

The Great Famine



In Dublin today there is a statue of victims of the Great Irish Famine

From 1845 to 1849, millions of poor Irish farmers died or became refugees due to hunger. This famine was triggered by the potato blight, a disease that made potatoes inedible. But as we will see, it was the result of many much bigger problems.

Links to previous topics:

Exploration:

The Potato came to Ireland from South America.

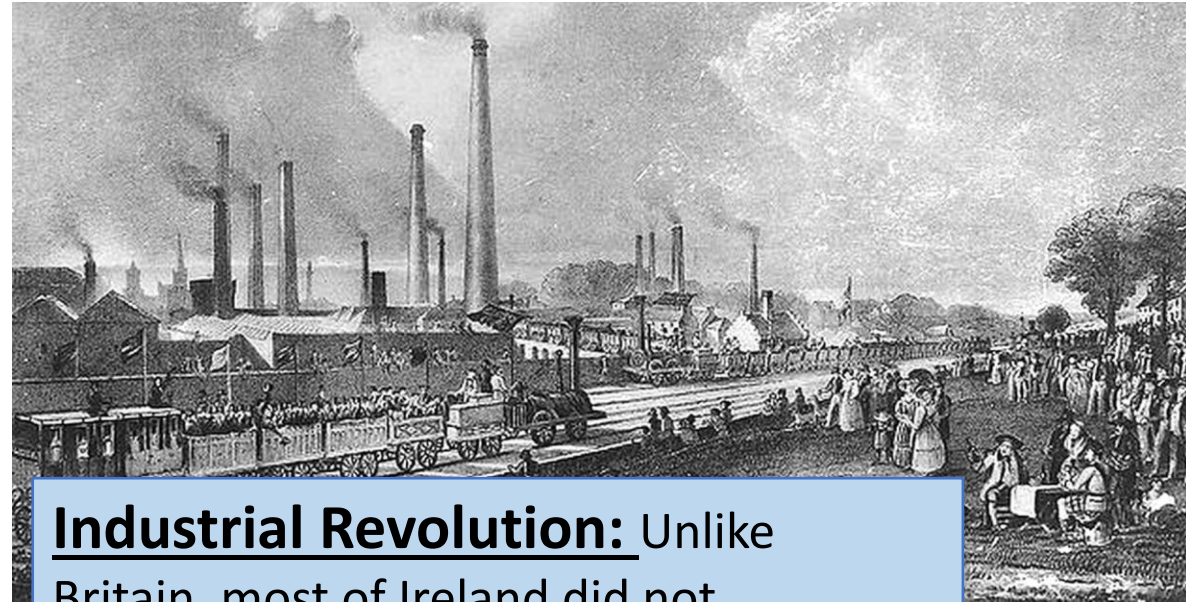
1798 Rebellion:

The failure of the rebellion meant Ireland was ruled by British politicians who let the famine happen.



