

A Scottish Christmas

First and Second levels:

Literacy, Technologies, Social Studies, Health and Wellbeing, Religious & Moral Education, Expressive Arts, Sciences



Overview

The context for study is learning about Christmas traditions and Scotland in the past through amateur films from the 1930s, '50s and '60s.

The resource refers to the first and second levels of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence in classroom settings. However, many of the activities can be enjoyed in other learning environments including community/family learning and intergenerational and reminiscence work.

The resource is designed to be used in conjunction with the educational website **Scotland on Screen**.

Three-Step Approach

Our suggestions for learning experiences have been organised into three steps:

- 1 **Explore** – Close reading and discussion
- 2 **Discover** – Find out more (go into greater depth)
- 3 **Create** – Make something new

Each activity can be done on its own but the learning journey is more rewarding when it involves all three steps.

Prior learning:

Learners will be able to reflect on their own experiences of Christmas and/or other customs and celebrations. They should be encouraged to make comparisons between their own lives and those of the people depicted in the films.

It would be desirable to develop learners' understanding of how film narratives are constructed. Learners may find it helpful to discuss how the films convey meaning through character, colour and camera techniques, as well as through story, setting and sound.

Capabilities:

Successful learners: By exploring familiar themes using accessible media, learners are enthused and motivated. The use of technology for learning is encouraged. Creative and independent thinking is stimulated.

Confident individuals: By considering values and beliefs and the role of customs in society, learners gain confidence in their own identities. Learners reflect on their own experiences and how these are different or similar to other people's.

Responsible citizens: Learners consider the image of the child on screen and think about health and wellbeing in relation to this. Learners explore toy manufacture and the custom of gift-giving and discuss how this relates to ethical consumerism.

Effective contributors: By stimulating critical thinking and discussion in the analysis of moving image texts and by enabling team work on creative projects, learners are encouraged to be proactive in their learning journey.

Relevant Experiences and Outcomes:

Literacy & English

I can show my understanding of what I watch by responding to and asking different kinds of questions.

LIT 1-07a/LIT 2-07a

I regularly select and read, listen to or watch texts which I enjoy and find interesting, and I can explain why I prefer certain texts and authors. LIT 1-11a/LIT 2-11a

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text. LIT 1-16a

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. LIT 1-20a/LIT 2-20a

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in a logical sequence and use words which will be interesting and/or useful for others. LIT 1-26a/LIT 2-26a

When listening and talking with others, I can:

- share information, experiences and opinions
- explain processes and ideas
- identify issues raised and summarise main points or findings
- clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more

LIT 2-09a

To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create questions of my own.

ENG 2-17a

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. LIT 2-26a

Technologies

I can work with others to generate, discuss and develop imaginative ideas to create a product of the future. TCH 1-01b

I can create, capture and manipulate sounds, text and images to communicate experiences, ideas and information in creative and engaging ways. TCH 1-04b/TCH2-04b

I explore materials, tools and software to discover what they can do and how I can use them to help solve problems and construct 3D objects which may have moving parts. TCH 1-12a/2-12a

When exploring technologies in the world around me I can use what I learn to help to design or improve my ideas or products. TCH 2-01a

Having analysed how lifestyle can impact on the environment and Earth's resources, I can make suggestions about how to live in a more sustainable way. TCH 2-02a

Social Studies

By exploring places, investigating artefacts and locating them in time, I have developed an awareness of the ways we remember and preserve Scotland's history. SOC 1-02a

I can compare aspects of people's daily lives in the past with my own by using historical evidence or the experience of recreating an historical setting. SOC 1-04a/2-04a

By comparing the lifestyle and culture of citizens in another country with those in Scotland, I can discuss the similarities and differences. SOC 2-19a

Religious and Moral Education

I am developing an awareness of the ways in which Christians celebrate different times of year and can relate these to my own life and community. RME 1-03b

I can describe the practices and traditions of Christianity and have considered the way these have influenced Scottish society. RME 2-03c

Health and Wellbeing

By applying my knowledge and understanding of current healthy eating advice I can contribute to a healthy eating plan.

HWB 2-30a

Through exploration and discussion, I can understand that food practices and preferences are influenced by factors such as food sources, finances, culture and religion. HWB 2-34a

Sciences

By investigating how friction, including air resistance, affects motion, I can suggest ways to improve efficiency in moving objects. SCN 2-07a

By exploring reflections, the formation of shadows and the mixing of coloured lights, I can use my knowledge of the properties of light to show how it can be used in a creative way. SCN 2-11b

Expressive Arts

I can create and present work using the visual elements of line, shape, form, colour, tone, pattern and texture.

EXA 1-03a/EXA 2-03a

Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. EXA 1-05a/EXA 2-05a

I have developed confidence and skills in creating and presenting drama which explores real and imaginary situations, using improvisation and script. EXA 1-14a/EXA 2-14a

Inspired by a range of stimuli, and working on my own and/or with others, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through musical activities.

EXA 1-18a/EXA 2-18a

Interdisciplinary learning and moving image education

Interdisciplinary learning is an important element within Curriculum for Excellence.

