

SOCIAL STUDIES / LANGUAGE · P4–P7

# Gàidhlig agus Scots — Scotland's Languages

P4–P7 Social Studies and Language

## Scotland's languages

1

### Scottish Gaelic (Gàidhlig)

A Celtic language, closely related to Irish Gaelic and Manx. Once spoken across most of Scotland; now mainly in the Western Isles (Outer Hebrides), Skye, and parts of the west Highlands. Approximately 57,000 speakers (2022 census).

2

### Why Gaelic declined

The suppression of Highland culture after Culloden (1746); English-only schooling for centuries; economic migration from Gaelic areas to cities; lack of official status until the 21st century.

3

### Gaelic Medium Education (GME)

Scottish schools where all subjects are taught through Gaelic, from P1. Growing — approximately 3,000 pupils in GME primary nationally. Strong in Western Isles, growing in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen.

4

### Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

Gave Gaelic official language status in Scotland for the first time. Established Bòrd na Gàidhlig (the Gaelic development body) and required Gaelic Language Plans from public bodies.

5

### Scots language

A Germanic language descended from Old English, spoken mainly in Lowland Scotland. Not a dialect of English — linguistically a distinct language. Burns wrote in Scots. Approximately 1.5 million Scots speakers (though definition is contested).



6

**Scots — key vocabulary**

Braw (fine/good); wee (small/little); dreich (grey, dreary weather); loch (lake); burn (stream); ben (mountain peak); glen (valley); bairn (child); haar (sea fog).

