

technology

Technology in Irish life: advantages and drawbacks

Lesson at a glance

Open with two or three everyday technologies pupils used before school and leave the hook open: is the newest tool always best? Model a bus-tracker versus paper-timetable comparison aloud, then groups of three or four become experts on one Irish technology—bus tracker, weather app or smart-farming tools—using a five-card research set. They compare with-technology and without-technology ways of doing the same job, capture the comparison on the ComparisonTable Investigation Journal page, present which option suits which setting, and close with a talk on when helpful tech becomes a problem.

Learning objectives

- Compare two ways of doing a job with and without a chosen technology
- Weigh advantages and drawbacks depending on how and where the technology is used
- Present which option suits which setting with clear reasons

Before the bell – prep

Print one full research card set (A, B or C) per group the day before; spread all three technologies across the room. Print the ComparisonTable Investigation Journal pages. Push desks into groups of three or four; scrap paper and pencils ready for rough notes.

Materials

Item	Qty	Per	Source	Low-cost substitute
research card sets (bus tracker, weather app, smart farming)	1	group	provided printable	handwritten card copies on scrap paper using the same full texts
scrap paper for rough notes	2	group	classroom	the back of used worksheets
pencils	1	pupil	classroom	any writing implement already in pencil cases
Investigation Journal page	1	pupil	provided printable	ruled paper; pupils write headings for technology, job, with/without, three judge-bys, helps/problems, and two places

**Safety watch-point**

Ordinary classroom movement only. If any group glances at a real app on a class tablet, keep it teacher-supervised and brief—the cards alone are enough.

**Teaching moves**

- **Getting Started:** Keep it light—two or three hands-up examples of tech used before school only. Pose the hook ‘Is the newest tool always the best tool for the job?’, take one or two quick answers, and leave the debate open. Do not hand out cards or the full judging list yet.
- **Weighing a technology:** Project only the short board definitions of advantage, drawback and setting—about six minutes total. Model the worked bus-tracker versus paper-timetable comparison aloud (helps, problems, then ‘the setting decides’). Head off ‘I like it / I don’t’ answers by insisting on job-linked reasons: speed, certainty, cost, who can use it, what fails first.
- **Research one Irish technology:** Give each group one card set and about 22 minutes. Project the pupil checklist so every group follows the same order. Circulate and press for judge-bys linked to the job—prompt ‘Who is this for? What breaks first? Who is left out?’ Rough notes stay on scrap paper; neat work waits for the journal page.
- **Record the comparison:** Each pupil records on the ComparisonTable Investigation Journal page: job and technology, both ways, at least three judge-bys, helps and problems linked to those, and two places with a recommended option plus a short why. If a group stalls, send them back to Cards 4 and 5, or model one spoken line from the bus-tracker example.
- **Present which suits which setting:** Plan three live groups (about one minute each plus one listener question). Other groups run a one-minute journal-page gallery swap. Listen for job-linked reasons and a genuine place contrast—revoice any ‘app always wins’ claim. Protect the next talk: if time is tight, drop to two live slots and the gallery rather than cutting step 6.
- **Big questions about technology in our lives:** Use Irish angles: screen time at home, devices in school tasks, rural broadband gaps. Collect three pair endings of ‘A good technology choice depends on...’ and write the strongest on the board (place, user, what fails, cost, fairness).

**What it should show**

A successful group names the job, both ways of doing it, at least three job-linked judge-bys, and opposite recommendations for two settings—not ‘the app always wins’. Expect city/good-signal settings to favour the tech and rural/dead-battery/no-phone settings to favour the simpler way. Vague ‘we like phones’ notes mean they have not used the cards; send them back to Cards 2–5.



Misconceptions & interventions

- **Pupils treat advantage as ‘I like it’ and drawback as ‘I don’t like it’.** — Push for job-linked reasons only: speed, how sure you can be, cost, who can use it, what happens when it fails. Hold up one research card and ask ‘What does the card say the tool actually improves or costs?’
- **Pupils conclude the newest digital option is always the best for every place.** — Point them at Card 5 places and ask which setting would break the tech first—dead battery, weak signal, no phone, storm night. Revoice: ‘Same job, different place, different winner.’
- **Pupils list features of the gadget instead of comparing two ways of doing the job.** — Reset with the checklist: say the job in one sentence, name with-it and without-it, then judge both. Model: ‘Job: catch the bus. With: live tracker. Without: paper timetable.’

Differentiation

Emerging	Developing	Proficient
• Give the group two ready judge-by prompts (speed; what happens when it fails) and ask them to add one more of their own from the cards. • Model one full spoken comparison line before they write on the Investigation Journal page.	• Prompt a second setting from Card 5 so their two place recommendations genuinely oppose each other. • Ask ‘Who is left out if this service is app-only?’ before they finalise drawbacks.	• Insist on one advantage and one drawback for each way of doing the job, plus two places with opposite recommendations and clear whys. • During the gallery or listener slot, critique another group’s comparison for a missing failure case or fairness angle.

Cross-curricular hook

Link to Geography’s urban and rural Irish places, and to oral language as groups present a one-minute recommendation.