



Summary report: Scottish Text refresh consultation

November 2024

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Foreword

The refresh of the Scottish texts on the curriculum is both timely and necessary. There is a pressing need to reconfigure the school curriculum in a manner which addresses contemporary concerns, increases student engagement and reflects current approaches to teaching literature. Throughout the consultation process, it has been clear that SQA has taken what can broadly be called an 'inclusive' approach to the refresh, whether in terms of stakeholder engagement, the recognition of the needs of learners, or the selection of appropriate texts for study. By opening up the curriculum to a wider range of writers, voices and experiences, SQA recognises the continued relevance of Scottish Literature to the literary curriculum and its potential to speak to a diverse audience of students.

The importance of having Scottish literature in Scottish classrooms is so that it might introduce young learners to Scotland's part among world literatures: to the ways in which our species has imagined itself through language associated with this particular part of the world.

The study of Scottish literature can foster an appreciation for the fact that Scotland cannot be imagined nor understood in isolation. By learning about the literary history of Scotland, students gain greater awareness of Scotland's defining connections with the wider world and the ways in which Scottish culture has both influenced and been influenced by the literatures and cultures of other places. Scotland has, moreover, always been home to different voices and experiences expressed in a variety of languages. Studying Scottish writing can encourage us to appreciate diversity in ways of life, identities, families, landscapes, class positions, belief systems and perspectives.

It is important for students to feel that Scotland's literary cultures include them and are there to be opened up further still by their presence and contributions. The proposed inclusion of more diverse contemporary voices on the curriculum should give learners opportunities to find elements of their own lives and times in the literary imagination. At the same time, the opportunity to revisit older texts and traditions through recognisable aspects of everyday life generates all sorts of possibilities for student engagement and for innovative approaches to Scotland's rich literary history.

In any given contemporary classroom a particular poem or story or play might speak out of historical contexts that are distant, in unfamiliar languages, through strange forms, with reference to ideas that need some explanation — the reward of studying such work comes with the realisation that countless others have articulated their hopes and their fears from this place, or towards this place. It is hoped that the refresh might give young learners confidence in seeing this cultural inheritance as their own through all its familiarity and its strangeness. Finally, it is hoped that they will be well placed to both identify with it and challenge it.

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Introduction

This report details findings which emerged from consultation with teachers, lecturers, learners, academics, professional groups and other interested parties on the refresh of the Scottish Set Text list for National 5 and Higher English. When the original Scottish Set Text list was published in 2013, it was stated that the list would be reviewed and refreshed every three years to maintain relevance and to allow new texts to be introduced. Following consultation, the list was refreshed in session 2018–19, but this update was intentionally limited in scope. At the time, we signalled that the next review would be more significant and would involve a larger revision of the list. The current refresh was scheduled to begin in early 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic.

The purpose of this consultation was to gather views from practitioners, learners and other stakeholders on which texts they were keen to retain, which should be replaced, and which new texts could be introduced. The refreshed list is published alongside this report and 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. The intention going forward is that there will be a four-year review cycle. All texts on the revised list will therefore remain on the list for a minimum of four years.

Our principal aim for this review was to listen to and reflect on the views of all relevant stakeholders and then to update the list accordingly to introduce more modern and diverse texts and writers, while retaining some of the heritage and cultural value of the current list.

It is important to note that the Scottish Set Text list is applicable to one section of the Critical Reading paper for National 5 and Higher English. There is complete free choice of text selection in all other aspects of English courses. Scottish texts and writers can also be used for the Critical Essay section, and more widely across English courses at all levels. Appendix C contains an overview of other Scottish texts and writers which were considered for this review.

Methodology

When devising a methodology, our aim was to be as collaborative and as inclusive as possible.

The Scottish text refresh consultation took place in two stages. The first stage took the form of two online surveys — one for practitioners and one for learners. Links to the survey were published on our website and sent to centres via SQA News. The surveys were also promoted via social media channels and reminders were sent out at various points during the six-week period that the surveys were open. Engagement with the surveys was very positive and we received 1384 responses from practitioners and 1172 responses from learners.

