# 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?

People interested in learning difficulties

People interested in child poverty

People interested in teaching methods

People interested in horse racing

1. What is the purpose of this text? Choose **two** answers.

To establish the school setting

To establish the narrator’s perspective

To provoke sympathy for the main character

To establish humour in the text

### 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?

Extremely difficult from the beginning

Moderately difficult

Easy for almost all of the class, with the narrator being the only exception

Easy at first, then very difficult

1. What part of the school curriculum do these lessons cover?

Modern languages

English and literacy

Maths and numeracy

Health and wellbeing

1. What speed was the dictation?

Frustratingly slow

A measured pace throughout

Very quick, with occasional pauses

Very quick with no hesitations whatsoever

### 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’? Choose **two** answers.

It is the Scots version of the suffix ‘-ed’

It is a feature specific to Glaswegian dialect

To show that the word is in past tense

To show that the word is of Gaelic origin

1. Which of the following is a grammatical feature of Scots, as demonstrated in this excerpt?

Commas can be used to create parenthesis

The letter ‘g’ can be missed from the suffix ‘-ing’

Apostrophes can be used to show that letters are missing

Sentences can begin with conjunctions, for example ‘but’

### 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?

rambled

stuff

oanythin

easie-peesie

1. Read the sentence again beginning, ‘The rest wur scribblin furiously…’. In this particular context, what are the connotations of the word ‘furiously’? Choose **four** answers.

anger aggression speed haste

violence madness energy rapidity

1. 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:

foreshadowing

alliteration

extended metaphor

prolonged image

1. What does the metaphor, ‘…their airms hingin oot thur soackets’ tell us about how the children were feeling?

they felt upset that the curriculum had changed

they wrote for so long that they became injured

their arms hurt with the exertion of writing

they grew so quickly it was as if they’d been stretched

1. Which image is used to demonstrate the pace of the teacher’s dictation?

such a pelt

wi a pause

wheech

lik lightnin

1. 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?

The narrator fell behind the rest of the class almost immediately

The narrator had a great start but then became complacent

The narrator underestimated how difficult it would be

The narrator made consistently good progress throughout the lesson.

## 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.