Moving image texts provide an excellent stimulus for interdisciplinary learning opportunities.

Interdisciplinary learning enables learners to:

- Make clear connections with literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across learning.
- Apply what is being learned in new, different and collaborative ways.
- Apply critical thinking and progress their learning, for example through asking and answering questions, exploring an issue or topic, solving problems or completing a final project.
- Deepen their understanding of a topic and to test their learning in 'real life' scenarios.

On the next pages, the summary of learning opportunities exemplifies a possible interdisciplinary approach to each film which could be used when planning. Each activity links to specific experiences and outcomes, however each experience and outcome might be revisited in other ways and contexts for depth of learning.



Christmas (Frank Marshall, 1937. 14 mins) 16mm/B&W/Silent

Two children wish for presents from Santa. They dream about gifts and meeting Santa. They open their presents on Christmas morning then attend a children's party. That night, Nairn has a nightmare but is comforted by his sister.

Look out for:

The filmmaker's children, Nairn and Muriel, perform in this film
Pre-war affluence: not every family would have been so well off
Shadow play

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

Key Questions: Questions can be set as an individual reading activity with pupils writing their answers OR as a talking activity splitting the class into groups each discussing a different question before feeding back to the class.

What makes you think the children are Scottish?

How can you tell the girl doesn't want to go downstairs?

Why does she not want to go downstairs?

Why does she go in the end?

Who was the shadow?

What do you think the shadow said?

Related experiences & outcomes: LIT 2-07a ENG 2-17a

Listening, Talking and Presenting

Pupils prepare to talk about their favourite toy (what it is, who gave it to them, why it is their favourite). Pupils can share their information through paired or small group discussions or by presenting their toy to the group.

Other pupils should be encouraged to ask questions to clarify points.

For numeracy links, pupils could prepare a class/school survey on favourite toys and present the results.

Related experiences & outcomes: LIT 2-09a

DISCOVER

Religious and Moral Education

Use research to explore whether any Christian beliefs are shown in the film. What customs and traditions are shown?

Related experiences & outcomes: RME 2-03c RME 1-03b

Technologies

Investigate what materials make the best Christmas cracker.

Resources: cardboard tubes (like those found inside wrapping paper, toilet rolls), different paper types (tissue, crepe, wrapping, etc)

- Split the class into groups giving each a different set of resources
- Challenge each group to make a Christmas cracker (set a time limit to add greater challenge)
- Come together to test and compare the crackers

Discuss which materials worked best.

Related experiences & outcomes: TCH 2-01a

Health and Wellbeing

Is Christmas good for your health? Why/why not?

- Describe your favourite Christmas meal
- Does it follow a healthy eating plan?
- Design a healthy menu for Christmas dinner (written as a menu or drawn as a labeled placemat)

What foods would you include to make a Scottish menu?

- What foods were shown in the film?
- Research the origins of the foods and recipes

What foods would you include to make a Scottish party menu?

Related experiences & outcomes: HWB 2-34a

CREATE

Literacy

Write a script with dialogue for the children's meeting with Santa. Incorporate the main ideas shown in the images.

Related experiences & outcomes: LIT 1-16a

Write the rules to the children's games (functional writing). Take it further by inventing a new Christmas-themed game.

Related experiences & outcomes: LIT 1-26a

Sciences

Light and shadow

- Using paper or your hands make a shape which will cast a Christmas-themed shadow
- Explore different ways of creating the shadow – which gives the best effect (natural light/room light/torch/projector)? Can you make your shadow move?

Related experiences & outcomes: SCN 2-11b



A Dream Come True (T.H.Thoms, c.1953. Clip length: 3.5mins) 16mm/Colour/Silent

A boy named Peter has a dream in which he meets Santa. Santa shows him a number of toys and Peter chooses his favourite, a trumpet. Peter wakes up at home to find the trumpet in his stocking.

Look out for:

Use of colour

Toys and technology (materials, movement)

Imagine what sounds could accompany the images

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

The film is silent. What is Santa saying?

What non-verbal signs do we use in everyday life to communicate?

Can you make a new sign to represent 'Happy Christmas'?

Related experiences & outcomes:

LIT 2-07a ENG 2-17a

Writing

Make a list of all the toys you can see in the film.

What do you think they are made from? Sort the toys into headings (e.g. Metal / Plastic / Fabric / Clay)

Why are the toys made from these materials?

Related experiences & outcomes:

LIT 1-15a / LIT 2-15a

DISCOVER

Social studies

Research popular toys through the decades

- Find out what toys were popular in the 1950s
- Compare to current trends
- Find out what were the most popular toys in each decade, starting in 1900 and leading up to the present day
- Which decade's best-selling toy is your favourite?

Related experiences & outcomes:

SOC 1-04a

Sciences

Investigate ways to make toys move.

Investigate the technology in wind up or spinning toys.

Related experiences & outcomes:

SCN 1-07a / 2-07a

CREATE

Expressive Arts – Music

Add sound to the video. Choose background music and add speech or sound effects when appropriate.