The practitioner survey contained the following introductory statement:

SQA is gathering views on the current [Scottish set text list](#) for National 5 and Higher English. We plan to update the list for use in session 2025–26 onwards, so that it more fully reflects life in Scotland.

What am I being asked to do?

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It asks you questions about which texts you'd like us to keep and which you'd like us to replace. You'll also have the opportunity to comment on any potential changes or additions you'd like us to make. You don't need to answer every question — please only answer the questions you have an interest in.

The survey will close on Monday 6 May 2024.

How will you use my feedback?

In addition to this survey, we're holding focus groups with the National Qualification Support Team (NQST) for English, and colleagues from representative groups who are closely involved in delivering the National 5 and Higher English course assessments.

We'll review and consider the feedback from this survey, along with the views of the focus groups. This will inform our decisions about the content of the revised list.

Where we keep poets or short story writers on the list, our aim is to replace at least two poems or two short stories.

When will you publish the revised list?

We'll publish the revised Scottish set text list by the end of 2024, with a view to implementing it in session 2025–26. This means the 2026 exams will be the first to contain content from the revised list.

The learner survey contained the following introductory statement:

Scottish texts are a key part of National 5 and Higher English courses.

SQA is gathering views on the current [Scottish set text list](#) for National 5 and Higher English. We want to update the list so that it more fully reflects life in Scotland.

What am I being asked to do?

The survey should take around four minutes to complete. It asks you questions about which texts you'd like us to keep, which you'd like us to replace, and what types of texts you like to read and study. The survey closes on Monday 6 May 2024.

How will you use my feedback?

We'll review and consider the feedback from this survey, along with the views of teachers and lecturers, which we're gathering through other surveys and consultations. This will help us to decide the content of the updated list.

When will you publish the revised list?

We'll publish the revised Scottish set text list by the end of 2024, with a view to implementing it in session 2025–26. This means the 2026 exams will be the first to contain content from the revised list.

The second stage of the consultation involved discussion with focus groups informed by the key findings from the two surveys. We shared the survey findings and some desk research with the English National Qualification Support Team (NQST) and then met with them to discuss the key findings and their reflections on the surveys. We had also discussed the upcoming refresh with the NQST in autumn 2023 before we launched the consultation. We then convened a focus group which was made up of senior appointees, teachers, higher

education representatives and Education Scotland to discuss the survey outputs. We also held a number of focus groups with learners to discuss the learner survey outputs and hear their views on the list.

Alongside these two formal stages, we undertook desk research to analyse the output of the survey results alongside uptake data and other intelligence gathered from assessment creation and marking procedures. This was followed by a period of researching and reading the suggested texts.

Throughout the consultation period, we invited submissions and comment from the Association for Scottish Literature (ASL) and the Department of Scottish Literature at Glasgow University. We also met with representatives from the Scottish Poetry Library.

In addition to the steps outlined above, the following key considerations and objectives were factored into the decision-making process.

Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • texts which will engage, and be representative of, learners • texts which can act as a window or mirror allowing learners to see representations of themselves, or to see a new view of their world, or the world of others • texts which offer multiple perspectives • the need to modernise the list
Validity and reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment demand • printable content • differentiation for crossover texts • scope for multiple sampling in longer texts • coherent grouping of shorter texts
Resources implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school budgets and resources • texts in print (publishers) • availability of support materials
Workload implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope of change • need to create resources • appetite for change
Uptake of texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trends in uptake • consistently low uptake

