

Scotland's scientists:

A Scots language resource – second level

An introduction:

- The Scientists from the [National Library Hall of Fame](#) were Scottish and many of them would have spoken Scots language. They would all have understood Scots. Although some of them are very well-known, others are not celebrated in their native land.
- Reading Scots is fun. The Scots biographies have a whole different dimension to them and allow us to see these great men in a different light.
- “There is a need for increased opportunities for children and young people at all stages to engage with and create Scots language and Scottish texts.” 3-18 Literacy and English Review
- Not all children enjoy poetry or prose fiction. This is an opportunity to use a non-fiction text, written in both English and Scots.
- Using Scots texts is a good way to improve Literacy learning: “Through Scots, learners can explore language in more depth, making connections and comparisons with the linguistic structures and vocabularies of other languages.” 3-18 Literacy and English Review
- Scots can also improve the engagement of boys and reluctant learners. “It can encourage reluctant readers and writers to become involved as texts in Scots can capture the imagination and speak to them in a familiar voice.” 3-18 Literacy and English Review
- For further information on famous women scientists follow this link to the National Library of Scotland. <http://www.nls.uk/learning-zone/science-and-technology/women-scientists> Maybe you could try your hand at translating their biographies into Scots!

Activity ideas for development:

1. Use the biographies for traditional reading comprehension activities.
2. Use the biographies for Critical Reading, using ‘Thinking Reader’ or an equivalent toolkit.
3. Record learners reading a biography and use it to form the basis of a listening comprehension.
4. Compare the Scots and English biographies. This will give learners an insight into the translation process. It could be a springboard for Scots translations of other texts.
5. Compare the different regional variations of Scots found across the different biographies. This will allow learners to see the variations in different areas of the country.
6. Quiz: who’s who? Give key pieces of information on some of the figures, and ask learners to figure out which scientist is being referred to. OR, have them learn all about each of the scientists and give them key facts and ask them to sort these under the correct scientist.

7. Explore the resource through song. There are songs on James Clerk Maxwell which could be learned and performed. Learners could develop their own for another scientist. [Clerk Maxwell song in English / Rab Wilson documentary on Clerk Maxwell](#) featuring Scots song.
8. Learners could research these figures and produce a similar biography, in Scots and English and a poster, to celebrate their achievements.
9. Have debate, in Scots or English, about the relative importance of the various Scientists. This could take the form of a balloon debate: which should be first to leave a dangerously descending balloon, or a more traditional debate on which has contributed most to the world.
10. Use the resource as the basis of a Scots dictionary. Have learners record the vocabulary used in the biographies and the English equivalent word or phrase. This can then be used as the basis for future work in Scots and can be added to over time.
11. Create a fictional interview for the BBC Science website using the information in the biographies. Learners can adopt roles as one of the scientists or as an interviewer. Interviews could be dramatised using costumes and props and/or recorded as podcasts.
12. Ask learners with English as an additional language if their mother tongue has any words they recognise in the Scots words. OR ask all learners to find any words they know/see/recognise in Scots which are connected to any foreign languages they know.