



# Intercultural Communication & Global Issues In Language Education 2023 Conference Proceedings



The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)  
Intercultural Communication in Language Communication (ICLE) &  
Global Issues in Language Education (GILE)  
Special Interest Group (SIG)  
2023 Conference Peer-Reviewed Proceedings  
Tokyo, December 2024  
Javier Salazar & Gaby Benthien (Editors)  
ISSN: 2436-9896

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## Conflict and Global Issues: Unraveling Northern Ireland's Sectarian Bonfires

John-Guy Perrem

*Muroran Institute of Technology*

*jgperrem@muroran-it.ac.jp*

### Abstract

This article addresses the challenge of teaching the complexity of place and conflict in Japanese EFL/CLIL global issues university level settings. It calls attention to the prevalent issue of oversimplifying the representation of places and countries. It also critiques the widespread practice in these educational environments of oversimplifying cultural narratives, which often leads to a superficial understanding of places. To counter this trend, the paper proposes the integration of imagery and media content into global issues teaching methodologies and presents four pedagogical activities designed to deepen students' engagement with legacy conflict and sectarianism issues in relation to Northern Ireland. The activities are designed to simultaneously improve language skills and to provide a comprehensive view of conflict within a global issues context. The article emphasizes the need for a more informed, balanced approach in EFL/CLIL education, particularly for university learners, by incorporating diverse cultural narratives and teaching methods surrounding places.

### 要旨

この記事は、日本の大学レベルの EFL/CLIL（英語教育とコンテンツ・アンド・ランゲージ統合学習）における「場所と対立の複雑さの教育」へのアプローチに焦点を当てていません。問題として、場所や国の表現の簡略化が指摘されており、文化的な物語の単純化により、場所に関する浅い理解が生まれることがあります。この問題に対処するため、本論文ではメディアコンテンツとイメージを教育方法に組み込み、北アイルランド（イギリス）の遺産対立や宗派主義と関連する 4 つの新しい教育活動を紹介しています。これらの活動は言語スキル向上とグローバルイシューに対する包括的な視点提供を目指しています。特に大学生向けに、多様な文化的な物語と革新的な教育方法を組み合わせた、情報に基づいたバランスの取れたアプローチの重要性を強調しています。

#### Please cite this article as follows:

Perrem, J.G. (2024). Conflict and Global Issues: Unraveling Northern Ireland's Sectarian Bonfires. In: J. Salazar & G. Benthien (Eds.), *Intercultural Communication & Global Issues in Language Education 2023 Conference Peer-Reviewed Proceedings*. Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). pp. 2-32. Retrieved from: <https://icle.jalt.org/mod/page/view.php?id=139>

In the international context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language), there is a noticeable tendency to underrepresent the complexity of the culture of places and to instead focus on “elements of surface” culture (Gómez-Rodríguez, 2015, p. 167). Research (Zhang & Smith, 2024) has also shown a propensity to focus on “trouble-free worlds” and aspirational middle-class worldviews. Further, research on Japanese EFL textbooks has shown that “countries outside of Japan appear in over-simplified mediums” (Efron, 2020, p. 22) and are also skewed towards a “tourism” perspective. This matters because, as Hollenback (2017, p. 1) states in relation to Japan, “these representations of culture can in turn affect how learners come to perceive culture and how they interact with those from foreign cultures.” This trend particularly impacts the understanding of intricate historical and socio-political narratives, such as those in Northern Ireland (Figure 1) in the United Kingdom or other areas with ongoing or legacy conflicts. Often, knotty characteristics of a country's history and culture, especially those involving conflict or controversy, are overshadowed by more superficial representations (Kubota, 2002; Seargeant, 2009).

In many Japanese EFL and CLIL classrooms, when teaching about the United Kingdom, for example, the emphasis tends to be on more visible and globally recognized aspects, such as landmarks (Houghton, 2020), the Royal Family, and cultural exports like literature and music. This “surface” style approach (Gómez-Rodríguez, 2015), effective for introducing basic cultural elements, often omits deeper, more complex regional and local narratives useful for comprehensive understanding at the university level. The tendency to gloss over contentious historical and political issues in favor of a sanitized cultural presentation is a larger trend identified in educational resources, which can lead to a skewed understanding of a place and its people, and underserves university students by not equipping them with a breadth of contextual knowledge (Gray, 2010). The simplification of Northern Ireland's situation in educational contexts, for example, not only limits the opportunity for Japanese EFL/CLIL learners to engage with the complex realities of different UK regions but also reinforces a homogenized and incomplete view of these areas (Kramersch, 1993).

To address this gap in Japanese EFL/CLIL contexts, there is a need for materials and teaching approaches that encompass the complexities of regions like Northern Ireland, rather than avoiding them due to their comparative complexity. This necessitates a balance that reflects the reality of places on the ground and embraces an intercultural pedagogical approach (Byram & Morgan, 1994). In general EFL/CLIL settings, there is a notable trend towards simplifying the depiction of places and countries. This simplification, often a response to the linguistic limitations of learners, can lead to portrayals of countries through

stereotypical or surface-level cultural markers. While this approach might facilitate introductory language learning, it often neglects the intricate socio-cultural dynamics that shape different places.

