

**BEYOND THE WESTERN SEA - BOOK ONE - ESCAPE FROM HOME by AVI.  
Orchard Books, 1996**

A teacher's guide prepared by Nancy Polette, Box 455, O'Fallon, MO. 63366

**About The Book**

It is 1851. Maura and Patrick O'Connell, fifteen and twelve-year-old Irish peasants, seek to escape a country destroyed by famine and the greed of English landlords. For Sir Laurence Kirkle, eleven and son of one such English lord, America holds the promise of justice, though he steals a fortune from his father to get there. How the O'Connells and young Laurence come to share a common fate in the English city of Liverpool, embarkation port for America, makes for an adventure alive with ironic coincidence and surprise.

**I. Setting the scene: (8)**

Answer the following questions. Guess if you do not know. Support or deny your guesses by reading the information box at the end of this guide.

- A. Between 1840 and 1960, how many immigrants came to the United States (Answer in millions) \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Of the total number of immigrants in (A) how many were Irish? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. In 1860, how many out of every 100 people in the United States came from other lands? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. In the 1840s and 50s what percent of Irish citizens lived on small farms and fed their families mainly potatoes? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. When the potato crop was destroyed by disease in 1845 and 1847, how many Irish died of starvation? \_\_\_\_\_
- F. During this same time, how many Irish emigrated to the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Introducing vocabulary. (5)**

Write these words on separate slips of paper. Arrange as many of the words as you can in one sentence to describe one or more of the pictures on the front cover. You may add other words as needed with the exception of conjunctions.

devastated	woe	famine
misfortune	proclaim	cowering
hostile	prosperous	mockery
constable	remorse	agitated
congenial	insurrection	indignation
blighted	trepidation	scrutinize
distinguished	composure	scoundrel
alcove	pandemonium	deceitful
consultation	interrogation	

**III. Pre Reading Journal Sentence Starters**

Choose one for each section of the novel (before reading that section). Complete the sentence and write on the topic for five minutes. Be prepared to share orally what you have written with a small group.

**SECTION ONE: Pages 1-99**

- A. An unexpected knock at a door by a man dressed in black can lead to...
- B. Watching helplessly while your home is destroyed...
- C. An unjust punishment can lead to...
- D. A child alone in a strange city with no money...
- E. Putting yourself in the hands of strangers...

**SECTION TWO: Pages 100-203**

- A. A lodging house in the worst part of a city...
- B. Discovering that you are a prisoner of one you thought was a friend...
- C. Having an ulterior motive means...
- D. Ways to get money when you have none...
- E. Those who avoid the police are...

**SECTION THREE: Pages 203-295**

- A. When no one believes the truth...
- B. A guilty conscience can lead to actions that...
- C. The fate of a stowaway if caught is...
- D. Those who have money can always...
- E. Putting yourself in danger to help another...

**ACTIVITIES**

**Chapters One to Seven: Summary**

The O'Connells receive a letter from their father sending money for their passage to America. At the same time, their home is burned to the ground. They set off for Cork and the ship which will be the first part of their journey.

Read aloud pages 25-26. Have a debate by (28) dividing the class into two sections. Should they make the trip or should they not make the trip.

Then read pages 27-29 to see what happens.

### Chapters Eight Through Twenty-Three:

Eleven-year-old Sir Laurence Kinkle is beaten severely by his brother, Albert, with their father's permission. Laurence runs away, taking 1000 pounds from his father's desk. He loses the money to a ruffian on the street. Meanwhile, Lord Kinkle hires Mr. Pickler to find his son and Albert hires Mr. Clemspool to make sure Laurence is not found. Clemspool finds Laurence on the train to Liverpool and pretends to be his friend.

- A. Describe the London of the 1850s as Laurence saw it using this model:

London is (color) \_\_\_\_  
It sounds like \_\_\_\_  
It smells like \_\_\_\_  
It tastes like \_\_\_\_  
It looks like \_\_\_\_  
It made Laurence feel like \_\_\_\_

- B. Find a famous painting. In one paragraph tell which of the characters you have met so far would like the painting. Give reasons why.

### Chapters Twenty-Four through Thirty-Four:

After a difficult crossing, Maura and Patrick reach Liverpool. Toggs, an unscrupulous runner, tells them the place they were to stay has burned down. He takes them to a run down lodging house filled with the poorest of the poor. A poor actor, Mr. Drabble, warns them that they might never be able to leave. Meanwhile, Laurence is taken to a hotel by Clemspool and after discovering that he is really the man's prisoner, escapes and is alone on the Liverpool streets with no money.

