# Scots Language Award level 6: Understanding and Communication

## Outcome 1

### Kidspoem/Bairnsang by Liz Lochhead

it wis January   
and a gey dreich day  
the first day Ah went to the school  
so my Mum happed me up in ma  
good navy-blue napp coat wi the rid tartan hood  
birled a scarf aroon ma neck  
pu'ed oan ma pixie an' my pawkies  
it wis that bitter  
said noo ye'll no starve  
gie'd me a wee kiss and a kid-oan skelp oan the bum  
and sent me aff across the playground  
tae the place Ah'd learn to say  
it was January  
and a really dismal day  
the first day I went to school  
so my mother wrapped me up in my  
best navy-blue top coat with the red tartan hood,  
twirled a scarf around my neck,  
pulled on my bobble-hat and mittens  
it was so bitterly cold  
said now you won't freeze to death  
gave me a little kiss and a pretend slap on the bottom  
to the place I'd learn to forget to say  
it wis January  
and a gey dreich day  
the first day Ah went to the school  
so my Mum happed me up in ma  
good navy-blue napp coat wi the rid tartan hood,  
birled a scarf aroon ma neck,  
pu'ed oan ma pixie an' ma pawkies  
it wis that bitter.

Oh saying it was one thing  
but when it came to writing it  
in black and white  
the way it had to be said  
was as if you were posh, grown-up, male, English and dead.

### 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?

### Activity 2: Main Ideas

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

1. Why does the writer give an account of this experience in two languages?
2. What impression are we given of the relationship between the mother and child?
3. What points does the writer make about the acceptance of Scots, as she perceives it?

### Activity 3: Grammar

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

1. Look at the words ‘pu’ed’, ‘an’, and ‘gie’d. Why do these words have apostrophes?
2. Look at the word ‘Ah’d’ (‘… tae the place Ah’d learn tae say’)
3. Why is the word ‘Ah’d’ capitalised?
4. Why is there an apostrophe within the word ‘Ah’d’?
5. What does the word ‘that’ add to the phrase ‘that bitter’?

### Activity 4: Connotations and Inferences

Answer these questions to demonstrate you understand the connotations and inferences of the word choice used.

1. What are the connotations of the word ‘dreich’?
2. What are the connotations of the word ‘happed’?

## Outcome 2

Read over ‘Bairnsang’ again. In groups, discuss Lochhead’s assertion that:

the way it had to be said  
was as if you were posh, grown-up, male, English and dead.

Points for discussion:

Think about Lochhead’s list of adjectives – posh, grown-up, male, English, and dead.

* Posh – To what extent is language, register, accent influenced by class? Are certain languages and accents accompanied by stereotypes?
* Grown-up – To what extent do you agree that speech and register are affected by age?
* Male – Is gender a factor in how people speak and the language that they use?
* English – Is English considered a superior language to other indigenous languages in the UK? If so, why?
* Dead – To what extent is the school curriculum focused on dead male writers?

## Option A

Creative: Write a poem, short story or excerpt from a novel featuring a person who struggles in society because of the language that they use. The piece can be reflective or imaginative.

## Option B

Discursive: Write a discursive essay about language hierarchy. The piece can be balanced or persuasive.

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 an understanding of Scots grammar.