# Scots Language Award level 5: Understanding and Communication

## Outcome 1

***Hieroglyphics*, from *Hieroglyphics and Other Stories* by Anne Donovan**

*In the following excerpt, a little girl who struggles with school describes the difficulties in keeping up with the rest of the class when they get a new teacher.*

The furst few days he rambled on aboot grammar and wrote stuff up on the board an we didnae really huvty dae oanythin bar keep oor mooths shut. Which is easie-peesie tae me. But then he startit tae dictate notes tae us and he could time his pace jist so. If ye kin imagine the class like a field a racehorses then he wus gaun at such a pelt that only the furst two or three could keep up wi him. The rest wur scribblin furiously, their airms hingin oot thur soackets, sighin an moanin ower their jotters, and then he’d tease them wi a pause that wis jist a toty bit aff bein long enough tae let them catch up, an then, wheech, he wis aff again lik lightnin.

 Me, ah wis the wan that fell at the furst fence.

### Activity 1: Audience and Purpose

Answer these questions to demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of, and audience for, this text.

1. Which type of audience is this text suitable for?
2. What is the purpose of this text? Choose **two** answers.

### Activity 2: Main Ideas

Answer these questions to demonstrate an understanding of the main ideas of this text.

1. How difficult were the new teacher’s lessons?
2. What part of the school curriculum do these lessons cover?
3. What speed was the dictation?

### Activity 3: Grammar

Answer these questions to demonstrate an understanding of the meaning and effect of the language used.

1. Read this sentence again, ‘But then he startit tae dictate notes tae us and he could time his pace jist so.’ Why does the word ‘startit’ end in the suffix ‘-it’?
2. Which of the following is a grammatical feature of Scots, as demonstrated in this excerpt?

### Activity 4: Word choice and Imagery

Answer these questions to demonstrate you understand the word choice and imagery used.

1. Which word tells us that the narrator wasn’t interested in the teacher’s discussions of grammar?
2. Read the sentence again beginning, ‘The rest wur scribblin furiously…’. In this particular context, what are the connotations of the word ‘furiously’?
3. The writer compares the class to a group of racehorses, who fall behind; catch up; and have obstacles to jump over. This technique is called:
4. What does the metaphor, ‘…their airms hingin oot thur soackets’ tell us about how the children were feeling?
5. Which image is used to demonstrate the pace of the teacher’s dictation?
6. Read the following sentence again, ‘Me, ah wis the wan that fell at the furst fence.’ What does this tell us about the narrator’s progress?

## Outcome 2

## Option A

Creative: Write a short story with a young first-person narrator as the protagonist. The story should describe a simple experience, e.g. a lesson at school, a game at breaktime or a family dinner, from a young and naïve perspective.

## Option B

Persuasive: Write a persuasive essay outlining the arguments in favour of Scots being taught in schools. You should include arguments related to literacy, language and culture.

Your piece should be written in Scots, and you must ensure that you:

* select appropriate ideas;
* use a suitable format – for example, paragraphs and/or subheadings;
* demonstrate that you know Scots vocabulary and have some understanding of Scots grammar.