Related experiences & outcomes: EXA 1-18a / EXA 2-18a

Expressive Arts – Art and Design

Create a painting or collage inspired by the film and using similar colours.

Related experiences & outcomes: EXA 1-03a

Technologies

Make Christmas puppets or instruments using junk materials

- Decide what you want to make
- Explore the materials on offer – which would be most useful?
- Design and make your puppet/instrument

Or

Design and make a wind-up toy (simple wooden frame, doweling rods, cardboard circles & elastic band) or windmill.

Related experiences & outcomes:

TCH 1-12a / TCH 2-12a



Tree for Two (Frank Marshall, 1957. 9 mins) 16mm/Colour/Sound

Two young children create havoc around the Christmas tree. They open all the presents, knock over the tree and surprise their dad!

Look out for:

How suspense and comedy is created
Gifts for different family members
Use of music

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

Key Questions: Questions can be set as an individual reading activity with pupils writing their answers OR as a talking activity splitting the class into groups each discussing a different question before feeding back to the class.

Who do you think each present was for? Why?

- brandy bottle
- nightgown
- roller skates
- figurine
- water pistol
- space/dart gun
- glasses

Why did they open the presents?

When did they have the most fun?

What made this film funny?

Were the boys being naughty?

Were they doing anything dangerous?

What did dad think when he walked into the room?

Related experiences & outcomes:
LIT 2-07a ENG 2-17a

DISCOVER

Technologies

Work in pairs or groups to compare the proper use of these objects to the ways they are used by the boys in the film. Create a comparison table.

Roller skate

Wrapping paper

Glasses

Can you think of other ways to use these items?

Related experiences & outcomes:
TCH 1-01b

CREATE

Technologies

In groups, invent new uses for everyday items (e.g. What could you do with toilet roll or a sock?) and then make a modern day version of this movie.

Or

Make a modern day version of this movie set in a school or classroom.

Related experiences & outcomes:
TCH 1-04b / TCH2-04b

Expressive Arts

Create a comedy Christmas card, advertisement or poster

Related experiences & outcomes:
EXA 1-05a / EXA 2-05a



Twee Bomen: a Tale of Two Trees (Frank Marshall, 1961. 10 mins) 16mm/Colour/Sound

A boy, a dog and a baby get into mischief on Christmas Eve. The boy cuts down a tree and decorates it with his mother's knitting, then he steals and eats chocolate biscuits. Thinking the baby has eaten the biscuits, the mother feeds her baby castor oil and finally discovers the tree in the nursery. 'Twee Bomen' is Dutch for 'Two Trees'.

Look out for:

Tree decorations

Period detail (fashion, technology)

How the story is told

EXPLORE

Reading, Listening and Talking

Key Questions: Questions can be set as an individual reading activity with pupils writing their answers OR as a talking activity splitting the class into groups each discussing a different question before feeding back to the class.

Discuss what happens in the film. Does the brother want the baby to get the blame for eating the biscuits? How do you know?

Which tree is the best? Consider from the point of view of both the boy and his mother. Hold a debate.

Related experiences & outcomes:
LIT 2-07a ENG 2-17a

DISCOVER

Technologies

History of Christmas trees – where did they first appear?

Investigate which is the most environmentally-friendly type of Christmas tree.

Related experiences & outcomes:
TCH 2-02a

Social studies

Investigate traditional ways of decorating the tree across the world. Which countries are similar to Scotland? Which are different to Scotland?

Create a visual presentation about a custom, tradition or religious festival that is significant to you.

Compare the sorts of decorations used in different cultures and religions.

Related experiences & outcomes:
SOC 2-19a

CREATE

Literacy and Expressive Arts

Turn your favourite scene into a comic book strip or into a Christmas card design. Think about your audience.

For enterprise links, make cards to sell at the winter fair.

Related experiences & outcomes:
LIT 1-20a / LIT 2-20a EXA 1-03a / EXA 2-03a

Writing

Write a story or a script, written from the mother's perspective, about her day looking after the children and the dog.

Related experiences & outcomes:
LIT 1-26a / LIT 2-26a

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Resources

Films

All of the films are available to view and download from our online resource **Scotland on Screen**. Each film is accompanied by further suggestions for learning experiences and links to further relevant films and videos, including advertisements from the era.

Scotland on Screen includes a step-by-step guide to moving image education, including suggested guidelines for how to analyse a film (close reading) and instructions for creating your own video essay using archive footage.

A number of the films referred to in this resource received praise at film competitions. You can read about the Scottish Amateur Film Festival on the **Scottish Screen Archive website**.

Into Film can help you set up a film club in school and offers opportunities to get started with filmmaking. To contact Into Film in Scotland visit <http://www.intofilm.org/scotland>.

Toys and technology:

You can find out about a wide range of toys from throughout the ages at the **Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh**.

The **V&A Museum of Childhood** in London has an excellent website which describes toys by decade.

It is fairly straightforward to make a simple moving toy such as a wind-up toy or windmill. There are many tutorials online that can help you do this.

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