

Scottish texts for National 5 and Higher English courses

The publication of the refreshed list (November 2024) follows extensive consultation with teachers, lecturers, learners and other stakeholders. The list will be reviewed and refreshed after four years to ensure it remains relevant and allows new texts to be introduced.

Teachers and lecturers will still have freedom in selecting texts for the critical essay section, which means a wide range of literature will be studied at both National 5 and Higher English.

The refreshed list will become live in session 2025–26. This means that the first question paper containing content from the new list will be during the 2026 exam diet.

National 5 English	Higher English
Drama	
<p><i>Yellow Moon</i> by David Greig</p> <p><i>Sailmaker</i> by Alan Spence</p> <p><i>Tally's Blood</i> by Ann Marie di Mambro</p>	<p><i>Sequamur</i> by Donald S Murray</p> <p><i>Men Should Weep</i> by Ena Lamont Stewart</p> <p><i>The Slab Boys</i> by John Byrne</p>
Prose	
<p><i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson (crossover)</p> <p><i>Duck Feet (*Part Wan First Year)</i> by Ely Percy</p> <p>Short Stories by Anne Donovan <i>All that Glisters, Hieroglyphics, Me and the Babbie, Loast</i></p> <p>Scottish short stories <i>A Voice Spoke to me at Night</i> by Helen McClory, <i>Things My Wife and I Found Hidden in Our House</i> by Kirsty Logan, <i>Andrina</i> by George Mackay Brown, <i>Death In A Nut</i> as told by Duncan Williamson (crossover)</p>	<p><i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson (crossover)</p> <p><i>The Sunlight Pilgrims</i> by Jenni Fagan</p> <p>Short stories by Iain Crichton Smith <i>The Red Door, Mother and Son, The Painter, The Existence of the Hermit</i></p> <p>Scottish short stories <i>A Voice Spoke to me at Night</i> by Helen McClory, <i>Things My Wife and I Found Hidden in Our House</i> by Kirsty Logan, <i>Andrina</i> by George Mackay Brown, <i>Death In A Nut</i> as told by Duncan Williamson (crossover)</p>
Poetry	
<p>Carol Ann Duffy <i>Originally, Mrs Midas, In Mrs Tilscher's Class, Medusa, Havisham, Before You Were Mine</i> (crossover)</p> <p>Norman MacCaig <i>Aunt Julia, Hotel room, 12th floor, Basking shark, On Lachie's Croft, Landscape and I, Old Highland Woman</i> (crossover)</p>	<p>Carol Ann Duffy <i>Originally, Mrs Midas, In Mrs Tilscher's Class, Medusa, Havisham, Before You Were Mine</i> (crossover)</p> <p>Norman MacCaig <i>Aunt Julia, Hotel room, 12th floor, Basking shark, On Lachie's Croft, Landscape and I, Old Highland Woman</i> (crossover)</p>

National 5 English	Higher English
<p>Jackie Kay <i>Gap Year, Keeping Orchids, Whilst Leila Sleeps, Grandpa's Soup, Darling, Maw Broon Visits a Therapist</i></p> <p>Edwin Morgan <i>In the Snack-bar, Trio, Glasgow Sonnet I, Strawberries, Love, Death on Duke Street</i></p> <p>National 5 Scottish poetry collection <i>The Bonnie Earl o' Moray</i> (traditional ballad), <i>The Twa Corbies</i> (traditional ballad), <i>A Red, Red Rose</i> by Robert Burns, <i>Lochinvar</i> by Sir Walter Scott, <i>Auntie</i> by Nadine Aisha Jassat, <i>Little Girls</i> by Len Pennie</p>	<p>Liz Lochhead <i>My Rival's House, Last Supper, Box Room, For My Grandmother Knitting, The Spaces Between, Sorting Through</i></p> <p>Don Paterson <i>Waking with Russell, 11:00: Baldovan, The Circle, The Thread, The Swing, Why Do You Stay Up So Late?</i></p> <p>Imtiaz Dharker <i>Bairn, Bloom, Letters to Glasgow, Send This, Stitch, The Knot</i></p> <p>Kathleen Jamie <i>Crossing the Loch, Mr and Mrs Scotland are Dead, Ospreys, Song of Sunday, The Morrow-bird, What the Clyde said, after COP26</i></p> <p>Higher Scottish poetry collection <i>Thomas the Rhymer</i> (traditional ballad), <i>Composed In August</i> by Robert Burns, <i>The Bonnie Broukit Bairn</i> by Hugh MacDiarmid, <i>Summit of Corrie Etchachan</i> by Nan Shepherd, <i>Da Clearance</i> by Rhoda Bulter, <i>33</i> by MacGillivray</p>

* Exam extracts from *Duck Feet* will only be taken from *Part Wan First Year* of the novel. Responses for the final question can be limited to this part of the novel or can go beyond it. There is no requirement to read beyond *Part Wan First Year* for assessment purposes.

New poetry collections

The information below relates to the two new poetry collections introduced at National 5 and Higher.

For the copyright free texts, the versions printed here are the ones which will be used in exams. We have included links to the texts which are not free of copyright; these are all available on the Scottish Poetry Library.

