



# DANIEL O'CONNELL AND CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

**Art and the Great Hunger exhibition, Quinnipiac  
University**

# JUNIOR CYCLE HISTORY: LEARNING OUTCOMES

## **Strand one: the nature of history**

L0 1.6 Debate the usefulness and limitations of different types of sources of historical evidence, such as written, visual, aural, oral and tactile evidence

## **Strand two: the history of Ireland**

L0 2.2 Investigate the role and significance of two leaders involved in the parliamentary tradition in Irish politics

# IRISH EMIGRATION REPRESENTED IN ART: LEARNING INTENTIONS

1. To understand **Catholic Emancipation**, an important achievement of the 19th century Irish politician **Daniel O'Connell**
2. To identify what a historical painting can tell us about an important achievement of O'Connell's
3. To evaluate the usefulness of this painting as a source for the historian

# THINK-PAIR-SHARE

What do you already  
know about Daniel  
O'Connell (1775-1847)?



# DANIEL O'CONNELL (1775-1848): THE LIBERATOR

Daniel O'Connell was a 19th century Irish politician, sometimes known as **The Liberator**.

Throughout his career he used **peaceful means** to achieve greater freedoms for Catholics living in Ireland in the mid-1800s.

One of Daniel O'Connell's greatest achievements was the granting of **Catholic Emancipation** in 1829, which allowed Catholics to sit in parliament.



# 1. DANIEL O'CONNELL: CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

In 1823, O'Connell set up the **Catholic Association** to campaign for emancipation. It cost one penny per month to join, so lots of ordinary Irish catholics could afford to become members.

O'Connell was elected to the British House of Commons in 1828. As a catholic he could not take his seat in parliament.

Fearing a rebellion in Ireland after O'Connell was elected, the British government granted **Catholic Emancipation** in April 1829.



'Derrynane' by Jack B. Yeats.  
Derrynane in Co. Kerry was  
O'Connell's homeplace.

# 1. DANIEL O'CONNELL: CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

The granting of Catholic Emancipation gave Catholics in Ireland a greater sense of freedom than they had before.

From 1829 onwards, there was a huge increase in the number of Catholic churches built in Ireland.

The following image shows Daniel O'Connell attending the **consecration** of a Catholic church. A consecration is a special ceremony in the Catholic church to make a church building sacred.



JAMES MAHONY (c.1810-59), *THE CONSECRATION OF ST. MARY'S, POPE'S QUAY, CORK*, (c.1841)





## 2. WHAT CAN A HISTORICAL PAINTING TELL US ABOUT O'CONNELL AND EMANCIPATION?

Study the painting and answer the following questions:

1. Can you identify Daniel O'Connell in this painting?
2. Based on the evidence in the painting, do you think the artist was an admirer/supporter of Daniel O'Connell?
3. What evidence can you identify to show that the catholic church was a powerful force in Ireland in the 1840s? Identify at least three pieces of evidence from the painting.
4. What message do you think this painting gives us about the importance of Catholic Emancipation in 19th century Ireland?

### 3. IS THIS PAINTING USEFUL AS A SOURCE FOR THE HISTORIAN?

In your opinion, is James Mahony's painting a useful source for the historian trying to learn about the life of Daniel O'Connell and 19th century Ireland?

Study the painting in the following slide of Daniel O'Connell's birthplace of Derrynane, Co. Kerry by the Irish artist, Jack B. Yeats.

Compare James Mahony's painting with Jack B. Yeats's painting. Which is more useful to the historian? Explain your answer.

JACK B. YEATS (1871-1957), *DERRYNANE*, (1927)



# EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Carry out further research on the life of Daniel O'Connell using the [Dictionary of Irish Biography](#), accessible free of charge through the Schools Broadband Network.