

# Early Years Activity Pack

## Burns Cottage – Self led

*Scots language and eighteenth century life themed fun for  
early years*



Curriculum for Excellence Level: Early (Pre 5 - Primary  
1)



## How to use this resource

### *Scots language and farmyard themed fun for early years*



Hello and welcome to your Burns Cottage Activity Pack for teachers. Everything you will need is explained in this document. In here you will find:

- Fun activities for you and your pupils designed to help you get the most out of your visit to Burns Cottage.
- Key facts and instructions to help your pupils learn more about life in the eighteenth century, as well as a series of mystery objects to discover.

## Aims and achievements:

### **What your pupils will achieve:**

- A deeper understanding of the Scots language,
- A deeper understanding of the farming environment Robert Burns lived in during his time at Burns cottage
- A stronger understanding of the differing roles that different members of the Burns family took on
- Ability to associate words and language with a visual stimulus and associate action and movement with words and meanings.

### **What skills your pupils will develop:**

- Performance, role play and drama skills.
- Use of different languages (English and Scots).
- The ability to work as part of a team and on their own.
- Increased confidence through participation in group activities.
- Deductive skills in working out what things were used for and finding mystery objects
- Listening and observation skills.





## Activity 1:

### Smallholding and Kailyard



*Learn about the crops grown on the farm at Burns Cottage using Scots vocabulary.*

#### **Lesson objectives:**

- Increase use of Scots language
- Improve knowledge of life on an eighteenth century farm
- Understand the differences between life in the past and life today

#### **Curriculum for Excellence:**

SOC 0-02a

LIT 0-04a

LIT 0-10a

## Smallholding and Kailyard:

Leader's Fact: This is called a 'Smallholding', a small farm which grows plants and keeps animals. The Burns family would have lived and worked here.

The big field would have been used to keep animals in and would also have been where the family grew their crops. Discuss with pupils what would have been grown in the field, and ask them to circle the picture on their worksheets.

Gather your pupils around the Kailyard (the small enclosed piece of land directly in front of the cottage) and explain that this is where the family would have grown their vegetables. Encourage pupils to name the different fruit and vegetables on their worksheets and ask them to circle which ones they think were grown in the Kailyard.

Introduce your pupils to the Scots word for potatoes (tatties) and turnips (neeps), is there a special meal they might eat these at? Perhaps with some haggis?



# Primary 1

## Cottage exterior and Stackyard



**Leader's Fact:** Robert Burns was born in this cottage and he lived in it until he was seven. It was built by his father, William, and is made out of stone and clay. The roof is made out of straw.

Encourage your pupils to discuss the differences between Burns Cottage and their own homes. Do they have a roof made of straw?

Do they have stone walls? Why might their homes be different now?

**Leader's Fact:** The enclosed area of land to the left of the cottage as you look at it is called a Stackyard. It is where the crops were dried after they had been cut down in the fields.

Take pupils into the stackyard and explain that they have a mystery object to find (Mystery Object 1!). It is called a STOOK and it is where the plants would have been dried out before being put in the barn. Ask your pupils to draw the STOOK on their worksheets.

Recap the Scots words that have been learnt so far today: 'Neeps', 'Tatties' and 'Stook'. Encourage pupils to pick their favourite and write it down on their sheets.

### Key Scots words:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>Neeps</b>   | Turnips                                |
| <b>Tatties</b> | Potatoes                               |
| <b>Stook</b>   | For drying out crops in the stackyard. |





# Primary 1

## Activity 2: The Barn



*Continue to find out about what life was like in the eighteenth century by exploring Burns Cottage.*

### Lesson objectives:

- Increase understanding of the roles of different family members
- Develop observation and drama skills.

### Curriculum for Excellence:

LIT 0-14a  
LIT 0-26a  
SOC 0-04a

Leader's Fact: This room is called the 'Barn'. It was the last room to be built in the cottage and was used for storing plants and farming tools. The crops stored in the barn would later be used to make food like bread and porridge.

Point out the farming tools attached to the ceiling and explain that these are like some of the tools that would have been used by the Burns family. Ask pupils to find the small hooked shaped object - this is called a 'Sickle' and would have been used by the girls in the fields. The larger tool next to it with the black blade hanging down is called a 'Scythe' and would have been used by the boys.

Ask the girls to pretend they are using a sickle and the boys to pretend they are using a scythe. How would they be held? Can they imagine using them? Encourage pupils to act out how they think the tools may have been used. Split the group into pairs of boys and girls. Boys should stand up straight and cut through the 'corn' with the scythe. Girls should follow afterwards crouched down with the sickle. This is how people would have harvested the crops!

## End of Activity 2



# Primary 1

## Activity 3:

### The Byre



*Explore the different animals that would have been kept at Burns Cottage, and different jobs members of the household would have done.*

#### **Lesson objectives:**

- Gain an understanding of the animals living on the farm.
- Use Scots language to improve knowledge of tasks family members would have done.