- A. Write a riddle report about one of the story settings: The Village of Killony, London, Liverpool or On board The Queen of the West. Use this model:

Let's go to long ago places and see the Earth's changing faces.  
We will see (list 4-6 sights)  
But that's not all (list 4-6 more sights)  
Do you know where we are?

Give the answer.

- B. During this period of time, Victoria was Queen of England. Research her life and report in an acrostic poem or play the "To Test the Truth" game.

### THE "TO TEST THE TRUTH" SHOW

Hostess:

Welcome to the To Test The Truth Show. Three people are pretending to be Queen Victoria of England but only one is the real queen. It is up to you to decide which one. Now let's meet our guests.

Victoria I.

My name is Queen Victoria. I became Queen at the age of eighteen and ruled for 63 years gaining the respect and veneration of my people.

Victoria II.

I was a very young Queen at a time when people did not respect the throne. But during my rule labor conditions improved and education became compulsory.

Victoria III.

Being an only child I was carefully reared and had little contact with the outside world so becoming Queen at a young age was quite bewildering for me.

Hostess: Tell us more.

Victoria I.

During the fifty years of my reign there were many wars but my leadership brought each to a successful conclusion.

Victoria II.

During my reign upper and lower Canada were united and given self-government.

Victoria III.

Ignoring my brother's advice, in 1877 I became Empress of India and seized control of Egypt.

Hostess:

Now it is time to vote on the real Queen Victoria. We will vote by a show of hands. Is it number 1, number 2, or number 3? Now for the moment you have all been waiting for. Will the real Queen Victoria please stand?

### Chapters Thirty-Five Through Fifty-Four:

Patrick disappears and Maura goes looking for him. Laurence meets up with Toggs who enlists his aid in robbing a ship. The police arrive and Toggs runs away. Laurence and Patrick meet on the docks and are taken in by a minister who feeds them. Patrick promises Laurence a ticket to America and finds his way back to Maura. Meanwhile, the police, Mr. Pickle and Mr. Clemspool are all looking for Laurence.

- A. Choose one and complete the sentence below:  
spinning wheel, rusty spigot, empty bow, locked safe, tornado, door hinge  
Injustice is like \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.

B. By now you can see that the life of an immigrant was very hard. Compile a book titled H IS FOR IMMIGRANT. Each page should explain how the H word is related to immigrants and be illustrated.

haggard, hand-to-hand, health officer, hunger, harvest, hoax, harbor, hostility, hardship, homeless, hovel... add other H words you can think of.

**Chapters Fifty-Five Through Seventy-Four:**

Another runner, Fred befriends Laurence and hides him away until it is time to board the ship. Fred hides Laurence in a crate which is put aboard the ship. He tells Patrick that when the ship is underway, Patrick must release Laurence. Patrick, Maura and Mr. Drabble board the ship for America where they learn that anyone who helps a stowaway will receive the same punishment as the stowaway. Patrick knows that if he doesn't help Laurence, Laurence will die.

**Research Idea:**

Choose one of these famous immigrants. Compile a data bank about the person. Use the information from the data bank in one of the patterns that follow:

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| John Aubudon          | Albert Einstein  |
| Enrico Fermi          | John Muir        |
| Alexander Graham Bell | Andrew Carnegie  |
| Irving Berlin         | Arturc Toscanini |
| Joseph Pulitzer       | Knute Rockne     |
| Greta Garbo           |                  |

**SAMPLE DATA BANK**

Lived (when/where)	Description	Had
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Remembered For	Related To	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	

**A. THE BIO POEM**

First name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Four traits \_\_\_\_\_  
 Related to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cares deeply about \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who feels \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who needs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who gives \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who fears \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who would like to see \_\_\_\_\_  
 Resident of \_\_\_\_\_

**B. THE ACROSTIC**

A lways curious  
 L ate in speaking  
 B orn in Germany  
 E ffort to be sociable  
 R ejected by the Munich Institute of Technology  
 T eachers thought he was not bright

E instein was his last name  
 I nterested in relativity  
 N ot appreciated in his homeland  
 S tudent of mathematics  
 T hought fantasy was important  
 E ffort to communicate verbally  
 I nvestigated Theory of Relativity  
 N ew American

**C. FORTUNATELY/UNFORTUNATELY**

Tell about the person's life using this pattern:

**FORTUNATELY** Albert Einstein was born in Germany

**UNFORTUNATELY** he had to leave Germany because Hitler did not like the Jews

**D. FACT AND FICTION BOOK**

Make a statement about the person on one page. Tell whether the statement is fact or fiction and why on the next.