Figure 1

Political Map Showing Northern Ireland (UK) Highlighted in Yellow



Source: Nations Online Project Creative Commons License

However, integrating a more refined view of “place”, inspired by theorists like Doreen Massey, can profoundly enhance students' comprehension and appreciation of global diversity and complexity (Massey, 2005). This approach involves emphasizing the diverse cultural, political, and historical aspects that shape a place, aligning with the concept that places are products of interrelations at all scales. To effectively address the gap in current EFL/CLIL approaches, this paper proposes the integration of media content and imagery into conflict teaching activities through the use of four activities (see Table 1) specifically designed to deepen students' understanding of conflict within global issues, with a focus on the complexities of Northern Ireland as a case study.

By adopting a more intricate and comprehensive approach to teaching about places and countries in EFL/CLIL global issues classes, educators can not only enrich students' learning

experiences but also develop a more inclusive and empathetic worldview. This approach aligns with the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology's educational goals of global citizenship, subjectivity and intercultural competence (MEXT, 2019), providing students with a deeper, more critical understanding of the world that surrounds them.

**Table 1**

*Overview of Conflict Related Pedagogical Activities for Northern Ireland*

Appendix	Activity	Description
A	Saving a Friend Writing Activity	In this scenario-based writing exercise, students address the serious issue of a friend considering joining a violent group, promoting critical thinking and empathy through a personal lens.
B	Power of Words and Imagery Activity	This exercise shows the impact of language and imagery in shaping perceptions, particularly in the context of the Northern Ireland conflict, encouraging students to critically analyze and interpret representations.
C	Managing Hate on Social Media Activity	This activity centers on engaging students with the challenges of hateful images and divisive content related to sectarian bonfires on social media and how they can respond to such content.
D	Bonfire Empathy and Imagination Activity	Students are encouraged to connect emotionally with the symbolic significance of burning items on sectarian bonfires, developing empathy through imaginative exercises and discussions.

### **Moving Towards Complexity and Authenticity**

As mentioned in the preceding section, the representation of places and cultures in EFL material often lacks the necessary depth and complexity for a comprehensive understanding. Gray's (2010) critical examination of ELT course books reveals a tendency towards idealized and commodified cultural portrayals and research indicates that this continues in more recent times too (Zhang & Smith, 2024). These depictions typically overshadow the complexity of local cultures and identities, and can even perpetuate cultural stereotypes that do not align with the realities of many English speakers worldwide. Similarly, Harwood (2010) illustrates how EFL pedagogical materials often present a homogenized view of the world, glossing over the complexities and heterogeneity of places. This approach, while simplifying the learning material, fails to convey the multidimensional nature of global issues, often neglecting local differences. It has been argued (Efron & Mori, 2023; Hollenback, 2017; Zhang & Smith, 2024) that the main driving force in materials is to instill practical skills

bolstering economic effectiveness which in turn reflects a neoliberal mindset and the more nuanced aspects of culture are thus squeezed out.

Earlier work by Cortazzi and Jin (1999) examined the issue of representation in EFL materials. They describe these materials as acting like selective cultural mirrors, reflecting limited perspectives and at times marginalizing or misrepresenting cultural aspects. These materials, often found in "approved" textbooks and endorsed by institutions such as universities or governments, carry significant weight with EFL learners. Cortazzi and Jin critically note, "These mirrors, predominantly reflecting limited perspectives, can act as a form of political exclusion by avoiding aspects of social, economic, political, or cultural reality" (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999, p. 200). More recent research in the Japanese context (Houghton, 2020) has shown that these limited perspectives persist via underrepresentation and simplification such as by focusing on famous landmarks in places. Such limited representations not only constrain Japanese learners' global perspectives but also impact their formation of opinions and thoughts related to the places and people being discussed.

The need for a more inclusive approach in EFL material development was emphasized in earlier research by Byram and Morgan (1994). They discussed the complexities involved in integrating cultural teaching in language education, observing that language textbooks often simplify culture by focusing on visible aspects like food, festivals, and music, while deeper cultural values, beliefs, practices, and problems are frequently overlooked. Their work advocates for an intercultural approach in language teaching, encouraging learners to critically engage with both their own and others' cultures, thus developing more intercultural communicative competence. More recent research has shown that the "static and congratulatory topics of surface culture" still persist (Gómez-Rodríguez, 2015, p. 167); thus, while Byram and Morgan's (1994) advocacy call is three decades old, it remains relevant in current circumstances.

