

Scotland Richard MacAndrew

Aims

- To make students interested in the book.
- To become familiar with some important facts about Scotland.
- To take part in some creative writing activities.

NB You may find that many of the activities described below can be exploited better in your students' own language or mother tongue, if you speak it. The mother tongue, if used carefully as a resource, can facilitate your students' progress in English and help them to understand the context of the story, thus preparing them to understand it better when they read it.

Pre-reading Activities

- 1 Tell students that the title of the book is *Scotland* and that it is a factbook. Elicit what they know about Scotland already and list or summarise this information on the board. Now show students Illustration 1 (the cover of the book) and ask them to guess what the eight photographs in the cover image are of. Provide some support with unknown vocabulary (e.g. curling, cranachan, bagpipes). (NB You may decide not to give students the answers at this stage to make them want to look at the book to find out for themselves!)
Suggested answers: Scottish architecture, a Scottish/Highland dancer, the sport of curling, cranachan (a Scottish pudding), a Scottish castle, standing stones, a man playing the bagpipes, someone in traditional dress playing the electric guitar.
- 2 Now ask students to look at Illustration 2 (photograph of wild Scotland) and to list the adjectives it inspires (e.g. green, beautiful, quiet, empty, lonely, cloudy, bright). You might want to teach vocabulary like 'isolated' or 'remote'. Ask *Who would like to visit the place in the photo? Why? Why not?*
- 3 Ask students to read Extract 1. As a class, discuss the extract. Ask *Do you agree with the narrator that Tiree is a great place to grow up? Why? Would you like to live there?* Now students work in pairs to build a picture of the narrator. They can base this partly

on facts given in the extract, but should also use their imaginations. Prompt students with questions (e.g. *Is the narrator male or female? What age is he or she? Does he or she like talking to people?*) Feedback to the whole class.

- 4 Ask students to read Extract 2 (about another young person who lives in a quiet place in Scotland). Once again, elicit and contrast students' opinions. Students now imagine that a newcomer is coming to the island. Caroline is to have a classmate at last! Ask students to make notes about the newcomer and then to write a scene where Caroline meets him or her. Ask *Will the new person be what Caroline hopes for? Or will her problems only just be beginning?*
- 5 Ask students to read Extract 3 and ask *Is climbing Monros something you would like to do? Why? Why not?* Now ask them to read Extract 4 and elicit their opinions about someone so young trying to achieve this challenge. Students then imagine they are a journalist interviewing one of Darwin Bradley's parents and note down the questions they would ask. Working in pairs, students take it in turns to be the journalist asking their questions and making note of the answers given, just as if they were really journalists.
- 6 Ask students to write the above interview in the form of an article as if it were to appear in a newspaper or magazine, giving it a suitable headline.
- 7 Ask students to read Extract 5 (about Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city) and look at Illustration 3 (a photograph of Edinburgh). Elicit their impressions and opinions. Ask *Would you like to visit Edinburgh? Why? Why not?* Remind them of Illustration 2 and of what they have learned about living on a Scottish island in Extracts 1 and 2. Ask *If you had to choose to live either in Edinburgh or on an island, which would you choose? Why?*
If time allows, students could do a piece of writing where they imagine they are a young person living on a remote Scottish island who is coming to Edinburgh for the first time.
- 8 Working in pairs, ask students to name and describe two similar places in their own country – one a busy

city with lots to do, and the other somewhere quiet and beautiful. They then discuss which of those they would choose to live in and why. Feedback to the whole class.

9 Ask students to read Extract 6 (a Scottish story or legend). Teach 'legend' if necessary (e.g. *a story from earlier times which has been accepted by many as being historical*). Elicit the students' impression of this story. Ask *Do you think it is true? If not, what do you think the Fairy Flag is?*

10 Ask students to imagine a situation where the MacLeods want to wave the flag for the third and final time. Ask *What has happened? Why do they need to wave the flag? What happens afterwards?* Students make notes and then share their ideas with the whole class. Write their ideas on the board. Then students choose one of these ideas (it need not be their own) and dramatise it as a piece of writing (prose, a play or a screenplay), showing the reason why the MacLeods decide to wave the flag, whether the magic works for a third time and what happens to the flag afterwards.