**Reading for the quiz on page one:**

In the 1840s and 50s, over half of all Irish citizens worked on small farms or for wealthy British landowners. Their main food was the potato and over one million died of starvation when the crop failed in 1845 and 1847. Another million came to the United States where 13 out of every 100 people were from other lands. The total of immigrants who came to the United States between 1840 and 1860 was 4,311,465.

I. The immigrants who boarded the crowded ships for the New World could bring only what they could carry. Which of these items would you bring?

books _____	tools _____
bread _____	shoes _____
basket _____	blanket _____
first aid kit _____	dishes _____

AN ELLIS ISLAND CHRISTMAS by Maxinne Leighton. Viking, 1992. Taking only what they can carry a family makes the difficult voyage to the new world.

Kryisia = K, Mother = M, Brother = B

K: My name is Kryisia and I traveled with my mother and brother

M/B: from Poland

K: to join our father in the United States.

All: We could take from home only what we could carry.

K: I cried when mother said I could

M: take only one doll. Clothes, shoes, blankets and good black bread

K: were more important she said.

All: By the tenth day at sea we were all ill.

B: The waves beat against the ship and made it rock back and forth.

K: When we reached New York

M: we were taken to a big room

All: to be seen by a doctor.

K: I did not see papa anywhere. Then we went into a room with a Christmas tree

B: and a kind lady gave us food.

K: Still papa was no where to be seen. Then mama reached into her basket and gave me something to lift my spirits.

M: Can you guess what it was?

All: To find out, read AN ELLIS ISLAND CHRISTMAS.

II. Non-Fiction: THE AMAZING POTATO by Milton Meltzer. Harper, 1992.

The important role of the potato throughout history with a special section on the Irish potato famine.

Activity: A Potato Race! In one minute...How many ways can you cook potatoes? Name uses of a potato other than as a food. How many words can you make from POTATO?

III. WILDFLOWER GIRL by Marita Conlon-McKenna. Illustrated by Donald Teskey. Holiday House, 1992.

Work with a friend or small group to answer yes or no to the questions below. GUESS if you do not know. Then support or deny your guesses by reading or listening to the booktalk.

1. In 1850 thirteen-year-olds in the United States could have full time jobs. \_\_\_\_
2. In the 1850s the Irish who came to America found jobs mostly as laborers or maids. \_\_\_\_
3. The Irish were welcomed by employers in the United States. \_\_\_\_
4. An employer was allowed to beat a child employee at any time. \_\_\_\_

WILDFLOWER GIRL by M. McKenna. Holiday House, 1992. Peggy immigrates to America but finds that immigrants have few rights.

Narrator One = N1, Peggy = P, Mrs. Cavendish = MC  
Narrator Two = N2

N1: Thirteen-year-old Peggy O'Driscoll can find no work in her small village in Ireland so she

P: sets off on a terrifying voyage to America and arrives in the big city of Boston

N2: to find work as a maid to Mrs. Cavendish,

MC: a drunken landlady who runs a boarding house.

N1: Peggy is

P: overworked and underfed.

N2: Then one night Mrs. Cavendish is missing and the men want their supper.

N1: Peggy finds

P: only eggs to cook and fixes them for the men.

N1: Much later that night Peggy

P: is awakened by blows from the landlady. She refuses

MC: to listen to Peggy's explanation for the missing eggs and beats the girl severely.

P: Left alone with a bloody face and a missing tooth

N1: Peggy vows

P: to run away.

N2: But where will she run to? Signs in every store window say "NO Irish Need Apply."

P: Anything would be better than this,

N1: Peggy thinks, as she carefully makes her way

P: down the stairs and out the door.

N2: To discover what happens to Peggy and how she makes her place in the New World, read:

ALL: WILDFLOWER GIRL.

IV. AMERICAN, TOO by Elisa Bartone. Lothrop, 1996. An Italian girl faces difficulties in being accepted as an American, too.

V. OF BLOOD AND HOPE by S. Pizar. Little Brown, 1985. An autobiography of a concentration camp survivor who became one of America's most distinguished lawyers.