

## SOCIAL STUDIES — SCOTTISH HISTORY · P5–P7

# Fuadaichean nan Gàidheal — The Highland Clearances

Knowledge Organiser — P5–P7

## The Clearances

### 1 The Highland Clearances (c.1750–1860)

The forced removal of crofters (tenant farmers) from their land in the Scottish Highlands and islands. Landlords replaced subsistence farming communities with more profitable sheep farming.

### 2 Crofters

Small tenant farmers who held a 'croft' — a small plot of land. They paid rent to landlords (often clan chiefs turned commercial landowners) and relied on the land for survival.

### 3 Sheep farming

Cheviot and Blackface sheep were far more profitable than crofting tenants. Landlords could earn more by converting crofting land to sheep pasture and burning the townships.

### 4 Emigration

Cleared communities sailed to Nova Scotia (New Scotland), Prince Edward Island, Australia, and New Zealand. Many had no choice — emigration or the poorhouse. The Scottish diaspora dates largely from this period.

### 5 The Sutherland Clearances

The most notorious — the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland cleared almost the entire population of Sutherland (approximately 15,000 people) between 1810 and 1820. Patrick Sellar, the factor, was tried (and acquitted) for culpable homicide.



6

**The Crofters' Act (1886)**

Following the 'Crofters' War' — resistance and land agitation in the 1880s — the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act gave crofters security of tenure, fair rents, and the right to pass on their croft. A major victory.

