



learn  
a  
language

# Cultural Classroom

Lesson 3: Ireland

## *Slainte! To your health and happiness!*

*With his red hair and ruddy complexion, Tommy O'Donnell seems to fit the image of the jolly Irishman to a "T." As soon as you walk into the pub that bears his name you are welcomed by his bright smile and a friendly "Now, what will you be having?" And he's more than happy to serve you up a pint or two -- it's his business, after all. Just don't ask him to join you in lifting a glass.*

*"Yes, it's true. I'm that rare bird: teetotal Irish!" he admits, with a mischievous grin. "And I'm glad I'm rare. Otherwise, how would I be making a living running a pub in Ireland?!"*

*Actually, tending bar is a perfect "cover" for Tommy's teetotaling: His customers who come in for a wee bit o' pleasant conversation or just to pass the time are unlikely to notice that their host behind the bar is not himself indulging as they raise a glass of whiskey or a foaming pint of stout and drink to Tommy's health and the success of his fine drinking establishment.*

*Tommy's pub is a classic Irish pub, with dark wood everywhere, timber floors, brass accents, and green glass, not to mention the sort of relaxed atmosphere ideal for cheerful, carefree hours of conversation, singing, storytelling -- and drinking, of course. But as Tommy's teetotaling reminds us, pubs in Ireland are much more than just places for bending an elbow; they provide a unique social experience: part living room, part music hall, part confessional, part debating society.*

*Like all Irish pub owners, Tommy's goal is to make people feel at home in his establishment, to give them the opportunity to talk or sing and just relax in a sort of refuge from the world. If a disagreement arises (most often between drunken men), Tommy handles the situation with the usual Irish grace and style. The offenders are gently but firmly invited to step outside and have with their donnybrook, and, once it is over, they are welcomed back inside and encouraged to buy drinks for each other and to forget about whatever it was that gave rise to their argument in the first place.*

*In Tommy's pub you can throw darts, shoot pool, play shuffleboard, organize a game of cards, or just sit around complaining about the boss and the politicians, but whatever you do, Tommy wants all his clientele to find companionship and a safe haven. Tommy relishes his self-appointed status as social director and peacemaker and knows that his task would be that much harder if he took a drop himself. Other than that, he won't say why he's on the wagon or even if he was ever a tippler. The few regulars who know of his sworn sobriety know enough not to ask him about it. For them, it's enough to know that Tommy's serves the best drink in Dublin and -- more importantly -- that Tommy himself serves up the warmest welcome.*

## You can't get more **English** than that!

### READING FOR DETAIL

1. What two drinks are mentioned by name in the text?
2. Name five non-speaking activities engaged in by customers of Tommy's pub.
3. Name five activities involving speaking engaged in by customers of Tommy's pub.
4. Where does Tommy usually position himself in the pub?
5. Does Tommy like playing the role of peacemaker? What word in the text tells you?

### GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In what ways does Tommy fit the image of the typical Irishman? In what ways does he not fit the image?
2. Describe the typical Irish pub. Does Tommy's pub fit this description?
3. How does Tommy -- as a teetotaling bartender -- "fit" in his pub?

### STUDYING THE LANGUAGE

1. Fill in the blanks (refer to the text):
  - a) What will you be \_\_\_\_\_?
  - b) Don't ask him to join you in \_\_\_\_\_ a glass.
  - c) How would I be \_\_\_\_\_ a living \_\_\_\_\_ a pub in Ireland?!
  - d) Actually, \_\_\_\_\_ bar is a perfect "cover" for Tommy's \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e) They are unlikely to notice that their host is not himself \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f) They sit around \_\_\_\_\_ about the world.
2. Fill in the blanks (refer to the text):
  - a) The bartender is happy \_\_\_\_\_ you.
  - b) The customers come in just \_\_\_\_\_ the time.
  - c) They are unlikely \_\_\_\_\_ that Tommy is not drinking.
  - d) Tommy's goal is \_\_\_\_\_ people feel at home.
  - e) He gives them the opportunity \_\_\_\_\_ freely.
  - f) The brawlers are invited \_\_\_\_\_ outside.
  - g) They are encouraged \_\_\_\_\_ about their disagreement.
  - h) Tommy wants all his customers \_\_\_\_\_ companionship.
  - i) His customers know enough not \_\_\_\_\_ him about his teetotaling.
3. Which of the following refer to drinking (D) and which refer to not drinking (ND)?
  - a) teetotaling \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) raising a glass \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) bending an elbow \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) indulging \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) taking a drop \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) to be on the wagon \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) to be a tippler \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) sobriety \_\_\_\_\_
4. What do the following pairs of words have in common?
  - a) "haven" & "refuge"
  - b) "red" & "ruddy"
  - c) "pub" & "drinking establishment"