Term	Definition
Absentee landlords	Property owners who did not live on their estates. They lived in Dublin or England and left the running of their estates to stewards.
Coffin ships	Name given to the ships that carried the famine-era Irish abroad because so many starving passengers died on board.
Conacre	The sub-letting of small plots of ground to grow crops, such as potatoes.
Cottier	Labourers who worked for a famer in return for one acre of land.
Emigration	Movement of people from their birth country to settle in another country.
Eviction	When someone is forced out of their home.
Irish diaspora	All the Irish people and descendants of Irish people who live outside Ireland.
Laissez-faire	The belief that a government should intervene as little as possible in economic affairs.
Landless labourers	People who lived in one-roomed cabins on the outskirts of towns and villages and found work on other people's land. Wandering labourers were called spalpeens.
Large farmers	Farmers who rented more than 30 acres.
Lazy beds	Parallel rows of earthen ridges used to grow potatoes.
Lumper	The most common type of potato grown in Ireland in the 1840s.
Migration	The movement of people within or between countries.
Peel's brimstone	Nave given to the maize (corn) imported by Peel's government to feed the starving Irish. It was yellow like brimstone (sulphyr), hard and unpalatable.
Potato Blight	A fungus that rots potatoes in the ground and makes them inedible.
Public works	Government work schemes to build roads and piers
Small farmers	Farmers who rented between 5 and 30 acres.
Soup kitchens	Places that gave soup to starving people who were not in workhouses.
Subsistence farming	Growing enough food to pay the rent and provide meals with almost nothing left over.
Tenant farmers	People who rented the land they farmed. For most, crops were grown to pay rent, and potatoes were grown to feed themselves.
Workhouse	Place where poor people could get food and shelter in return for their labour. Familes were kept apart and conditions were terrible.

2.7 INVESTIGATE the causes, course and consequences, nationally and internationally, of the Great Famine, and examine the significance of the Irish Diaspora

Causes

In 1841, more than 70% of the Irish population still lived in the countryside. In under a century, the Irish population had doubled to over 8.2 million. This was mainly down to two reasons: Irish people tended to marry young and have large families at the time while agricultural improvements meant more food was available.

Most land was owned by landlords and was worked by tenant farmers. Large farmers were able to rent more than 30 acres while small farmers rented between 5 and 30 acres. Poorer people worked as labourers with some able to rent one acre from a farmer. These were known as cottiers. By 1845, there was about 1 million Irish cottiers.

Potato blight is a fungus that spreads in damp and humid weather and destroys potato crops. In 1845, blight arrived in Ireland, causing the potato crop to fail. There were several factors which helped to make the arrival of the blight into a national catastrophe:

- The majority of Irish people lived rurally and were dependant on farming while widespread poverty meant people were already very vulnerable.
- The rise in population and the subdivision of land meant that, over time, people had to live off smaller and smaller plots of land with very large families.
- The poor were reliant on the potato for food. A small plot of land was more than enough to grow enough potatoes to feed a family as well as potatoes being easy to harvest and store.
- Cottiers worked in exchange for rent so they had no cash to buy other food.

Course	Consequences	Historical Significance
1845 – A potato blight, caused by a fungus, begins to spread across Ireland as farmers noticed the potato stalks turning black. The potatoes rot but some of the previous harvest that had been in storage was able to be used. The British government, under Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel, establishes a scientific commission to investigate the cause of the potato blight. **1846** – Two-thirds of the year's crop was lost to blight. The potatoes in storage had been used up. The poorest began to starve and diseases spread easily. The British government passes the Importation of Corn Act, which abolishes duties on imported grain in an attempt to alleviate the food shortage in Ireland. **1847 – Black '47:** The worst year of the famine. People had very few seeds to plant so the crop was very small. An estimated 300,000-500,00 died and over 250,000 emigrated. The government's relief efforts are inadequate to address the scale of the crisis as many Irish people are forced to seek assistance from workhouses, which are overcrowded and unsanitary, leading to the spread of disease and high mortality rates. The British government establishes the Poor Law Extension Act, which increases funding for relief efforts. **1848** – Starvation and diseases (such as typhus and cholera) worsened. The Young Ireland movement, which advocates for Irish independence, stages a failed uprising against British rule. **1849** – The potato crop begins to recover, and the famine slowly abates. The British government passes the Irish Poor Law Extension Act, which shifts responsibility for relief efforts from local to central government. The British government also establishes the Board of Works, which funds public works projects to provide employment for the unemployed. **1850** – Roughly 40,000 more people died in 1850 than in 1846.	**Decrease in population** – From 1845 to 1850, the population dripped from 8 million to about 6 million as roughly 1 million died from disease or starvation while a further 1 million emigrated. **Changes in farming practices** – subdivision of land was ended; the eldest son would now inherit the entire farm when his father died which resulted in larger farms but forced younger children to emigrate. Many landlords changed from tillage (crops) to pasture (cattle) farming. **Rise in anti-British feeling** – Many blamed the British government for the great suffering experienced during the famine. This would lead to a boost in support for nationalist groups and a desire for Home Rule, paving the way for the upcoming uprisings and rebellions. **Decline of the Irish language** – Irish-speaking areas were the worst affected by death and emigration. People began to speak English instead of Irish as it would help them find work. **New emigration trends** – emigration from Ireland existed from as early as the Irish Plantations but the events of the Great Famine exacerbated the issue. In the 1881 census, the population of the island had fallen by over 3 million (37%) since 1841.	Irish migrants faced challenges such as discrimination and poverty in their new homes, but they also played important roles in shaping the culture and politics of their adopted countries. In the United States, the Irish diaspora was a significant political force, particularly in urban areas such as New York City and Boston. Irish immigrants played a key role in the labour movement, and many prominent politicians, including multiple U.S. Presidents, were of Irish descent. Irish culture also had a significant influence on American music, literature, and sports. 32 million Americans claim Irish ancestry. In Britain, the Irish diaspora played a significant role in industrialization and the development of the railway system. However, the relationship between the Irish and British was often tense, and discrimination against Irish migrants was common. The Irish diaspora also had a significant impact on British politics, with many Irish politicians playing prominent roles in the Labour Party and other left-wing movements. 6 million British people claim Irish grandparents and/or Irish ancestry/origins.