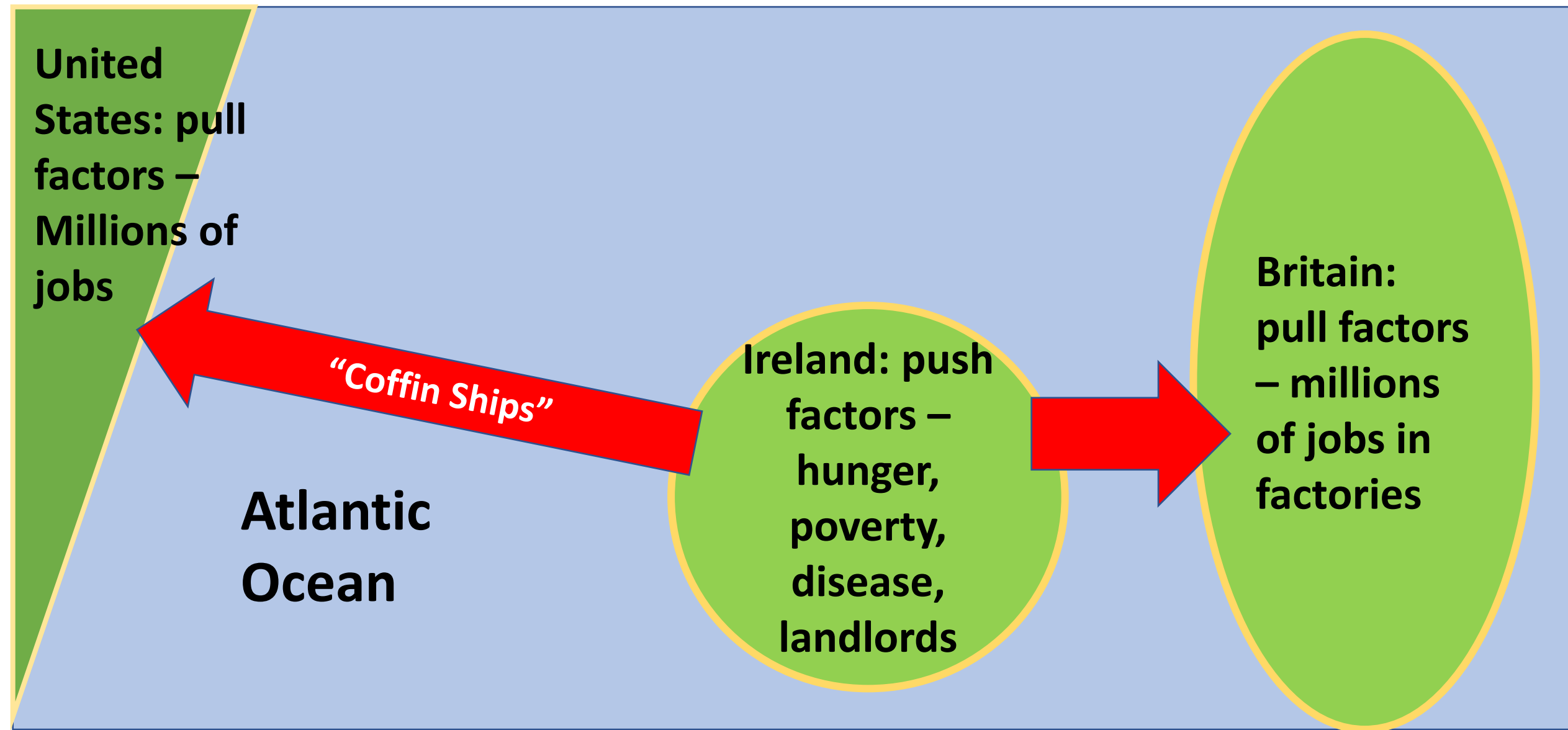
Reformation:

Rich landlords were mainly Protestant, poor farmers mostly Catholic.



Industrial Revolution: Unlike Britain, most of Ireland did not industrialise. Most Irish people were farmers living in poverty.

Emigration – The Great Famine led to 3 million people emigrating to Britain and the United States between the 1840 and 1860. Link to **Geography – migration – push and pull factors**





“Coffin ships”: a dangerous 6-week voyage across the Atlantic ocean in overcrowded conditions



Clips from *Black 47*, 2018, Directed by Lance Daly

Questions on Clip 1

1. In what year did 'a terrible famine' begin in Ireland?
2. Fill in the blank: 'one in _____ of our people would be gone forever.'
3. What happened to all these people?
4. What empire ruled Ireland at the time?
5. Describe in your own words what you see in this clip.



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Questions on Clip 2

1. Who is carrying out the eviction?
2. Why are these people being evicted?
3. What do you think the two men are doing on the roof?