#### **Curriculum for Excellence:**

LIT 0-21b

SOC 0-01a

**Leader's Fact:** This room is called the 'Byre'. Ask pupils what they think might have lived in this room. Pupils should say 'animals'.

Tell pupils to spend a minute being quiet and listening to the sounds of the animals. What different noises can they hear? What three animals make these noises? If they are struggling point out the cow and horse stalls to give them a clue. Pupils should circle the three animals on their sheets that lived in the Byre.

Explain that pupils are now looking for another mystery object (Mystery Object 2!). It is tall and brown, shaped like a barrel and has a wooden stick coming out of the top of it. Who can find it?

This is an object that turns milk into butter. In English it is called a 'Churn' but in Scots it is a 'Kirn', and this is what Robert Burns would have called it. Encourage some of the girls to have a go at 'making butter', and get all pupils to draw the Kirn in their mystery object box.

Explain that while the girls made butter, boys would be looking after the animals and cleaning up their poo. Show the boys the rake (Scots – graip) and brush (Scots – besom) which would have been used. Let some of the boys hold the besom and pretend to sweep up poo.

### *End of Activity 3*



# Primary 1

## Activity 4: The Spence



*Gain a deeper understanding of life in Burns Cottage and education in the eighteenth century.*

### Lesson objectives:

- Use deductive skills to work out what the room is used for and what the mystery object is

### Curriculum for Excellence:

LIT 0-04a

LIT 0-14a

**Leader's Fact:** This room is the 'good room' or 'Spence' and would have been used for a very special purpose. Tell your pupils it is their job to guess what it is. Give them a series of clues until they guess that this was a Schoolroom, hearing their guesses in between each one.

Clue 1: They needed somewhere that was quiet so that they could hear properly  
Clue 2: Ask pupils to listen to the noises they can hear (e.g. singing/reciting/reading)  
Clue 3: Nowadays you would go to this place 5 days a week, Monday to Friday  
Clue 4: They would come here to learn things.

**Leader's Fact:** Instead of going out to school, Robert Burns and his brother would have learnt their lessons at home. Their father asked a man called John Murdoch to come and teach them. Ask pupils if they would like to be taught at home?

Explain that pupils have another mystery object to find in this room (Mystery Object 3!). There are two of them, they are small and rectangular. The back is made of wood, but the front is clear and you can see writing on it. Who can find it?

Ask your pupils to think about what the front is made of, giving clues if they are struggling. The answer is cow horn, and the object is called a 'hornbook'. It was used by Robert Burns to learn his lessons. Ask pupils to draw it in their box.

## End of Activity 4





# Primary 1

## Activity 5: The Kitchen



*Learn about some of the ways Robert Burns was inspired when he was growing up in the cottage.*

### Lesson objectives:

- Use storytelling to bring Burns's experience at the cottage to life.

### Curriculum for Excellence:

LIT 0-26a

SOC 0-02a

Leader's Fact: This was the first room to be built by Robert's Dad. Although it is only one room, it was used in three different ways.

Ask pupils to have a look around for clues, thinking about rooms they would have in their own house. Pupils should get a) Kitchen, b) Bedroom and c) Living room. For each answer, ask them to point out which object in the room made them think that. N.B. The family would have also eaten in here, so Dining Room is also an answer!

Point out the bed to the pupils. This is the bed where Robert Burns would have slept with his family. Ask pupils to count how many christening gowns there are on the bed. Would they like to share a bed with lots of other people? Would it be comfortable? Would it be warm?

Read out the following passage to your pupils, and ask them to fill in the gaps with the words on their worksheet (FOOD, THE BIBLE and STORIES):

**In the kitchen, Robert Burns's mum Agnes would have cooked the ..... . His dad William would have read books like ..... . His Aunt Betty would have told him lots of scary ..... .**





Explain to pupils that a woman named Betty Davison also lived at Burns Cottage, and liked to tell ghost stories to Robert and his brothers and sisters. Sit on one of the chairs in the room, gather pupils around you and tell the following story:

‘Once upon a time a man was walking home from the village. As he was passing Alloway’s Auld Kirk he heard a strange noise, a noise that sounded like a ghost! He was a brave man so he decided to go and see what was happening. He crept all the way up the path to the Kirk and stood on his tiptoes to peak through a window. There he saw two big black eyes, two great big horns, a long tail and a massive nose! And then he heard the noise again. The man was so scared that he ran all the way home to bed.

In the morning, his wife asked him about what happened, saying ‘Why were you so scared last night?’. The man replied ‘I have seen the de’il in the Kirk!’. His wife told him not to be silly. ‘Of course you didn’t see the de’il’ she said.

She made her husband walk all the way back to the church with her to show him how silly he was, but when they got near they heard the strange ghostly noise again! They crept back up the path, stood on tiptoes and peaked into the window.

But today it was daylight and they would see properly... and do you know what was in the Kirk? It was a COO! A naughty wee coo who had



*End of Activity 5*

