1) Did seeing the Irish landscape open up thoughts, perspectives, understandings?
Yes, the Irish landscape really opened my mind. Standing at places like the Giant's Causeway, the Cliffs of Moher, and the Ring of Kerry, I realized how deeply nature and history are connected in Ireland. The land itself tells stories whether it's through the basalt columns shaped like myths or the Peace Bridge symbolizing healing. It made me reflect on how landscapes can carry culture, resilience, and identity, much like our own lands do back home in the Choctaw Nation.

2) Do you see reflections of the connection in modern Ireland?
Yes, I definitely see reflections of the Choctaw-Irish connection in modern Ireland. Visiting the Kindred Spirits Memorial in Midleton was a powerful example; it's a visible reminder that the generosity of the Choctaw Nation during the Irish Famine is remembered and honored even today. What struck me most was how people across different generations engaged with the story. Professor Padraig who traveled all the way from London to share the history, the councilman who brought posters of the monument at night, and even young Irish girls who came wearing ribbon skirts to meet us all showed that this connection isn't just historical; it is alive in their communities.

Beyond that, I noticed it in the everyday attitudes and gestures of Irish people, their hospitality, their willingness to share stories, and their pride in preserving history. The Peace Wall in Belfast and the Peace Bridge in Derry reminded me that Ireland values reconciliation, remembering the past while building bridges for the future. These examples mirror the spirit of the Choctaw gift: acts of compassion, connection, and support that transcend generations. Modern Ireland demonstrates that the bonds formed through shared history can continue to inspire relationships, understanding, and cultural exchange even centuries later.

3) Did folks in many places already know about the gift?
Yes, in several places people already knew the story of the Choctaw gift during the Irish Famine. The councilman who gave us posters of the monument showed just how much the Irish still carry this story with pride and gratitude. I was very pleasantly surprised at how deeply people respected that moment of history and how often they wanted to talk about it with us.

4) What did the trip mean to you, personally, and as a representative of the Choctaw Nation?
Personally, the trip meant growth, reflection, a grand teaching opportunity for my students, and a sense of peace. Visiting places like the Kindred Spirits Memorial gave me a serene feeling, something I could feel deeply in my heart, even if it's hard to fully put into words. It was a quiet, powerful reminder of the impact our ancestors had, and it made me appreciate the depth of our history and culture in a way that reading about it could never capture.

As a tribal member of the Choctaw Nation, I felt proud and honored. Standing there, knowing that our ancestors' generosity continues to inspire hope and unity, made me feel a responsibility to carry that story forward. The trip was more than sightseeing; it was an opportunity to connect

emotionally, spiritually, and culturally with another nation, and to understand how acts of kindness and solidarity can echo across time and space.

5) What surprised you about the Irish?

What surprised me most was how welcoming and humorous they were. From dinners full of Irish music in Derry to friendly conversations in small towns, the Irish people always made us feel at home. And yes their way of using language was both sharp and funny, especially the way they mix cussing with warmth. It showed me that humor and storytelling are just as important in their culture as they are in ours.

6) What do you see as the future of the connection?

I can see the Choctaw-Irish connection growing stronger every year. With each visit, exchange, and shared story, another layer is added to the friendship between our nations. The Irish people showed their care for us just a few years ago when they donated millions to help tribal nations to help with the Covid-19 vaccines. That act of kindness reflects the deep bond first formed many years ago. It proves that both nations value one another and remain connected. I believe future generations will continue to build on this friendship through student exchanges, cultural events, and storytelling. What began in history has carried into the present, and I'm confident it will last far into the future.

7) Is there anything you'd do differently in future—or now like to do—in the wake of your trip?

If I could do anything differently, I'd spend more time talking with local people about their personal family histories, especially how they connect to the famine or to immigration. After this trip, I'd also like to help share the story of the Choctaw and Irish connection more widely back home, so more people understand its importance. The trip inspired me to not only remember the connection but to be part of keeping it alive.

8)How did traveling with classmates,students, parents affect your understanding of teamwork, friendship, or shared cultural experiences?

Traveling with students and their parents strengthened my appreciation for teamwork and shared experiences. We relied on each other navigating new cities, sharing meals, and exploring historic sites together. From spontaneous drum circles in Galway to group walks across the Peace Bridge in Derry, I realized that travel isn't just about the sights, it's about the shared memories and support of those around you. Laughing, learning, and reflecting together made our connections stronger and helped me see the value of new friends who quickly become like family while exploring both new places and new ideas.