

# Writing in Scots

Resource created by Matthew Fitt (Scots Hoose) and Scottish Book Trust

People in Scotland often tell a better story when they tell it in Scots.

Writing in your own language can give you freedom. But here are some activities you can do which will help you to write even better in Scots.

## INTRODUCING SCOTS

Lit 3-25a, Lit 3-14a

Take a big sheet of paper and some coloured pens. In groups or individually, write down as many Scots words you can think of.

The Scots language is made up of many dialects. What is your dialect of Scots? Which words are special to you and your area? Ask parents, grandparents and teachers which Scots words they use.

## BEGINNING TO USE SCOTS

Lit 3-09a

Talking in Scots is a great way to prepare to write in Scots.

Think about the way you speak and the sounds of the words you use. Practise writing them down the way you say them. Ask a friend if they can understand what you've written. If they can, keep writing in the same style. If not, you may have to change the spelling to make it easier for others to read.

Write a short piece introducing yourself, your home or any other simple topic, and practise

reading it out loud to your classmates. If you want to hear some great examples before you start, visit the following link to hear others speak about themselves:

[www.educationscotland.gov.uk/knowledgeoflanguage/scots/dialects/index.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/knowledgeoflanguage/scots/dialects/index.asp)

Alternatively, you could listen to Scottish writer Alan Bissett reading two traditional Scots stories here:

[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01jh50q](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01jh50q)

A particularly good way to get into the groove of Scots dialect is to write a very short drama script and perform it with a group. Alternatively, you could take an existing play and translate it into Scots, and then act it out.

To find plays already written in Scots, check out the book *Tam O'Shanter's Big Night Out*, edited by Matthew Fitt and published by Itchy Co: [www.itchy-coo.com/secondary.html](http://www.itchy-coo.com/secondary.html)

Read some poems or stories in Scots. The best way to learn how to spell in Scots is from other writers. To see examples of Scots writing by pupils of all ages, check out this page: [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/knowledgeoflanguage/scots/writinginscots/index.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/knowledgeoflanguage/scots/writinginscots/index.asp)

## FURTHER READING

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Here are some lists of books written in Scots, for different age groups:

3-7: [scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/scots-language-books-3-7](http://scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/scots-language-books-3-7)

8-11: [scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/scots-language-books-8-11](http://scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/scots-language-books-8-11)

12-16: [scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/scots-language-books-for-teens](http://scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/scots-language-books-for-teens)

## FOR REFERENCE

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A great source of Scots vocabulary is the Scots Language Dictionary: Scots/English - English/Scots (Polygon, 1996). Many schools already have copies of this - it's definitely worth checking.

Former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen recently travelled to Glasgow to learn more about the Scots language. You can hear all about it here:

[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0418kg6](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0418kg6)

**I** (first person singular). For Edinburgh, Glasgow, Ayrshire, Fife, Central Belt and the South of Scotland, use **Ah** or **A** for I. For Dundee, use **Eh**. And for Aberdeenshire, Shetland, Orkney and everywhere else, use **I**.

These are some Scots words which you may find useful for writing your piece for *Scotland's Stories of Home* in Scots.

**faither, mither, da, maw, wean, bairn, grandfather, grannie, failmie, hoose, windae, flair, lum, cludgie, gairden, floers, chuckie stanes, polis, provost, toun, brig, brae, wynd, vennel, close, kirk, schuil, hert, heid, hauns, airms, fingirs, oxters, hurdies, shanks, taes, bonnie, braw, strang, auld, wee, lang, licht, couthie, blythe, guid, hackit, mingin, crabbit, glaikit, dytit, dubbie, sleekit, carnaptious, richt, wrang, staun, fling, birl, shoogle, haiver, greet, coorie in**

Matthew Fitt is the writer of a host of Scots books including *Katie's Moose* which won a Scottish Children's Book Award in 2009. In September 2014 he will launch Scots Hoose, an exciting and inspiring online resource to support learning and creativity in Scots. For more information contact Matthew at [matthew@scotshoose.com](mailto:matthew@scotshoose.com).