

## SOCIAL STUDIES — SCOTTISH HISTORY · P5–P7

# Màiri Banrigh na h-Alba — Mary Queen of Scots

Deeper Study — P5–P7

## The life of Mary Queen of Scots

1

### Born to be queen (1542)

Mary became Queen of Scots at six days old when her father James V died. Scotland was Catholic but increasingly contested between Catholic and Protestant factions.

2

### Childhood in France

Sent to France aged 5 to keep her safe and to be raised as a future French queen. Married Francis II of France at 15. He died in 1560, after just over a year as king. Mary, 18, returned to Scotland — a country she barely knew.

3

### Return to Scotland (1561)

Mary was Catholic; Scotland had just experienced the Protestant Reformation. The fiery preacher John Knox vehemently opposed her. She tried to govern fairly across religious divides — with mixed success.

4

### Marriage to Darnley

In 1565 Mary married her cousin Lord Darnley. The marriage went badly. Darnley was jealous and violent — he murdered her secretary David Rizzio in front of her while she was heavily pregnant.

5

### Darnley's death and Bothwell

Darnley was killed in suspicious circumstances in 1567. Mary then married the Earl of Bothwell — widely believed to be involved in Darnley's death. The marriage destroyed her reputation.



6

**Abdication and escape**

Scottish nobles forced Mary to abdicate. Her infant son James (the future James VI/I) became king. Mary escaped, lost a battle, and fled to England seeking the help of her cousin Queen Elizabeth I.

7

**19 years a prisoner**

Elizabeth, fearing Mary as a Catholic rival, kept her imprisoned for 19 years — moving her between English castles. Mary became a focus for Catholic plots against Elizabeth.

8

**Execution (1587)**

Mary was tried for plotting against Elizabeth and beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle, aged 44. Her son James later became James I of England (1603), uniting the crowns of Scotland and England.

