an icon of freedom and of the United States, and was a welcoming sight to immigrants arriving from abroad. It is inscribed with the poem, 'The New Colossus' by Emma Lazarus, which contains the famous lines:

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "**Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.**

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"