Two views of one school

Two views of country schools

Name _____ Date _____

These two sources are about the same real school, Kill National School in County Kildare. One is a man remembering starting there about 1848. The other is a government inspector who visited in 1868.

READ

Read this memory of starting at Kill National School.

> I was sent to the National School in Kill when I was six. My eldest brother [...] was the smartest boy in the school. He could demonstrate the 45th problem in Euclid with his back to the blackboard, and my uncles had similar reputations, so that Dowling, the schoolmaster, was surprised at finding that I couldn't learn the alphabet. He sent for my father one day, and after a long consultation put me on a seat nearer to the alphabet card. In a few minutes I was able to call out all the letters, and thus the discovery was made that I had short sight. After that I made rapid progress, but at that time giving spectacles to a little boy or girl was never thought of. If I had got them then and been coaxed to wear them perhaps I shouldn't have so much difficulty in writing this after three operations (two major and one minor) for cataracts.

A man remembers starting at his country school. John Devoy, Recollections of an Irish Rebel (1929), page 378. Public domain.

READ

Read this inspector's report on the same school in 1868.

> 122. The Kill national school is under the management of the parish priest, and contains separate departments for boys and girls. [...] The rooms were quite large enough to accommodate many more children than were present when I visited the school, and were in excellent repair, but wanted more light and ventilation. [...] In one school twenty-nine boys were present, of whom only four were above the second class. [...] The dictation exercise was singularly bad, but the arithmetic was good. [...] The schoolmaster was unassisted. [...] His salary, in the year 1868, was £31 6s. 5d., of which the Commissioners paid £28, and the rest was derived from school-fees. [...]
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> 123. In the other school-room were twenty-nine girls, of whom five were in the third class, the rest in the first or second class. [...] The children were exceedingly neat, and very quiet and orderly. [...] The mistress appeared to be thoroughly efficient in all respects. [...]

An inspector's report on a country school, 1868. Thomas King, report on the Dublin District, Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland), Vol. II (1870), pages 27 and 28. Public domain.

Lesson 1

WHO TELLS US?

Who tells us this? Circle Devoy, the inspector, or both.

He started school at Kill when he was six.	Devoy	the inspector	both
Short sight was the reason he had seemed slow to learn.	Devoy	the inspector	both
The rooms needed more light and fresh air.	Devoy	the inspector	both
The master's salary in 1868 was about thirty-one pounds.	Devoy	the inspector	both
There was a schoolmaster at Kill National School.	Devoy	the inspector	both
Boys went to Kill National School.	Devoy	the inspector	both

LIMITS

Write one thing Devoy's memory cannot tell us, and one thing the inspector's report cannot tell us.

Devoy's memory cannot tell us

The inspector's report cannot tell us

Key words

source · memory · evidence · perspective