Kramersch (1993) also points out the significance of context in the interplay between language and culture. She critiqued traditional language teaching methods for their tendency to detach language from its cultural and social contexts, which can lead to a superficial understanding of both elements. Kramersch (1993) advocated for an integrative pedagogical approach that interweaves language learning with cultural context, enabling learners to explore the meanings and uses of language in authentic settings that encompass aspects of dissent and discourse rather than stereotyped sterility. Kramersch's approach has been successfully applied in language learning settings in recent times, as evidenced by de Saint-

Léger and McGregor (2015) and Freitag-Hild (2018), whose work has helped students engage more deeply with cultural experiences during the processes of meaning-making and language learning.

Taken together, the preceding research insights lead me to call for a transformative approach in the presentation of places and cultures within EFL materials. When considered from a comprehensive view, they emphasize the importance of moving beyond oversimplified portrayals to embrace the complexity, diversity, and authenticity of different regions and cultures. This shift is not solely about enriching the content of language education but is about nurturing a wider understanding of the world among Japanese learners. By integrating more comprehensive cultural narratives, educators can ensure that language learning becomes a conduit for awareness and empathetic engagement, thus enhancing the depth and richness of the educational experience.

### **Why the Concept of “Place” Matters**

The need for a more intricate portrayal of cultures and places in EFL/CLIL materials aligns with contemporary theoretical perspectives that offer a deeper, more dynamic understanding of “place” in our increasingly complex world. Massey (2005) presents a view of place as an evolving entity, continually shaped by social interactions and cultural practices. This perspective challenges the notion of places as static, isolated units, suggesting instead that they are integral parts of broader global processes. In EFL/CLIL contexts, incorporating this perspective encourages a portrayal of places that reflects their animated and changing nature, providing a more realistic understanding of the world. Tuan (1977) emphasizes the emotional and experiential aspects of places, exploring how individuals form deep, affective connections with their environments. This exploration of how people form emotional and experiential connections with their surroundings emphasizes the importance of incorporating these dimensions into language education, enhancing students' understanding of the cultural and emotional aspects of different regions. Examining landscapes as sites of public history, Hayden (1995) notes the importance of place in collective memory and identity formation. This perspective is particularly relevant for EFL/CLIL settings, as it suggests that landscapes are not just physical spaces but also repositories of cultural and historical narratives that can greatly enrich language learning.

Lefebvre's (1991) perspective on how spaces and places shape and are shaped by social practices adds another layer of understanding to the concept of place. This view stresses the active role of places in societal dynamics, suggesting that they are deeply embedded



in the structures of power and society. Thrift (2007) also contributes to this discourse by advocating for an understanding of place that goes beyond mere representations, focusing instead on the practices and experiences that constitute them. This approach aligns with the need for EFL/CLIL materials to capture the fluid and changing nature of places, enriching students' comprehension of the complex interplay between place, culture, and society. These theoretical perspectives collectively led me to advocate for a representation of places as being interrelated processes rather than static entities. We can apply this advocacy to EFL/CLIL materials to more adequately capture their dynamic and interconnected nature. Embracing this comprehensive approach encourages a deeper appreciation of place, not just as a geographical entity, but as a crucial element intertwined with social and political processes. This shift in perspective is essential for developing an enriched global issues understanding among learners, positioning the concept of place at the forefront. Indeed, the theory of place itself deserves to be included as a dedicated strand within global issues teaching and learning, complementing practical classroom materials. Having established the significance of a comprehensive understanding of place, we now shift our focus to the specific case that forms the core of this article's activities, Northern Ireland. A place that features sparsely in EFL/CLIL content and is not well known amongst many Japanese students when they think about the UK.

### **Northern Ireland Conflict Context**

Northern Ireland is located in the northeastern part of the island of Ireland. It constitutes part of the United Kingdom and also shares a border with the Republic of Ireland. It has a population of approximately 1.9 million (NISRA, 2021) and the capital is the port city Belfast. Northern Ireland was established through the partition of Ireland in 1921 and this led to a distinctive historical and political trajectory marked by complex cultural identities and conflicts. The historical landscape of Northern Ireland is profoundly shaped by the Troubles, a term encapsulating the prolonged and complicated conflict that spanned from 1968 to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. This period was characterized by significant divisions (Hall, 2023), primarily between two groups: the nationalists/republicans, mostly Catholics advocating for unification with the Republic of Ireland, and the unionists/loyalists, primarily Protestants, who favored remaining within the United Kingdom. These divisions, deeply entrenched in historical, cultural, and political allegiances, were exacerbated by socio-economic disparities and manifested in various forms of violence and civil unrest (Bardon, 1992; Dawson, 2007; Magliacane, 2021).

Paramilitary groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), and the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) played a central part in the conflict. Specific paramilitary style youth wings were also present such as the Young Citizen Volunteers (YCV). Their activities, including bombings, shootings, assassinations, and civil unrest, were pivotal in shaping the course of the Troubles.

The activity in Appendix A addresses the issue of violent splinter groups in Northern Ireland, which continue to recruit, often targeting young people. In the activity, students engage with a challenging hypothetical scenario in which a friend is considering joining a violent group such as the ones mentioned in Northern Ireland. The goal is to develop critical thinking, empathy, and persuasive writing skills. Students write a letter to their friend, expressing their concerns, critiquing the group's actions, and considering the implications of joining a violent group. This exercise encourages students to reflect on the personal and broader societal implications of such decisions. Through writing and discussion, they explore strategies for supporting friends in difficult situations, emphasizing empathy, communication, and the role of personal intervention in preventing violence.