Key findings

Online practitioner survey

- National 5 Drama: The majority of practitioners who responded to the survey were in favour of keeping *Tally's Blood* on the set text list, while just over half thought *Bold Girls* should be replaced.
- Higher Drama: A large majority of the respondents were in favour of replacing *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*.
- National 5 Prose: The majority of respondents were in favour of replacing *The Testament of Gideon Mack*.
- Higher Prose: Respondents were in favour of replacing short stories by George Mackay Brown, *The Cone-Gatherers* by Robin Jenkins, and *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassic Gibbon.
- National 5 Poetry: Overall, practitioners wanted to keep the current poets. However, they did note that the poems should be updated.
- Higher Poetry: Practitioners were very supportive of keeping Carol Ann Duffy, Norman MacCaig and Liz Lochhead. Sorley MacLean was the poet that the majority of practitioners wanted to replace.
- There were a number of suggestions for new additions to the list for both National 5 and Higher. Some of these have been added to the list and others are included in appendix C. The suggested writers which have been added to the list include Kathleen Jamie, David Greig, Jenni Fagan, Len Pennie, Imtiaz Dharker, Kirsty Logan and Ely Percy.
- The most common theme to come out of the open-ended comments was that respondents wanted a list that is diverse and relevant to learners. They wanted to include more writers of colour, female writers, LGBT+ writers and writers of different backgrounds. Respondents also stated that they would prefer some more modern texts that represent contemporary experiences.
- As was the case with the consultation for the previous refresh of the Scottish set text list, we invited commentary and suggestions from ASL, who submitted a detailed paper. A number of the texts they suggested are included in the updated list: *Sequamar*, *Yellow Moon*, *Duck Feet* poetry by Kathleen Jamie.

Online learner survey

- Learners chose to comment on a range of texts, not just the ones they had studied.
- At National 5, 60% or more of respondents were in favour of keeping poems by Edwin Morgan, Carol Ann Duffy and Norman MacCaig as well as *Tally's Blood* by Ann Marie di Mambro.
- At Higher, 60% of respondents were in favour of keeping poems by Norman MacCaig and Carol Ann Duffy, as well as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson.
- At National 5, 50% or more of all respondents were in favour of removing short stories by Iain Crichton Smith, *The Cone-Gatherers* by Robin Jenkins and *The Testament of Gideon Mack* by James Robertson.
- At Higher, 60% or more of all respondents were in favour of removing short stories by George Mackay Brown, *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* by John McGrath and *Sunset Song* by Lewis Grassic Gibbon.

- Overall, respondents stated that they would like to see more modern and diverse texts included in the revised list.
- Learners were also keen to study a text that was relevant to them, had challenging themes and issues, and had strong emotional content.
- Learners included suggestions for what they would like to see in the Scottish set text list. These included:
 - more contemporary Scottish writers
 - texts that are more inclusive of other cultures
 - texts that are more relevant to today's society and current events
 - modern poets
 - reduction of short stories to three
 - more short plays
- There were a number of suggestions for new additions to the list for both National 5 and Higher. Some of these have been added to the list and others are included in appendix C. The suggestions which have been added to the revised list include: Len Pennie, Walter Scott, Jenni Fagan, David Greig, Kathleen Jamie, Imtiaz Dharker, Ely Percy.

NQST and key stakeholder focus groups

- In general, there was agreement with the retention of the high uptake texts from the surveys.
- Both groups were encouraged that the survey findings indicated an appetite for change.
- There was broad agreement about the texts that were likely to be removed and enthusiasm about the possible new texts.
- There was a lot of discussion about content of texts since many modern texts feature strong and sometimes quite explicit language as well as challenging content. The group felt that so long as practitioners have a range of texts to choose from, they can make appropriate choices for their circumstances and their particular learners.
- In order to refine the outcomes of the survey, there was discussion of the wider issues of implementation. Considerations discussed included: the availability of texts, the size and manageability of the question paper, the scope for assessable content, and the appropriateness of content for teaching, learning and assessment.
- Glasgow University have committed to producing free resources to support all of the new writers on the list. These should be available by around April 2025.
- There was general recognition of the very low uptake of Burns at Higher. However, all agreed on the cultural significance and cultural value of Burns and that, ideally, his poetry should be represented on the list in some form.
- There was discussion of a new model for poetry at both levels, based on six poems across a wide time period by different poets. This model was supported by consultation with ASL, who offered suggestions of texts to consider. Both groups were very enthusiastic about this, particularly the scope to include new writers. Both groupings feature a text by Burns to acknowledge his importance to Scottish literature and culture.
- This led to the suggestion that a similar model could be adopted for a new bespoke collection of short stories at National 5 and Higher, featuring a range of authors across time. This idea was upheld.

