Oisín’s journey: put the story in order

Read the short telling, then number the six event boxes from 1 to 6. No cutting is needed.

A short telling

Niamh invited Oisín to the Land of Youth. They crossed the sea together on a white horse. Time passed happily there, but Oisín missed Ireland. Niamh let him return and warned him to stay on the horse. In Ireland he found that his companions were gone and their home was in ruins. He leaned down to help some men lift a heavy stone. The saddle-girth broke and his feet touched the ground. The horse fled, and Oisín became an old man who remembered his lost friends and Niamh.

Six events, mixed up

Write 1 beside the earliest event and 6 beside the latest.

- ☐ A The saddle-girth breaks as Oisín helps lift a stone. He touches the ground and becomes old.
- ☐ B Niamh invites Oisín to the Land of Youth.
- ☐ C Oisín finds Ireland changed and his companions gone.
- ☐ D After time in the Land of Youth, Oisín misses Ireland.
- ☐ E Niamh allows the return journey but warns him to stay on the horse.
- ☐ F Oisín and Niamh cross the sea on a white horse.

Why does Oisín want to return? Use a detail from the telling.

Oisín's journey: put the story in order

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Correct order

B, F, D, E, C, A. The numbers in the printed boxes are A=6, B=1, C=5, D=3, E=4 and F=2.

Explaining the choice

Oisín misses Ireland and his companions. Accept a short answer supported by the retelling. Invite learners to think about why someone might miss home even in a wonderful place.

What happens at the end?

In Joyce's account the saddle-girth breaks while Oisín helps men with a stone at Glenasmole. His feet touch the earth, the horse leaves and he loses his youth, strength and sight. He survives to tell his story to Patrick. Do not replace this with an immediate-death ending.

What has been shortened?

The worksheet selects six major events. It omits the adventures on the outward journey, including a rescue and combat, and compresses the return. Joyce says more than three hundred years feel like three to Oisín. Names are modernised from Oisin, Niam and Tirnanoge. The adaptation is original wording, not a quotation.

One telling, with other versions to explore

The source is P. W. Joyce, Old Celtic Romances, first published 1879; consulted 1920 edition, "Oisin in Tirnanoge; or, The Last of the Fena", pp. 385-399. Other accounts change the journey and the event that brings Oisín to earth. Keep them separate when comparing them in the linked story entry.

Try another perspective

Invite the learner to write three sentences from Niamh's point of view. Underline a detail supported by the passage and circle one they invented. Older learners can compare Oisín's lost time with Thomas the Rhymer's absence, without treating the stories as identical.

Read Joyce at Project Gutenberg · Explore the tellings at The Myths

Suggested for ages 7-11 with reading support. The story has a sad ending; discuss loss gently and adapt the conversation to the learner.