A notable event during this period of the Troubles was Bloody Sunday in 1972, where British soldiers shot 26 unarmed civilians during a protest march, escalating the conflict significantly (Neumann, 2003; McAuley, 2016) and a string of deadly bombings by the IRA both within Northern Ireland and in English cities. The Troubles profoundly affected Northern Irish society, leading to over 3,500 deaths, numerous injuries, and lasting societal divisions. It resulted in largely segregated communities and educational systems, with peace walls, initially erected in the 1970s, physically separating community enclaves in Belfast. These structures remain as reminders of divisions that persist in various forms today. Walls and gables are often adorned with murals throughout urban landscapes which also act as symbolic borders as well as political propaganda for violent groups (See Figure 2).

Figure 2

YCV Mural Showing the Words 'Young', 'Citizen' and Volunteer in the Center



Source: Keresasp, Creative Commons License

One way to address violent political propaganda and language/words in public murals is addressed in Appendix B. This activity centers on enhancing students' understanding of how language and imagery shape perceptions, particularly in the context of the Northern Ireland conflict. Students engage in discussions about three specific words—"Young," "Citizen," and "Volunteer"—initially exploring their positive connotations, such as community service and civic duty. However, the focus shifts when these words are examined via public wall murals in the context of the "Young Citizen Volunteers" (YCV), a paramilitary group associated with sectarian violence during the Troubles. The activity demonstrates how these seemingly harmless words were appropriated for violent purposes, prompting reflection on how language can be manipulated. This exercise encourages students to critically evaluate the power of language and imagery in shaping societal and political narratives.

The Troubles also severely impacted Northern Ireland's economy, leading to diminished investment and development, exacerbating unemployment and social deprivation (Dawson, 2007; McAuley, 2016). In tandem with deprivation a strong attachment to symbols emerged. Symbols such as flags (Figure 3) and emblems, including the Union Jack, the Irish Tricolour, Saint Patrick's Saltire, the Ulster Banner, and others, became powerful tools for expressing identity and allegiance, especially in socio-economically deprived areas. These symbols, often used during parades, protests, and public displays, reinforced community identities and sporadically fueled tensions. Sectarianism continues to be a significant issue,

particularly evident during the July and August marching seasons, when paramilitary-controlled bonfires, involving the burning of flags, political posters, and effigies of community leaders, become focal points of tension and cultural expression. The advent of social media has introduced a new dimension to these tensions, with platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and Facebook etc. becoming arenas for negative interactions and exacerbating real-world tensions (Magliacane, 2021; Jarman, 1997; Kelly et al., 2018; Hall, 2023).

One way to address this issue can be seen in Appendix C. The activity immerses students in the challenge of confronting hateful images on social media, with a focus on sectarian bonfires in Northern Ireland. It aims to develop responsible digital communication by examining real-life examples of hateful social media image posts related to the bonfires, alongside responses that counter hate with empathy. Including first-person perspectives via social media posts is important, as it deepens understanding of content, makes abstract aspects more relatable, and shows how things unfold online in connection to contentious issues. In the activity, students engage in creating their own concise social media responses, reflecting on how to constructively address hatred and sectarianism in online spaces, but within the safety of the classroom. Through discussion and reflection, the activity emphasizes the importance of compassionate communication in breaking cycles of animosity and promoting peace and understanding in digital interactions.

**Figure 3**  
*Important Flags Used in Northern Ireland*



Source: The author

The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 marked a significant milestone in the peace process, addressing various political, cultural, and social issues and laying the foundation for power-sharing between the different communities. This agreement was pivotal in bringing an end to widespread violence and setting the stage for ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts. However, the legacy of the Troubles continues to influence the socio-political dynamics in Northern Ireland, pointing to the challenges in the passage towards lasting peace and reconciliation. The historical context, the profound social and economic impacts, the position of paramilitary groups, the significance of the Good Friday Agreement, and the powerful symbolism of flags and emblems all contribute to a broad understanding of this pivotal period in Northern Irish history.

We now turn our attention to take a deeper look at a symbol of the region's ongoing divides: sectarian bonfires. These bonfires, far more than mere communal events, encapsulate the deep-rooted historical, cultural, and political symbolism that continues to shape the sectarian landscape of Northern Ireland.

### **Sectarian Bonfires**

In Northern Ireland, bonfires are not merely collective gatherings around a fire; they are laden with deep historical, cultural, and political baggage, particularly in the context of the region's sectarian divides (Hall, 2023). These events, especially prominent during the summer marching season, are deeply intertwined with the legacy of the Troubles and the broader historical conflict between nationalist/republican (mostly Catholic) and unionist/loyalist (mostly Protestant) communities. Sectarian bonfires (Figure 4) are primarily associated with two key dates in the Northern Irish calendar: the Eleventh Night (July 11<sup>th</sup> and sometimes bleeding into the 12<sup>th</sup>) and the August Bonfires (around August 15<sup>th</sup>). The former is predominantly observed by the unionist community to commemorate the victory of the Protestant King William of Orange over the Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The latter is more associated with the nationalist community, marking the introduction of internment without trial by the British Army in 1971.

