

SOCIAL STUDIES — SCOTTISH HISTORY · P5–P7

The Scottish Enlightenment

Knowledge Organiser — P5–P7

Key figures and ideas

1

David Hume (1711–1776)

Philosopher and historian from Edinburgh. One of the most important philosophers in the history of Western thought. Challenged religious assumptions and developed empiricism.

2

Adam Smith (1723–1790)

Economist and philosopher from Kirkcaldy. *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) founded modern economics. His ideas on free markets and the division of labour still shape economic thinking.

3

James Watt (1736–1819)

Engineer from Greenock. Developed the improved steam engine (1769) — the key technology of the Industrial Revolution.

4

Robert Burns (1759–1796)

'The Bard' — Scotland's national poet. *Auld Lang Syne*, *To a Mouse*, *Tam o' Shanter*. Burns Night is celebrated on 25 January worldwide. Wrote in Scots English.

5

Edinburgh

'The Athens of the North' — the intellectual capital of the Enlightenment. The Old Town and New Town together form a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Contribution to the modern world

The disproportionate impact of a s



- THE STEAM ENGINE: James Watt's improvements powered the Industrial Revolution worldwide
- MODERN ECONOMICS: Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) — still foundational
- TELEVISION: John Logie Baird (Helensburgh, 1888–1946) invented the television
- PENICILLIN: Alexander Fleming (Ayrshire, 1881–1955) discovered penicillin
- THE TELEPHONE: Alexander Graham Bell (Edinburgh, 1847–1922) invented the telephone
- TARRED ROADS (MACADAM): John Loudon McAdam (Ayr, 1756–1836) invented the road surface
- ANAESTHETIC: James Young Simpson (Bathgate, 1811–1870) first used chloroform as anaesthetic
- Scotland has produced more discoverers and inventors per head of population than almost any other nation. This is the Enlightenment legacy — an extraordinary investment in education and ideas.

