



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/z97swsg>

### 1. As the pupils enter

Play Auld Lang Syne – display the lyrics (page three of the presentation) for them to read along.

### 2. Introduction

Ask the pupils if they recognise this song, have they ever heard it being played or sung at New Year's Eve? 'Auld Lang Syne' literally means 'old long since' but is more commonly translated as 'for old times' sake'. It is a song, based on a poem by the famous Scottish poet Robert Burns – a poem that Robert Burns said was from 'an old song, of the olden times' and that he 'took it down from an old man'.

25 January is Burns Night. Ask pupils to discuss what they think Burns Night is. Explain that it is a night celebrated in Scotland and beyond, where people celebrate the work of Robert Burns. Friends and family gather to eat haggis (a traditional Scottish sausage), neeps (turnips), and tatties (potatoes). 25 January is Robert Burns' birthday.

Robert Burns was born near Ayr, Scotland in 1759 – it may help to explain that this was about 100 years before the Victorian era. He grew up on a farm and wrote poems about everyday things he saw and did. He wrote in Scots, a language that was commonly spoken in Scotland at the time, to make his poems feel real and celebrate Scottish life and culture – it was considered quite different to the formal poetry (written in English) that was popular at that time. In 1788, when he was 29, he wrote 'Auld Lang Syne,' which is now a famous song for celebrating the new year, also known as 'Hogmanay' in Scotland.

### 3. The video

Play the video. The duration is 3' 06" and the final words are: '*...People all around the world still know the name of Robbie Burns, a'right!*'

### 4. After the video – time to talk

Can pupils pick out and understand any of the words he used from the video? (page two of the presentation)

'Wee' – small

'Sleekit' – crafty or sly

'Cowrin' – cowering

'Wasnae' – wasn't

Tim'rous beastie – fearful animal

'Didnae' – didn't

- Ask pupils to repeat some of the phrases in Scots.
- Ask pupils to guess what Auld Lang Syne might be about. Can they understand the meaning from the words?
- Discuss the emotions the poem evokes – is it happy or sad? What does it make them think about and how does it make them feel? Do they think it's about making new friends or remembering old ones? Why?
- Ask pupils if they can think of any other Scottish words or phrases they might know.
- Ask pupils what everyday parts of their own lives that matter to them, that they could consider writing poems about – just like Robert Burns did.
- Ask pupils if they can pick a word in Scots from the lyrics sheet that they think could fit into a poem? What would their poem sound like?

### 5. Opportunity for reflection/prayer

Listen again to Auld Lang Syne and its lyrics about old friendships. Ask pupils to think about the friendships and good times they will want to be celebrating in many years' time.