These bonfires, which are becoming large in size over the years (BBC News, 2024) and often involve the gathering of large groups, marked by music, speeches, and sometimes parades, creating an atmosphere that is politically charged (Jarman, 1997).

#### Figure 4

*A Unionist/Loyalist Sectarian Bonfire Which Will Burn the Irish Tricolour and the Celtic F.C. Sports Team Jersey*



Source: JTCorscadden Creative Commons License

The materials burnt in these bonfires are highly symbolic. In unionist bonfires, it is common to find Irish Tricolour flags, effigies of nationalist figures, effigies of religious figures like the Pope, sports team jerseys (Figure 4), or other symbols associated with Catholicism. Conversely, nationalist bonfires might burn the Union Jack or effigies of unionist figures. These acts are highly provocative and are seen as a means of expressing defiance, identity, and historical grievances (Bryan, 2000). The bonfires also cause environmental harm, particularly from the burning of tires and other toxic materials, leading to air pollution and health risks. The aftermath often requires extensive cleanup efforts, straining local systems and municipal services. Additionally, the involvement of firefighting services to manage risks places a further burden on public resources. As Hall (2023) notes in the context of Northern Ireland: In some areas bonfires are dangerous and raise considerable safety and environmental concerns, particularly where they are constructed close to homes or property, or burn toxic materials. The burning of flags, emblems, election posters and other offensive images and items on bonfires also causes concern to many people. (p. 6)

The trend towards larger bonfires symbolizes a hardening of attitudes, with an increasing use of political effigies and symbols. It also links to Massey's idea (2005) of places as evolving. This practice has been criticized for perpetuating hatred and sectarianism, reflecting

growing extremism in certain segments of the community (Jarman, 1997). While some participants view the bonfires as a vital expression of cultural identity and historical remembrance, others see them as provocative and offensive, which often exacerbate tensions between communities, perpetuating divisions and hostility. The events can lead to increased policing and sometimes result in clashes between communities or with law enforcement (Bryan, 2000; Kelly et al., 2016).

As shown in Appendix D, one way to help students comprehend the symbolic and emotional weight of bonfires in Northern Ireland, especially in relation to sports teams, is presented. By imagining their own cherished sports team's jersey (or something of similar attachment) being burned in a hostile display, students are encouraged to reflect on how they would feel and respond. Through discussions with peers, they explore their emotional reactions and consider actions they might take. The exercise emphasizes the importance of empathy in understanding conflicts, using sports as a personal connection to gain deeper insights into the emotional and symbolic impact of sectarian acts in Northern Ireland. In Figure 4, an effigy of the Pope can be seen on top of the sectarian bonfire, but sports jerseys were chosen as the focal point as sports are a relatable topic for young people in many cultural contexts. This makes them an effective entry point for encouraging empathy. In contrast, symbols like the Pope may evoke strong reactions from certain groups, particularly Catholic students, but may not resonate universally, especially in countries such as Japan, where Catholicism is not prominent. By centering the activity on sports jerseys, the material remains more relatable.

### Conclusion

This paper has examined the challenges and potential strategies within EFL/CLIL settings in the context of Japan's educational approach to complex global issues in English speaking countries like conflict, such as the case in the UK with Northern Ireland. The paper flags the necessity for a more sophisticated and comprehensive method in teaching about various cultures and places, moving beyond the common practice of oversimplifying these complex topics within university level classes. The main issue addressed is the tendency in Japanese EFL/CLIL classrooms to present a simplified view of world cultures and countries which could be summarized as a "food and festivals" approach. While this approach can be helpful in early stages of language learning, it often overlooks the diverse and intricate socio-political realities of different regions which many tertiary level students are equipped to explore. The paper suggests that the simplified and sanitized approach to place may lead to a limited and incomplete understanding of global contexts and thus it is important

to integrate more detailed and context-rich content into global issues curriculum when possible.

The pedagogical activities (see Appendix A-D) presented aim to address these challenges. These activities are designed to encourage students to think critically and develop a deeper understanding of the subtleties and cultural contexts of global issues using media content and imagery. This method enhances language skills and also helps in building awareness and empathy amongst Japanese students for places that are geographically distant from Japan.

For EFL/CLIL educators teaching global issues, it is hoped the paper will provide a clear method activity integration, using the case study of Northern Ireland as a starting point. Adopting these teaching strategies can improve the learning experience, expanding beyond traditional language teaching to include a broader understanding of place-based culture. This approach is important for developing students' global awareness and intercultural skills in tandem with language.