- The new short story collection will be supported by the production of a PDF containing the short story texts. This will be available on our website.

Learner focus groups

- Learners wanted texts they could relate to and which reflected their lives, their relationships, and their environments (eg coming of age stories).
- Learners wanted texts which encouraged them to find out about and understand the points of view of others.
- Learners wanted texts which were 'easy to remember and to write about' in assessment situations.
- Some interest was expressed in the genre of fantasy, or 'the uncanny'. There was also the notion that texts studied should provide an 'adventure' for readers, a sense of discovery.
- Views were split over most texts mentioned, though there were generally positive reactions to texts from the list which had already been studied.
- Some learners liked texts on the list to be about or set in Scotland. However, other learners did not see this as significant and thought only writers themselves needed to be Scottish.
- Learners felt that the set text list should be broad in scope and should offer variety.

Summary of changes to the list

The updated list retains stability, with all of the high uptake texts and writers remaining. Based on consultation and uptake, a number of texts are being replaced in order to allow more modern and diverse texts to be added to the list.

Based on uptake, feedback and discussion with the focus groups, for both National 5 and Higher we have added an additional poetry option and reduced the prose options by one text. The overall number of options available at each level remains the same.

Texts added to the list:

National 5 English	Higher English
Drama	
<i>Yellow Moon</i> by David Greig	<i>Sequamur</i> by Donald S Murray
Prose	
<p><i>Duck Feet (Part Wan First Year)</i> by Ely Percy</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>The Sunlight Pilgrims</i> by Jenni Fagan</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>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>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> <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>

Rationale

- *Yellow Moon* by David Greig. David Greig was the second most requested playwright by practitioners. The play centres around two teenagers and has been described as a modern Bonnie and Clyde story.
- *Sequamur* by Donald S Murray. It is set in The Nicolson Institute school in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, and is translated from Gaelic. Its historical themes retain strong contemporary relevance.
- *Duck Feet* by Ely Percy featured in the suggestions from practitioners and learners. The novel is about a teenager's experience of high school in Renfrew and is written in Scots. In acknowledgement of the length of the novel, 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.
- *The Sunlight Pilgrims* by Jenni Fagan was chosen for its contemporary and topical relevance, as it is a dystopian climate change adventure of self-discovery. Jenni Fagan featured in the authors suggested by practitioners and learners.
- The Scottish short stories selection was put together as a new crossover option, featuring a range of works from both contemporary and established writers. The short stories are *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 and *Death In A Nut* as told by Duncan Williamson. The collection should be treated in the same way as one from a single author.
- The Scottish poetry collections were put together to allow the inclusion of culturally significant poets such as Robert Burns and Walter Scott, and the introduction of poets such as MacGillivray and Len Pennie. The collections should be treated in the same way as ones from a single poet. Please note the selections for Higher and National 5 are not the same.
- See appendix A for the full groups of poems at both levels, and appendix B for the full group of crossover short stories.
- In creating these groupings, we had the following aims:
 - have a representation of texts across time
 - explore Scottish culture and language
 - include some historically significant Scottish writers (eg Burns and Scott)
 - consider issues of diversity
 - include some very recent works
 - address sustainability issues and resource limitations (all poems are free to access, either out of copyright or available on the Scottish Poetry Library website, and the short stories will be collated into a freely available PDF)
 - reflect the survey (Burns, Len Pennie, Kirsty Logan and Nadine Aisha Jassat are all recommendations in the surveys)
- Imtiaz Dharker was one of the poets suggested by both learners and practitioners in the surveys. She has published extensively and was the recipient of the Queen's Gold Medal for poetry in 2014. The selection chosen for the list comes from her collection *Luck is the Hook*.
- Kathleen Jamie was also suggested by both learners and practitioners in the surveys. She was Scotland's Makar until the summer of 2024. Most of the selection comes from

Selected Poems with the exception of *The Morrow-bird* and *What the Clyde said*, after COP26, which can both be found on the [Scottish Poetry Library](#) website.