National 5 Scottish poetry collection

The Bonnie Earl o' Moray (traditional ballad), *The Twa Corbies* (traditional ballad), *A Red, Red Rose* by Robert Burns, *Lochinvar* by Sir Walter Scott, *Auntie* by Nadine Aisha Jassat, *Little Girls* by Len Pennie

The Bonnie Earl o' Moray — anonymous (from ASL's *Voices of Scotland* publication)

Ye Hielands and ye Lowlands,
O, whaur hae ye been?
They hae slain the Earl o' Moray,
And laid him on the green.
He was a braw gallant,
And he rade at the ring,
And the bonny Earl o' Moray,
He might hae been a king.
*O lang will his lady
Lok frae the Castle Doune
Ere she see the Earl o' Moray
Come soundin' through the toun.*

Now wae be to ye, Huntly,
And wherefore did ye sae?
I bade ye bring him wi' ye,
And forbade ye him to slay.
He was a braw gallant,
And he played at the glove;
And the bonny Earl o' Moray,
He was the Queen's true love.
*O lang will his lady
Lok frae the Castle Doune
Ere she see the Earl o' Moray
Come soundin' through the toun.*

The Twa Corbies — anonymous (from ASL's *Voices of Scotland* publication)

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making mane;
The tane unto the t'other say,
'Where sall we gang and dine the day?'

In behind yon auld fail dyke,
I wot there lies a new slain knight:
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair.

'His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may make our dinner sweet.

'Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.

'Mony an ane for him maks mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.'

A Red, Red Rose — Robert Burns (from the Scottish Poetry Library)

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair are thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luv am I;
And I will luv thee still, my Dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luv thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Lochinvar — Sir Walter Scott (from ASL's *Voices of Scotland* publication)

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Esk river where ford there was none;
But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)
'O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'

'I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide;
And now I am come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland, more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.'

The bride kissed the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar, —
'Now tread we a measure!' said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume:
And the bride-maidens whispered, 'Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croup the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprang!
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

Auntie — Nadine Aisha Jassat (from the [Scottish Poetry Library](#))

Little Girls — Len Pennie (from the [Scottish Poetry Library](#))

Higher Scottish poetry collection

Thomas the Rhymer (traditional ballad), *Composed In August* by Robert Burns, *The Bonnie Broukit Bairn* by Hugh MacDiarmid, *Summit of Corrie Etchachan* by Nan Shepherd, *Da Clearance* by Rhoda Bulter, 33 by MacGillivray

Thomas the Rhymer — anonymous (from ASL's *Voices of Scotland* publication)

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e;
And there he saw a ladye bright
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk.
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap
And louted low down to his knee;
All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see.

O no, O no, Thomas, she said,
That name does not belong to me;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland
That am hither come to visit thee.

Harp and carp, Thomas, she said,
Harp and carp along wi' me,
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be.

Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunt me,
Synne he has kissed her rosy lips
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

Now ye maun go wi' me, she said,
True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years
Thro' weal or woe, as may chance to be.

She mounted on her milk-white steed,
She's ta'en True Thomas up behind;
And aye whene'er her bridle rung
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on —
The steed gaed swifter than the wind —
Until they reach'd a desert wide
And living land was left behind.

Light down, light down now, True Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide and rest a little space
And I will shew you ferlies three.

O see ye not yon narrow road
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

And see ye not that braid, braid road
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to Heaven.

And see not ye that bonny road
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue
Whatever ye may hear or see,
For if you speak word in Elflyn land
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie.

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night and there was nae stern light
And they waded through red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree;
Take this for thy wages, True Thomas,
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

Composed In August — Robert Burns (from BBC archive)

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs on whirring wings
Among the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, as I rove by night,
To muse upon my charmer.

The paitrick loves the fruitful fells,
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells,
The soaring hern the fountains:
Thro' lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path of man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine,
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring cry,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

But, Peggy dear, the ev'ning's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow,
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading – green and yellow:
Come let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of Nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And ilka happy creature.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
While the silent moon shine clearly;
I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
Swear how I lo'e thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
Not Autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

The Bonnie Broukit Bairn — Hugh MacDiarmid (from the [Scottish Poetry Library](#))

Summit of Corrie Etchachan — Nan Shepherd (from the [Scottish Poetry Library](#))

Da Clearance — Rhoda Bulter (from the [Scottish Poetry Library](#))

33 — MacGillivray (from the [Scottish Poetry Library](#))

Crossover short story collection

Scottish short stories (National 5 and Higher)

A Voice Spoke to me at Night by Helen McClory, *Things My Wife and I Found Hidden in Our House* by Kirsty Logan, *Andrina* by George Mackay Brown, *Death In A Nut* as told by Duncan Williamson (crossover)

A PDF containing all four stories is being collated and will be available on [the English subject homepage](#).

The stories also feature in the following collections:

A Voice Spoke to me at Night by Helen McClory from *Mayhem and Death*

Things My Wife and I Found Hidden in Our House by Kirsty Logan from *Things We Say in the Dark*

Andrina by George Mackay Brown from *Andrina and Other Stories*

Death In A Nut as told by Duncan Williamson from *The Oxford Book of Short Stories* edited by Douglas Dunn