

## Why I fell in love with Irish dancing

Morgan Bullock is an African-American Irish dancer. Watch this video to find out about her story.

### Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the exercises. You can also read the transcript.

### Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

#### Vocabulary

- ..... a recital
- ..... to go viral
- ..... tanner
- ..... inappropriate
- ..... cultural appropriation
- ..... Riverdance
- ..... to have guts
- ..... to postpone

#### Definition

- a. taking things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing you understand or respect it
- b. something you apply to your skin to make it look sun-tanned
- c. to be brave and determined
- d. a performance of dance, music, poetry, etc.
- e. a popular theatrical show of traditional Irish music and dance
- f. to become very popular very quickly on the internet
- g. to delay an event and plan that it should happen at a later date
- h. not suitable for a particular condition

### Task 1

Write a number (1–8) to put the events from Morgan's life in the correct order.

\_\_\_\_\_ The US Riverdance tour was postponed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Morgan went viral on TikTok with her Irish dancing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Morgan is ready to perform with Riverdance whenever the tour takes place.

\_\_\_\_\_ She started going to classes a few times a week and attended dance competitions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Morgan was invited onto a very popular Irish radio show.

\_\_\_\_\_ When she was a little girl, Morgan saw Irish dancing for the first time at a recital.

\_\_\_\_\_ Some people accused her of cultural appropriation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Padraic Moyles asked her to perform with Riverdance.

**Task 2**

Put the words in order to make sentences.

1. African-American    the only    you    class?    in the    girl    Were
2. don't    issue.    I ever    think    considered    I    it an
3. were not    and you    Irish dancing?    Because    you weren't Irish    be performing  
white, you shouldn't
4. difference    between    and    appropriation    There's    appreciation.    a
5. I think    'appropriation'    knowing what    it means.    people use    without    the term
6. handling    she's    how    proud    I'm    of    it.
7. for    yourself    having    out there.    Thank you    the guts    to put
8. in terms of    in that    unique    you showed    video.    what    You are

**Discussion**

What type of dancing do you like?

## Transcript

People were saying that I shouldn't be Irish dancing because I'm black and I don't look like most Irish dancers, but I saw it for the first time at a recital and it was just the coolest thing ever to me.

When you think of Irish dancing, this probably isn't what comes to mind. This is 21-year-old Morgan Bullock, an Irish dancer from Richmond, Virginia, who recently went viral for her dancing on TikTok.

Morgan was just a little girl when she saw Irish dancing for the very first time.

**Morgan:** I remember how energetic it was, and the bright dress, and it just, it just was something like I'd never seen before. It became a huge part of my life.

She started going to classes a few times a week and attended dance competitions.

And Morgan, when you went into those Irish dancing classes, were you the only African-American girl in the class?

**Morgan:** Yeah, I was always the only one in my class.

Did that ever have any effect on you, or how did that make you feel?

**Morgan:** I mean, obviously, it's hard to miss someone who's actually their face matches their legs at the competitions, because, you know, the, there's like the tanner, you, like ...

There's a lot of tanner.

**Morgan:** Yeah, a lot of tanner, but it's hard to miss someone who's African American. I don't think I ever considered it an issue. It was definitely something that I took note of, but I had grown up in a predominantly white area, so it wasn't something that I was uncomfortable about.

After going viral with her Irish dancing, the reaction was overwhelmingly positive, but there were a few who thought that what she was doing was inappropriate. The negative comments that people were leaving under the video, what were people saying?

**Morgan:** Just early on, like, shortly after posting it, some people were saying that what I was doing was cultural appropriation. Just because I don't look like what you would typically picture an Irish dancer to look like, but, I mean ...

So were they saying because you weren't Irish and because you were not white that you shouldn't be performing Irish dancing?

**Morgan:** Yeah, basically that's what they were saying.

You were misappropriating the Irish dancing culture.

**Morgan:** I mean, my understanding of the term is that it means when you're taking something from another culture, claiming it as your own without recognising where it comes from. And that's couldn't be further from what I'm doing, like. It's important for people to recognise that there's a difference between appropriation and appreciation. Um, I think people use the term 'appropriation' with not, without knowing what it really means.

Her parents, Yolanda and Ray, have always been so supportive of her and are proud of how she's handling her online fame.

**Ray:** It's unbelievable, it's hard to, even, you know, for family to imagine that it's happening.

**Yolanda:** I'm proud how she's handling everything. She's 20, so she's a woman, so she's handling these things on her own, pretty much.

After the video went viral, Morgan was invited onto a very popular Irish radio show, where she was surprised by Padraic Moyles, the lead dancer of Riverdance.

**Padraic Moyles:** If you're up for it, we'd love you to join us in Vienna, Virginia, to perform in Riverdance.

**Morgan:** Oh my God, I would love to do that. My heart just dropped.

**Padraic Moyles:** I think you're going to do an amazing job.

**Morgan:** It was unreal. Riverdance is like the end goal for me with dancing, so the opportunity to perform with Riverdance is amazing.

**Padraic Moyles:** Thank you for having the guts in many ways to put yourself out there, and you are unique in terms of what you showed on that video.

**Morgan:** It's been postponed, so I'm not sure about the dates for the US tour, but, I mean, I'll be there whenever it is.

## Answers

### Preparation task

1. d
2. f
3. b
4. h
5. a
6. e
7. c
8. g

### Task 1

- 7 The US Riverdance tour was postponed.
- 3 Morgan went viral on TikTok with her Irish dancing.
- 8 Morgan is ready to perform with Riverdance whenever the tour takes place.
- 2 She started going to classes a few times a week and attended dance competitions.
- 5 Morgan was invited onto a very popular Irish radio show.
- 1 When she was a little girl, Morgan saw Irish dancing for the first time at a recital.
- 4 Some people accused her of cultural appropriation.
- 6 Padraic Moyles asked her to perform with Riverdance.

### Task 2

1. Were you the only African-American girl in the class?
2. I don't think I ever considered it an issue.
3. Because you weren't Irish and you were not white, you shouldn't be performing Irish dancing?
4. There's a difference between appropriation and appreciation.
5. I think people use the term 'appropriation' without knowing what it means.
6. I'm proud of how she's handling it.
7. Thank you for having the guts to put yourself out there.
8. You are unique in terms of what you showed in that video.