This soundscape represents the story of the Irish/Gaeilge language. Very similar to both Scotts Gaelic and Welsh, the Irish language story is not a happy story, but it has an optimistic ending. The language begins slowly as it is brought over by the Celts and slowly takes hold. What first began as place names mostly in Ogham inscriptions grew to a primitive language and evolved into what is now considered old Irish. This is represented in the first 15 seconds of the soundscape. You can hear the countryside and birds chirping as a signifier of the peace and growth that the Irish language was experiencing.

We start to witness the change in the language as England takes over Ireland. You hear the gusts of wind to symbolize the influx of the English. The forceful nature of the wind perfectly encompasses the occupation. For this clip, I reduced the amplification so that the wind could be the main sound. With the wind comes a storm and you hear both rain and thunder. The initial countryside track is reduced to nothing so that the all-consuming occupation could be spotlighted. Under English rule, there was a large-scale immigration to Ireland and the Irish people were forced to abandon their culture, their language, and their land. There are a series of rebellions, a civil war, and a famine that I have encompassed into the storm section of the soundscape, with the marching, and the gravely footsteps adding the uneasiness of the time.

The turmoil lasts for a handful of years and English takes over as the main language. The Great Famine caused the loss of millions of lives, including a substantial loss of those who spoke Gaeilge. Trying to encapsulate the death of the language was a challenge. As the English literally squash the language to near extinction, I chose to use two different audio clips with marching or stomping. I layered the storm and faded some sounds out to ease into the next. You can hear the marching still, but also the falling and rustling of leaves. It signifies what we experience in autumn as the trees slowly lose their leaves and become barren similar to Gaeilge slowly being replaced by English.

After Ireland gained its independence, they began to standardize and revitalize the language. Gaeilge is now a required subject taught in school, it is the official language of the Republic of Ireland, and they have designated Gaeltacht’s, which are small, designated areas where the primary language spoken is Gaeilge. You can hear this change as the leaves began to change into the spring, symbolizing the rebirth of Ireland as a free state and the language. The wind chimes symbolize hope and prosperity, and they make way for the optimistic sounds that fade out into the Irish traditional music. Ireland made a conscious effort to make Gaeilge a priority in the country. With the resurgence of the language, you get joy and happiness, but also the soul of the country.

Throughout the soundscape, I learned how to split and join tracks as I adjusted the audio to what I needed to convey the feeling of the moment. The initial audio was several minutes long, and I was able to trim it down to the hopeful sounds in the beginning but joined it with some rain audio to add onto the storm and turmoil layering. By zooming in and out of the audio, I was able to locate the best points and was able to highlight and trim the clips with greater accuracy. I moved the sounds around a lot as I needed them to overlap and layer at fixed points. I enjoyed being able to highlight areas and replay them until I achieved the exact sound I wanted.

I also enjoyed the amplify tool. Being able to take a sound completely down to emphasize another or to quiet a sound so as not to overpower the layering was beneficial to my soundscape. I especially loved the storm and silencing the countryside line so that the thunder and wind could take precedence in that moment. The storm and turmoil took a lot of adjustment because I wanted it to be dynamic and distinct from the rest of the piece. I found that by highlighting the end of a clip and fading out, I was able to control the length of the fade out. This was a fantastic skill to learn because the clips are relatively short and just choosing fade in or fade out would adjust the entire clip and I still wanted the bold parts to remain bold.

Thank you for listening!