



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

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AN INTRODUCTION TO
**SCOTLAND'S
LANGUAGES**

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THE LANGUAGES OF SCOTLAND

The indigenous languages of Scotland are Gaelic and Scots.

Both languages are part of our history and culture with rich oral traditions still very much alive in song, drama and storytelling.

The literature of both languages goes back hundreds of years and, in the 21st century, talented writers are producing excellent new books for adults and children.

Both languages are protected under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.



GAELIC

Gaelic is one of Europe's oldest written languages. It came to Scotland from Ireland in the fifth century. With the expansion of the Celtic church, it spread throughout Scotland. Its dominance in the South and East began to decline during the late 11th and early 12th centuries, as a result of Southern influences on the Scottish court. Today, its stronghold is in the Western Isles but its use is growing in many cities.

EDUCATION

Gaelic-medium education is growing. In accordance with Part III of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages there is provision at pre-school, primary and secondary levels. Gaelic is taught at universities and there are Gaelic classes offered in communities throughout the country.

Image courtesy of Celtic Connections

ARTS AND CULTURE

You can access Gaelic cultural activity at many festivals and events throughout the year.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal
www.feisean.org

The Royal National Mod
www.acgmod.org

Celtic Connections
www.celticconnections.com

Blas Festival
www.blas-festival.com

Hebridean Celtic Festival
www.hebcelfest.com

RESOURCES FOR GAELIC

Bòrd na Gàidhlig encourages greater use and understanding of the Gaelic language, and aims to increase access to Gaelic culture.

www.gaidhlig.org.uk

LearnGaelic is a website for anyone interested in learning Scottish Gaelic, offering help for all ages and all stages of learning.

www.learnghaelic.net

Cli Gàidhlig is the Gaelic learners association and aims to enable adult learners to achieve fluency in the language by providing a wide range of learning resources. www.cli.org.uk

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is internationally recognised as a National Centre for the Gaelic language and culture.

The College is an academic partner within UHI (University of the Highlands and Islands) and provides high quality education and research opportunities through the medium of Scottish Gaelic.

www.smo.uhi.ac.uk

BBC Alba is a Gaelic language digital TV channel and features news, sport, drama, documentary and entertainment, as well as children's programmes. Radio nan Gàidheal is also available on BBC iPlayer.

www.bbc.co.uk/alba

Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) is a social enterprise providing Gaelic services throughout Scotland, covering different areas including young people and events, Gaelic initiatives, education and funding.

www.cnag.org

Faclair na Gàidhlig is The Dictionary of the Scottish Gaelic Language, an inter-university initiative by the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Strathclyde and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

www.faclair.ac.uk

Gaelic Books Council provides assistance for publishers wishing to publish Scottish Gaelic books and supports a wide variety of titles.

www.gaelicbooks.org

SCOTS

Scots, at least compared with Gaelic, is a young language. It is descended mainly from Northern Middle English with its many Old Norse words. Latin, French, Dutch and Gaelic words were added and, by the 12th century, it was the language of the Scottish court. After the Union of the Crowns (1603), its status began to decline, although this trend is now being reversed. Its use remains widespread today.

EDUCATION

There is no requirement for the provision of Scots-medium education under Part II of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and it is often under-represented in the classroom, but the development of 'Scottish Studies' will do much to support the Scots and Gaelic Languages:

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/studyingScotland

ARTS AND CULTURE

Lowland Scotland and the Northern Isles have their own distinctive styles in literature, dance and music from Border ballads to Shetland fiddle. Scots poets, novelists and playwrights receive international acclaim.



RESOURCES FOR SCOTS

Scottish Language Dictionaries are the nation's resource for Scots lexicography. They maintain A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue and the Scottish National Dictionary with their supplements available online. They also produce paper publications and have an education and outreach programme.
www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk
www.dsl.ac.uk
www.scuilwab.org.uk

The Scots Language Centre is a hub for everything happening in the Scots-language community, with audio material, texts, news and discussion.
www.scotslanguage.com

The Elphinstone Institute within the University of Aberdeen researches and celebrates the traditions and culture of the North East.

www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone

Shetland ForWirds celebrates Shetland Dialect in literary and oral material. It has a Shetland Dialect Dictionary and teaching resources.
www.shetlanddialect.org.uk

RESOURCES FOR BOTH GAELIC AND SCOTS

Creative Scotland is the national agency for the arts and creativity. Part of its remit is to support the indigenous languages, and the artists and organisations whose work is delivered in Gaelic and Scots. In 2012 Creative Scotland published their Gaelic Language plan.

www.creativescotland.com

The National Library of Scotland has extensive collections of Gaelic and Scots in published and manuscript form. www.nls.uk

Kist o Riches – Tobar an Dualchais provides a wealth of Gaelic and Scots recordings including folklore, songs, music, history, poetry, traditions and stories. www.tobarandualchais.co.uk

The Scottish Storytelling Centre (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland) offers live storytelling, theatre and literature, visual arts, workshops and training events.

www.scottishstorytellingcentre.co.uk

The Association for Scottish Literary Studies publishes works of Scottish literature, the Scottish Literary Review, ScotLit, Scottish Language, New Writing Scotland, and the Scotnotes study guides.

www.arts.gla.ac.uk/scotlit/asls

All of Scotland's national Literature Agencies include responsibility for the Gaelic and Scots languages in their remits.

www.literatureforumscotland.org.uk

All literature festivals in Scotland represent Gaelic and Scots writing in their programming.

www.bookfestivalscotland.com