4 Tell students that they have been given a large sum of money to make a film. It must be either about or set in Scotland. Students decide if it would be a documentary (i.e. facts about Scotland) or a story set in Scotland. Ask *If you decide on a documentary, what would it be about? If it is a story, where would you film it? Would it be set in the present day, or would it be historical?* Students make notes about their idea, choose a title for their project and then share them with the rest of the class.

Post-reading Activities

1 Ask students to look at Illustration 1 (the cover of the book) again. Now they have read the book, ask *Do you agree with the choice of photos? Would you choose different images?* They need not choose photos that are already in the book, but can 'request' photos of things that are just described if they wish. Feedback to the whole class. Hold a vote to find the most popular cover. (NB Students are not allowed to vote for their own cover.)

2 Divide students into two teams (Group A and B), and call out words randomly from the three lists below. Students have to guess if the word is connected to 'Scottish food and drink', 'Scottish nature' or 'Scottish history and traditions'. You can add to the categories or wordlists if you wish. The winners are the team with most correct answers!

Lists:

Food and Drink: haggis, cranachan, Burn's supper, whisky, scotch, shortbread, fish supper, deep-fried chocolate.

Scottish Nature: puffin, otter, golden eagle, red deer, red squirrel, Munro, Ben Nevis.

Scottish history and traditions: clan, Gaelic, kilt, bagpipes, Hadrian, Wallace, Watt, penicillin.

3 Ask students to reflect on their reactions to the book. Start a discussion with the phrase *When I read the book I was really interested when ...* Observe if there is any particular section that most students liked.

Extract 1

Tiree is a great place to grow up. It's safe, quiet and beautiful. It might not have things that the big towns and cities have, but it has the countryside instead. Tiree hasn't got a swimming pool or a shopping centre – but you can swim in the sea and you enjoy shopping centres more when you leave the island.

Tiree has got a lot of crofts. One of my favourite times of the year is spring because there are lots of lambs around. I like going out and helping my dad during lambing time, and enjoy giving food to the lambs.

Living on an island means we go on quite a lot of school trips. One of my favourite trips was the Youth Games trip. This was a sporting trip. There were lots of different competitions, and Tiree was in the hockey and football competitions.

Tiree is a very musical island. And we're lucky because we have some really good teachers. I started playing the accordion when I was ten. You can also learn the piano, the violin, the flute, the pipes, the drums and other instruments. I love going to school on Tiree because everyone knows each other and we are all friends.

Extract 2

Caroline Mackinnon, the loneliest schoolgirl in Britain, is hoping that she will soon have some classmates. Caroline is one of the fifteen people who live on the island of Canna off the west coast of Scotland, and she is the only student in the island's school.

'There are people to play with when I'm on holiday,' says Caroline, 'but at school there are no people to play with. It would be good if there were kids here.'

Canna is seven kilometres long by 1.5 kilometres wide. The nearest shop is four hours away by boat; the nearest doctor is a little closer on the island of Eigg.

There are two empty houses on the island and islanders are hoping that new families will come to live there. There has been interest from all around the world including Dubai, Japan and Australia.

However, Caroline's aunt, Winne Mackinnon, warns that life is not easy on Canna. 'Winters are long, dark and can be hard for those not used to it,' she says.

Extract 3

At the end of the 19th century Sir Hugh Munro, who belonged to the Scottish Mountaineering Club, made a list of all the Scottish mountains over 3,000 feet (914 metres) in height. There are 284 of them. These mountains became known as the 'Munros' and very quickly it became a hobby to climb them all. Over four thousand people, both young and old, have climbed them all and the number rises every year.

My notes

Extract 4

Four-year-old wants to be top

Four-year-old Darwin Bradley from Guisborough in the north of England wants to become the youngest person to climb all Scotland's 284 Munros. He climbed his first at the age of twenty-to months and has so far completed fifteen.

Extract 5

Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland. It is also one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. The main street, Princes Street, has shops on only one side, with gardens and the castle on the other. Edinburgh Castle, high on a hill in the Old Town, looks over the city from the centre; Arthur's Seat, a high green hill, looks over it from the southeast. The New town, which is actually 250 years old, has wide streets and beautiful 17th century buildings.