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# Appendix A

## “Saving a Friend” Writing and Discussion Activity

### 1. Objective

#### Learning Objective

General Objective	To create persuasive letters articulating concerns about the influence of violent groups, using empathy to guide friends toward better choices
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### 2. Activity Context

This activity is for an advanced English course focused on global issues and/or conflict resolution. The course aims to deepen students’ understanding of legacy conflicts, such as those in Northern Ireland, and the impact these conflicts have on young people and communities. In the context of Northern Ireland, paramilitary groups, including youth wings similar to the YCV, continue to recruit, making the scenario highly relevant for discussing the broader social implications of violence. This activity is suitable for advanced-intermediate to advanced learners and encourages both language development and critical reflection on global issues.

#### Students

Number of students	10 Min.      30 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes
What is the second language?	English
Level(s) in target language: * See table at the end of these activities description for reference about these mastery levels.	Advanced-Intermediate   CEFR B2/C1   IELTS 5.0-6.5   TOEIC 700-900  Advanced   CEFR C1 / C2   IELTS 7.0 +   TOEIC 900+

### 3. Activity Materials & Prep

#### Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	90
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	<b>No</b>

#### Materials

Material # 1 Title:	Scenario outline for the writing activity
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZwBJtEE37kX234sNI-lfROZ6yJhF4Ci2vJU6DrN4fFc/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZwBJtEE37kX234sNI-lfROZ6yJhF4Ci2vJU6DrN4fFc/edit?usp=sharing</a>

Material #2 Title:	Discussion prompts and guidelines for the post-writing reflection
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zNbJLFYXysWZrGijlYjEwEaKRe6gr8C1RC8iG-pZJDgY/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zNbJLFYXysWZrGijlYjEwEaKRe6gr8C1RC8iG-pZJDgY/edit?usp=sharing</a>

#### Set-Up Instructions

1. Print out copies of Material #1 and Material #2. Ensure you have a copy of both for each student.
2. Prepare the classroom for writing—make sure students have access to physical writing materials.
3. Arrange the classroom in a way that allows students to engage in both independent writing and group discussions.

Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 10

#### 4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
3 minutes	Divide the class into groups with four students per group. Distribute the Saving a Friend Scenario Handout (Material #1) to all students.
5 minutes	Introduce the scenario in Material #1 and the instructions. Explain the hypothetical situation where a friend is considering joining a violent youth group like the YCV in Northern Ireland.
20 minutes	Writing time. Students work independently to write their letters using the space provided in Material #1. They should focus on constructing persuasive arguments to help their friend.
16 minutes	Sharing letters in small groups. Students take turns reading their letters to the group.
16 minutes	Class discussion. As a class, discuss the key points raised in the letters using the Discussion Guidelines in Material #2.

# Appendix B

## “Power of Words and Imagery” Activity

### 1. Objective

#### Learning Objective

General Objective	To analyze how language and imagery can be appropriated or manipulated to influence societal and political perceptions, particularly in the context of conflict.
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### 2. Activity Context

This activity is for an advanced English course focused on global issues and/or conflict resolution. The course aims to deepen students' understanding of legacy conflicts, such as those in Northern Ireland, and the impact these conflicts have on young people and communities. In this lesson, students critically examine how language and imagery are used to shape public perception, particularly during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Through analyzing words like "Young," "Citizen," and "Volunteers," students explore how paramilitary groups manipulated these terms and imagery to influence societal and political divisions.

#### Students

Number of students	10 Min.      30 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes
What is the second language?	English
Level(s) in target language:*	Advanced-Intermediate   CEFR B2/C1   IELTS 5.0-6.5   TOEIC 700-900
* See table at the end of these activities description for reference about these mastery levels.	Advanced   CEFR C1 / C2   IELTS 7.0 +   TOEIC 900+

### 3. Activity Materials & Prep

#### Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	60
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	<b>No</b>

#### Materials

Material # 1 Title:	Brainstorming Handout: "Young, Citizen, Volunteers"
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/18OMYRLUedRs3urNeez-ibxMg24SF5F9u1pzi1X4krmMg/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/18OMYRLUedRs3urNeez-ibxMg24SF5F9u1pzi1X4krmMg/edit?usp=sharing</a>

Material # 2 Title:	Image of Paramilitary Mural (Young Citizen Volunteers)
Material Type:	Webpage / website
Material Access:	<a href="https://www.virtualbelfastmuraltour.com/young-citizen-volunteers-east-belfast-mural.htm">https://www.virtualbelfastmuraltour.com/young-citizen-volunteers-east-belfast-mural.htm</a>

Material # 3 Title:	Discussion Prompts Handout
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_IEAJbqOAxFHgGClzWM-IOKZtNhRsPYysQue0uNYUgGA/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_IEAJbqOAxFHgGClzWM-IOKZtNhRsPYysQue0uNYUgGA/edit?usp=sharing</a>