Responses to the Famine

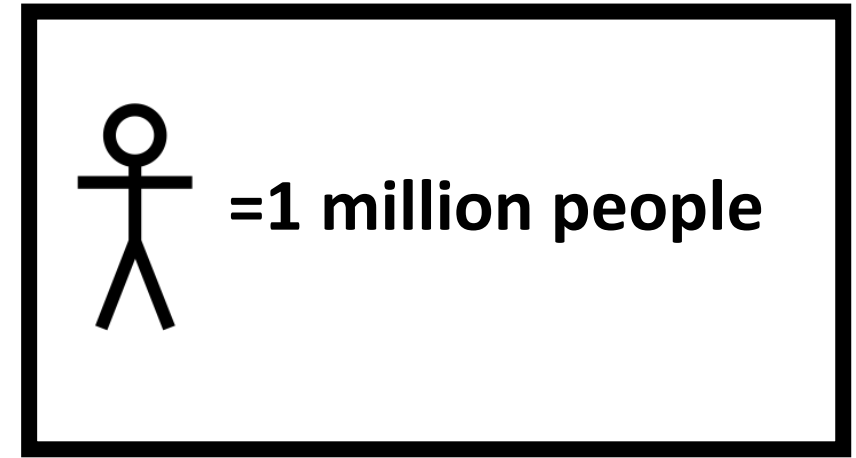
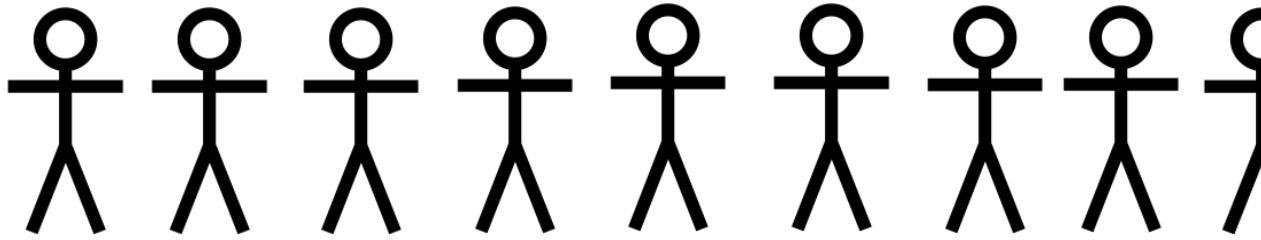
British government:

- Work schemes – “famine roads”.
- Workhouses.
- Maize – “Peel’s Brimstone”

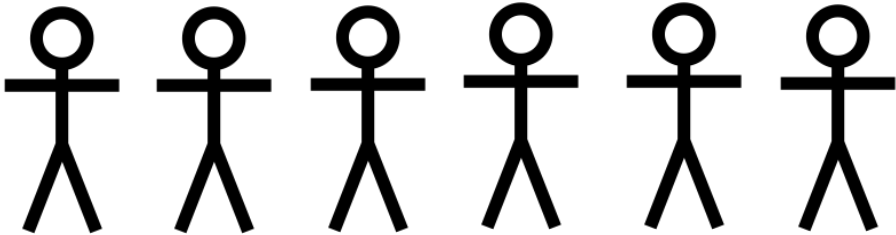
The Famine caused huge international sympathy for Ireland. For example:

- The Emperor of Turkey sent shiploads of food to Ireland
- A very poor Native American community, the Choctaw Nation, donated food to Ireland
- Many British people donated food, clothes and money, especially early on in the Famine

Ireland before the Famine – 8.5 million people



Ireland after the Famine – 6 million people



Relief efforts

Work schemes led to more deaths – hungry people doing hard labour were vulnerable to disease.

For a while, the government opened soup kitchens and fed millions of people.

However they shut down these soup kitchens after less than a year.

Religious groups such as the **Quakers** and other groups organised huge famine relief efforts.



Why did the British government not help more?

Under the Act of Union (1801), Ireland and Britain were one country, so the British government was responsible for helping Irish people. But many British people had negative attitudes toward the Irish.

- “It’s their own fault for having too many kids”
- “Let them help themselves”
- “It’s God’s punishment for their sins”
- “This will help the Irish in the long run”
- “They must learn to work harder, like us”
- “We’ve already given too much, and look, they’re still starving.”
- “They’re ungrateful and rebellious.”

