



Scots Language Centre

Learning Activities: Research and Discussion

Task 1

Watch and listen carefully to [the videos](#) about vocabulary from different dialects of Scots. You can also download the transcripts.

Now watch [this video](#), by 'Babbel', to help you to understand the definitions of the terms 'language', 'dialect' and 'accent'.

Discuss

In your opinion, what are the differences between a dialect and a language?

Why do you think that some people say that whether Scots is defined as a language or a dialect is *political* rather than *linguistic*?

political means 'relating to politics or the activities of the government'.

linguistic means 'connected with language or the study of language'.

Task 2

Watch [the dialects videos](#). Pay attention to *all* of the Scots words used. You can read the transcripts, if that is helpful.

Across all of the videos, find:

- four words that, according to the speakers in the videos, are unique to particular dialects;
- four words that are general Scots words (these will be easy to spot as they will be words that are used in more than one video).

Find the definitions of the words at dsl.ac.uk



Task 3

Discuss the following:

- Think about the times when you have heard Scots being used, and/or when you have used Scots words yourself.
 - When or where would Scots speakers be **more** likely to use dialect words? Why?
 - When or where would Scots speakers be **less** likely to use dialect words? Why?
- Think about the videos. The videos contain examples of words that are predominantly used within particular dialects and not in others. Look back at Task 2 to remind you of these examples.
 - Why might some words be confined to a particular dialect?
 - Why are some other words common across Scots language, and most parts of Scotland, in general?
- Think about whether you would think of yourself as being a speaker of a specific dialect. How do you know if you speak a particular dialect or not?
- Do you know anyone who does identify themselves as being a Scots speaker, or a speaker of a specific dialect?
 - Why might some people consciously and deliberately use words from a specific Scots dialect that is local to them? think about the people in the videos as examples.
 - Would you use a word from a dialect of Scots that is not usually used in your area? Why?
 - Is it acceptable for people to borrow and use words from dialects that are not their own, for example, a person in the Sottish Borders using words that are rarely heard outwith the Orkney Islands?
 - Would you ever object to someone from (or living) outwith your local area using vocabulary from the dialect that is used where you live? Why?