## Set-Up Instructions

1. Prepare Material #1 the Word Brainstorming Handout. Print out the handout with the words "Young," "Citizen," and "Volunteers". Prepare enough copies so that each group of four students will have one handout.
2. Prepare a projector and screen to show Material #2 Website for the Paramilitary Mural. Ensure the website is displaying the Young Citizen Volunteers paramilitary mural and that it is ready to be shown.
3. Prepare Material #3 Discussion Prompts Handout. Print out enough copies of the Discussion Prompts Handout so that each student will have their own copy for the discussion portion of the activity.
4. Arrange the Classroom for Group Discussions. Organize the seating so that students can easily work in groups of four for the brainstorming session and group discussion, and later engage in a full class discussion.
Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 10-15

## 4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
3 minutes	Divide the class into groups of four students per group.
15 minutes	Distribute the word brainstorming handout (Material #1) and conduct the brainstorm. Give students' one copy of the handout (with the words "Young," "Citizen," and "Volunteers") to each group.
5 minutes	Reveal the paramilitary mural (Material #2) by projecting the image of the Young Citizen Volunteers mural using the recommended website. Explain how the words from the brainstorming session were co-opted by the paramilitary group and direct students attention to the words in the mural.
10 minutes	Distribute the discussion prompts handout (Material #3) to each student. Ask the students to reflect individually on the prompts and prepare for a group discussion.



15 minutes	Instruct the students to have a group discussion where they contribute their personal reflections and interact using the prompts from Material #3.
12 minutes	Facilitate a class-wide discussion to allow opinions from different groups to be heard on a wider basis.

# Appendix C

## “Managing Hate on Social Media” Activity

### 1. Objective

#### Learning Objective

General Objective	To develop students' ability to critically engage with hate speech on social media and encourage responsible digital communication.
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### 2. Activity Context

This activity is for an advanced English course focused on global issues and/or conflict resolution. The course aims to deepen students’ understanding of legacy conflicts, such as those in Northern Ireland, and the impact these conflicts have on young people and communities. In this lesson, students critically engage with real-life examples of hateful images on social media, in the context of sectarian bonfires in Northern Ireland. The goal is to encourage empathy and responsible digital communication.

#### Students

Number of students	10 Min.      30 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes
What is the second language?	English
Level(s) in target language: * See table at the end of these activities description for reference about these mastery levels.	Advanced-Intermediate   CEFR B2/C1   IELTS 5.0-6.5   TOEIC 700-900  Advanced   CEFR C1 / C2   IELTS 7.0 +   TOEIC 900+

### 3. Activity Materials & Prep

#### Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	60
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	<b>No</b>

#### Materials

Material # 1 Title:	Examples of Social Media Posts about Bonfires
Material Type:	Digital image
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yB94gpU-peT-fWtwxiA8GT7mzJoh0iobm5DtenqM_Fh4/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yB94gpU-peT-fWtwxiA8GT7mzJoh0iobm5DtenqM_Fh4/edit?usp=sharing</a>

Material # 2 Title:	Social Media Student Response Worksheet
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vgQ8pL0qJoFZB-_NqNOR-iNTkoH56mWfUQW6paDGc5pQ/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vgQ8pL0qJoFZB-_NqNOR-iNTkoH56mWfUQW6paDGc5pQ/edit?usp=sharing</a>

Material # 3 Title:	Managing Hate Discussion Prompts
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qSZ5PZtjJSI8NYZrm-NDZ8zd31MBaPsQHSTjQwvLcq1g/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qSZ5PZtjJSI8NYZrm-NDZ8zd31MBaPsQHSTjQwvLcq1g/edit?usp=sharing</a>

## Set-Up Instructions

1. Print the Social Media Examples (Material #1) with social media posts related to sectarian bonfires in Northern Ireland. Ensure you have a copy for each student.
2. Print the Student Response Worksheet (Material #2) and ensure you have a copy for each student. They will craft their social media responses using this worksheet.
3. Print the Discussion Prompts Handout (Material #3) for each student. The prompts will be used after the response drafting phase to guide the class discussion.
4. Arrange the classroom for group discussions. Organize seating to allow for group discussions and easy sharing of ideas during the worksheet activity and class discussion.
Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 10

## 4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
3 minutes	Divide the class into groups of four students per group.
2 minutes	Distribute printed copies of the hateful social media posts (Material #1) related to sectarian bonfires in Northern Ireland to each student.
15 minutes	Group discussion on the social media posts using Material #1. In their groups, students discuss the content of the posts, focusing on how the hate speech escalates tensions in divided communities.
15 minutes	Student Response Worksheet (Material #2). Distribute the Student Response Worksheet to each student. Ask students to individually write a concise (30-60 words) response to the hateful posts, focusing on promoting empathy and responsible communication.
10 minutes	Group sharing. In their groups, students share the responses they wrote using Material #2. Guide each group to discuss which responses they find most effective in de-escalating the hate speech.

