



Classroom role play



The Hewer

You live at Number 3 Francis Street with your family.

You work at the Mahogany Mine as a hewer.

Your parents came from Ireland to find work. Now you have sons working down the mine and there is a good income coming into the house. Your family has prospered well.

As a hewer you cut coal from the coal face using a pick axe. At times you are crawling on your hands and knees. You undercut the coal which is blasted to bring further coal down. You shovel this into the tub to be taken to the surface. As well as being strong, you need to understand the dangers of underground work. This comes with experience.

You work alongside miners of different religious beliefs and those with none at all. You are from a Roman Catholic family. There is no Roman Catholic church in your village, so every Sunday you walk to Stanley to attend church.

You keep whippets as a hobby, training them to catch rabbits. Betting is popular

and you also race your whippets. You meet up with friends in the local pub, and distil your own drink, known as poteen.

Several other Irish families are part of the local community and you are all friends. You send your children to a Catholic school, meet at a nearby Institute to read and discuss issues and you work closely together down the mine.

You are much better off than many Irish immigrants living in the city slums. You work very hard, but are paid well and have the security of a big family. You and your wife will always be looked after should you be injured at work.