

Primary 2- 4 Activity Pack

Burns Cottage – Self Led

Scots language and eighteenth century life themed fun



Curriculum for Excellence Level: First (Primary 2 –
Primary 4)



How to use this resource

Scots language and farmyard themed fun for P2 -4



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.
- A series of facts and clues for your pupils to find out and solve as eighteenth century 'time travellers' in Burns Cottage.

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.
- An understanding of the past through learning about a famous historical figure
- 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 eighteenth century and life today

Curriculum for Excellence:

SOC 1-04a

LIT 1-07a

Welcome your pupils to Burns Cottage – where Scotland’s National Bard was born! Explain to them that today they are going to go back in time to the eighteenth century and learn about what life would have been like for Robert Burns and his family. Start by taking your class to the wall beside the big field.

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. They owned all the land from the car park up to the Education Pavilion, and from the far side of the field to the cottage.

The big field would have been used to keep animals in and would also have been where the family grew their crops. They would have grown oats and barley here, but not much wheat because the soil is too salty. So they wouldn’t have eaten any bread, but would have instead eaten a lot of porridge. Ask your pupils if they would like living on this sort of diet?

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.



Introduce your pupils to the Scots word for potatoes (tatties) and turnips (neeps), two of the vegetables that would have been grown here in the Kailyard. Is there a special meal they might eat these at? Perhaps with some haggis? Encourage pupils to talk about any Burns Supper they may have heard about or gone to.

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 reeds.

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

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. The triangular structure covered in straw is called a 'Stook' and is where the crops would have been put out to dry before being processed in the barn.

Key Scots words:

Neeps	Turnips
Tatties	Potatoes
Stook	For drying out crops in the stackyard.

End of Activity 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, reasoning and creative skills.

Curriculum for Excellence:

EXA 1-03a

SOC 1-02a

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 porridge and oatcakes.

Now get your pupils to look up at the ceiling at all of the different farming tools.

Leader's Fact: Now farmers use machines to collect what they grow, but 250 years ago these farming tools were all that they had. The scythe and the sickle were used by men and women in pairs to collect the harvest. That's where Robert met the first girl he fell in love with, Helen Kilpatrick, and he wrote his first ever poem about her!

Pupils should draw the scythe (the tool with the long wavy handle and curved black blade hanging down towards the floor), looking at the different shapes that make up its different parts, e.g. the long handle, the curve of the blade.

Boys would have used the scythe by holding it to the side and swinging it. Girls would have used the sickle (small hooked blade) by crouching down to cut the crops. Ask the boys and girls in your class to do this so you have a 'field' of people harvesting the crops.

End of Activity 2



Activity 3: The Byre



Explore the different animals that would have been kept at Burns Cottage, and the 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 different tasks family members would have done.

Curriculum for Excellence:

SOC 1-03a

EXA 1-12a

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 listen to the sounds of the animals. What 3 different animal noises can they hear?

Pupils should write down how many cows could live in the stalls (4 – one in each stall) and then circle the answer for what cows make. Explain that we can buy milk in a shop but Robert Burns couldn't!

Find the butter churn in one of the cow stalls. 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' by moving the wooden stick up and down.

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.

Move over to the horse stall and look at the Scots words on the wall. Pupils need to find the Scots word for a horse (aiver).

End of Activity 3



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 discover more about eighteenth century materials and hobbies

Curriculum for Excellence:

HWB 1-19a

EXA 1-03a

Leader's Fact: This room is the 'good room' or 'Spence'. At first it was the room where the animals lived, but when the Byre was built it became the schoolroom. 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.

Without telling pupils what they are called, find the hornbooks on the table and let everyone handle the objects to see what they feel and look like. Pupils should try to guess what material the front side of the hornbook is made of. Hint: it comes from an animal and it is very hard (horn). Pupils should write this on their sheets.

Leader's Fact: Horn is very easy to mould when it is heated and it can be polished up to be very shiny. It was also cheap because there were lots of cows. Lots of people have their own books now but paper was expensive 250 years ago so not many people owned their own books.

End of Activity 4



Primary 2 - 4

Activity 5: The Kitchen



Learn about the way Robert Burns and his family would have lived and relate this to modern life.

Lesson objectives:

- Explore in detail some of the objects in Burns Cottage and what they were used for.

Curriculum for Excellence:

EXA 1-04a

SOC 1-02a

Leader's Fact: This was the first room to be built by Robert's Dad, William. 4 children were born in this Cottage and Robert was the eldest – he lived here until he was 7. Soon after he was born the chimney was knocked down by a big storm, but it has been rebuilt. 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 explain why they think that.

N.B. The family would have also eaten in here, so Dining Room is also an answer!

Gather your pupils in a semi circle around the fireplace. Pupils should think about what different things you could use a fireplace for that we have other things for now (radiators, ovens, toasters) and write them down on their sheets. Robert Burns wrote a poem about a family sitting around the fire called *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. You can see some of the lines he wrote in this poem on the chairs by the fireplace. Instead of 'fireplace', Robert Burns called it by its Scots name - an 'ingle'.

Point out the 'spurtle' (the wooden stirrer in the pot by the fire) and ask pupils what they think it might have been used for. It was used for stirring or mashing food.

Without letting pupils know what it is made of, move over to the dresser and hold up the horsehair whisk.



Leader's Fact: This is a whisk just like the whisks that we use today except it is made out of a different material. Pupils need to try and work out what the whisk is made of. Hint: it comes from an animal (horse). They should write this on their sheets.

Now move over to the box bed and look at the blanket covering the bed.

Leader's Fact: This blanket was made especially for the cottage. The different colours represent different things about Robert Burns's family. The brown represents William Burns, to show that he worked as a farmer in the earth. The red represents Agnes Burns, who had lovely red hair. The gold represents how clever and imaginative Robert Burns was. The seven green threads represent the seven children that William and Agnes had, including Robert!

Pupils are to draw their own pattern for a blanket.

Congratulate your 'time travellers' on the great job they have done in the cottage. Encourage them to think about how life was different in the eighteenth century, and whether or not they would like to live in Burns Cottage.



End of Activity 5 – we hope you and your class enjoyed your visit!