15 minutes	Class discussion using the discussion prompts (Material #3). Distribute the Discussion Prompts Handout to each student. Lead a full-class discussion, using the prompts to guide students in reflecting on their responses, the challenges of addressing hateful social media posts.
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# Appendix D

## “Bonfire Empathy and Imagination” Activity

### 1. Objective

#### Learning Objective

General Objective	To develop students' understanding of the emotional and symbolic significance of conflict-related acts, such as sectarian bonfires in Northern Ireland.
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### 2. Activity Context

This activity is for an advanced English course focused on global issues and/or conflict resolution. The course aims to deepen students' understanding of legacy conflicts, such as those in Northern Ireland, and the impact these conflicts have on young people and communities. In this lesson, students explore the emotional significance of sectarian bonfires by imagining how they would feel if their favorite sports team's jersey (or similar item) was burnt on such a bonfire. This reflective exercise encourages students to develop empathy and understanding of how symbolic acts can fuel conflict in divided societies.

#### Students

Number of students	10 Min.      30 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes
What is the second language?	English
Level(s) in target language: * See table at the end of these activities description for reference about these mastery levels.	Advanced-Intermediate   CEFR B2/C1   IELTS 5.0-6.5   TOEIC 700-900  Advanced   CEFR C1 / C2   IELTS 7.0 +   TOEIC 900+

### 3. Activity Materials & Prep

#### Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	60
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	<b>No</b>

#### Materials

Material # 1 Title:	Sectarian Bonfires Reflection Worksheet
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cfizbt1ZSBcDe6q0ZU76C2ynJcAJotZAIBSukj-RiU4/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cfizbt1ZSBcDe6q0ZU76C2ynJcAJotZAIBSukj-RiU4/edit?usp=sharing</a>

Material # 2 Title:	Bonfire Empathy and Imagination Discussion Prompts Handout
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ACFawAle0yd6af-kkAdK0ja0jFDxRtT1v8SR3rDCGtGc/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ACFawAle0yd6af-kkAdK0ja0jFDxRtT1v8SR3rDCGtGc/edit?usp=sharing</a>

#### Set-Up Instructions

1. Print the Sectarian Bonfires Reflection Worksheet (Material #1). One copy for each student
2. Print the Discussion Prompts Handout (Material #2). One copy for each student.

3. Arrange the classroom for group discussion. Organize seating to allow for small group discussions and easy sharing of reflections during the worksheet activity and class discussion.



Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 10

## 4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
3 minutes	Divide the class into groups of four students per group.
2 minutes	Distribute the Sectarian Bonfires Reflection Worksheet (Material #1). Hand out the reflection worksheet to each student.
15 minutes	Student reflection on the worksheet using (Material #1). Ask students to take time individually to reflect and write their thoughts on the worksheet. Encourage them to focus on their emotional reactions and how the symbolic act would impact them.
15 minutes	Group sharing of reflections. In small groups, students share their reflections and discuss how they felt about the symbolic act of burning the jersey. Encourage them to consider how young people in Northern Ireland might feel when seeing symbols of their community burned.
20 minutes	Class discussion using the discussion prompts (Material #2). Distribute the Discussion Prompts Handout to each student. Lead a full-class discussion, using the prompts to guide students in reflecting on empathy, symbolic acts, and the potential for conflict resolution in divided societies.
5 minutes	Final Reflection. Wrap up the activity with a final teacher reflection on how empathy can help resolve conflicts and promote understanding in divided societies like Northern Ireland.



## English Mastery Reference Levels

TOEFL	IELTS	TOEIC	Cambridge exam	CEFR Level	Skill level
 Comparison chart of English certificates to European levels					HigherEd 
118-120	9		CPE	C2	
<b>115-117</b>	<b>8.5</b>		<b>CPE</b>	<b>C2</b>	Mastery or proficiency
110-114	8	975-990	CAE / CPE	C2/C1	
102-109	7.5	966-974	CAE	C1	
<b>94-101</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>945-965</b>	<b>CAE</b>	<b>C1</b>	Effective operational proficiency
79-93	6.5	900-960	FCE	C1/B2	
<b>65-78</b>	<b>5.5-6.0</b>	<b>785-940</b>	<b>FCE</b>	<b>B2</b>	Vantage or upper intermediate
53-64	4.5-5	785-795	FCE	B2/B1	
41-52	4	670-780	PET	B1	
<b>35-40</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>550-665</b>	<b>PET</b>	<b>B1</b>	Threshold or intermediate
<b>30-34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>225-545</b>	<b>KET</b>	<b>A2</b>	Waystage or elementary
19-29	2.0-2.5	171 -220		A1	
<b>0-18</b>	<b>1.0 - 1.5</b>	<b>120 -170</b>		<b>A1</b>	Breakthrough or beginner

Source: <http://www.higheredme.com/2017/04/11/english-test-comparison/>

### *Authors' Biography*

*John-Guy Perrem* has worked at secondary and tertiary institutions in Ireland, Sweden and Japan. His teaching and research interests are broad, and encompass Global Issues, language education and human/urban geography. Correspondence should be sent to: [jgperrem@muroran-it.ac.jp](mailto:jgperrem@muroran-it.ac.jp)