

# Burns Night

25 January



## 1. As the pupils enter

Play 'Auld Lang Syne'. Display the lyrics (page 3 of the Powerpoint presentation) for everyone 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.

25 January is Burns Night. Ask pupils to discuss what they think Burns Night is. Explain that it is an evening marking the birthday or Robert Burns to celebrate his writing, popular in Scotland and beyond. Friends and family gather to eat haggis (a traditional Scottish sausage), neeps (turnips), and tatties (potatoes).

Burns was born near Ayr 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. Play the video

Final words: '...name of Rabbie Burns, a'right!' Duration: 3' 06".

## 4. Time to talk

Can pupils pick out and understand any of the words he used from the video (page 2 of the Powerpoint 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.
- What is 'Auld Lang Syne' about? What is the meaning?
- Discuss the emotions the poem evokes. Is it happy or sad? What does it make them think about?
- Ask pupils if they can think of any other Scottish words or phrases they might know.



Webpage with video

- Ask pupils what everyday parts of their own lives they could consider writing 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 to sing

An opportunity to sing your chosen song.

## 6. Opportunity to reflect

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.

## 7. Opportunity for prayer

Use your normal form of address ('Dear God', 'Let us pray', etc) and:  
*We thank you for our friends and families.*

*Help us to share happy times with them.*

*So that one day we can look back 'for auld lang syne'.*

*Amen.*