In August and September every year Edinburgh has an arts festival. There are shows for adults, shows for teenagers and shows for children. There are films, plays and musicals. There are comedians, bands and singers. You can see shows in cinemas, theatres, church halls and the castle – even shows in the street.

Extract 6

At some time in the past – nobody knows exactly when – one of the chiefs of the MacLeods fell in love with a fairy and asked her to marry him. She agreed on condition that, after twenty years, he would allow her to return home to her fairy land. One day, twenty years later, they were standing on a bridge near the castle. The fairy told her husband that it was time for him to keep his promise. He wanted her to stay so badly that he tried to stop her leaving. But she escaped from him, ran into some woods and was never seen again. He was left holding the cloth that she wore around her shoulders. That cloth is now called the Fairy Flag.

You can still see the Fairy Flag in a glass case on the wall in the castle. It is a very old, yellow piece of cloth. It is so old that it looks ready to fall to pieces if you even touch it. But it is the fairy flag and people say it is magical. The owners of the flag can wave it to call for help from the fairies – but they can only do this three times. So far the MacLeods have waved the flag twice. The first time was many years ago when the MacLeods were fighting the MacDonalds and it seemed certain that the MacLeods were going to lose. The chief of the MacLeods waved the flag and from that moment on the MacLeods started to win the fight. The second time was when a young MacLeod child was ill and the family were afraid he was going to die. They waved the flag again and the little boy lived.

My notes

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Readers

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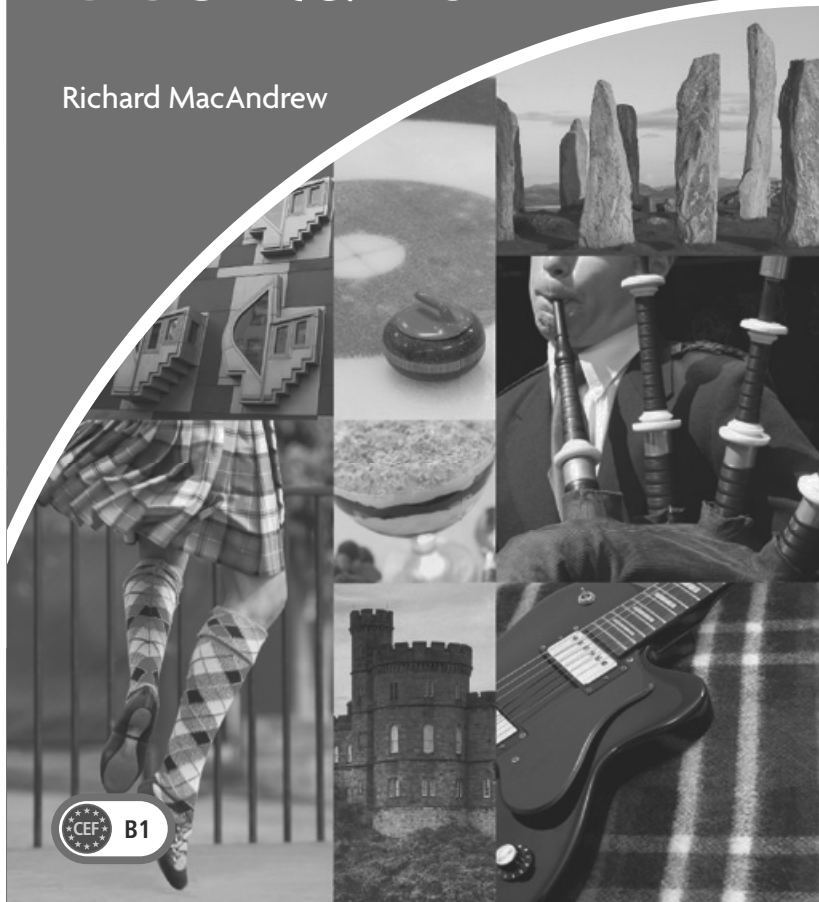


Illustration 3 _____

My notes _____