Texts removed from the list:

National 5 English	Higher English
Drama	
<i>Bold Girls</i> by Rona Munro	<i>The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil</i> by John McGrath
Prose	
<i>The Cone-Gatherers</i> by Robin Jenkins	<i>The Cone-Gatherers</i> by Robin Jenkins
<i>The Testament of Gideon Mack</i> by James Robertson	<i>Sunset Song</i> by Lewis Grassic Gibbon
Short stories by Iain Crichton Smith	Short Stories by George Mackay Brown
Poetry	
	Sorley MacLean poems
	Robert Burns poems

Rationale

- *Bold Girls* has had a pattern of decreasing uptake since 2018 and is now studied by under 5% of the cohort. About 60% of practitioners surveyed thought it should be replaced. Candidates were more likely to want it replaced than kept. Qualitative feedback suggested that the play’s setting of Northern Ireland was incongruous to it being on the Scottish set text list.
- *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* has had a consistently low uptake of under 1% since 2018. Just over 75% of practitioners and over half of candidates surveyed thought it should be replaced.
- *The Cone-Gatherers* has had a decreasing uptake at both National 5 and Higher and is now only studied by 0.5% and 3% of the respective cohorts. Nearly 60% of practitioners surveyed thought it should be replaced, as did over half of candidates surveyed. Qualitative feedback received from teachers suggests that learners struggled to engage with the text.
- *The Testament of Gideon Mack* has the lowest uptake of all the National 5 texts. Over 80% of practitioners felt it should be replaced, as did the majority of candidates surveyed.
- Iain Crichton Smith’s short stories have had a consistently low uptake of around 2% for National 5. Though practitioners were broadly in favour of retaining this option, learners were split. The uptake rate, the assessable content and the poor engagement reported by the focus group contributed to the decision to remove the collection for National 5.

- *Sunset Song* has the lowest uptake of all the Higher texts. Over 60% of practitioners and learners surveyed felt it should be replaced.
- George Mackay Brown's short stories have had a consistently low uptake of under 1% since 2018. Over 60% of practitioners and learners surveyed felt the collection should be replaced. In recognition of his importance as a representative of island communities, one of his most popular short stories will be retained and used in the new bespoke collection of short stories.
- Sorley MacLean's poetry selection has had a consistently low uptake of under 1%. Over 60% of practitioners and learners surveyed felt the selection should be replaced. As MacLean's works gave representation to Scotland's island communities and to the Gaelic language, we have added a new drama to the Higher options, set on the Isle of Lewis and translated from the original Gaelic text.
- Robert Burns's poetry selection has had a consistently low uptake of under 2% since 2015. Unlike the other low uptake texts that are being removed, over half of practitioners and learners felt that Burns should still feature on the list. The practitioner focus groups also felt that due to his cultural significance and value, Burns should be retained in some way. In recognition of this, some of Burns's poetry features in the two new National 5 and Higher collections of poems.

Below are the updated selections for the remaining poetry and short stories collections.

Updated short story and poetry collections

National 5 English	Higher English
Prose	
Short Stories by Anne Donovan <i>All that Glisters, Hieroglyphics, Me and the Babbie, Loast</i>	Short stories by Iain Crichton Smith <i>The Red Door, Mother and Son, The Painter, The Existence of the Hermit</i>
Poetry	
Carol Ann Duffy <i>Originally, Mrs Midas, In Mrs Tilscher's Class, Medusa, Havisham, Before You Were Mine</i>	Carol Ann Duffy <i>Originally, Mrs Midas, In Mrs Tilscher's Class, Medusa, Havisham, Before You Were Mine</i>
Norman MacCaig <i>Aunt Julia, Hotel room, 12th floor, Basking shark, On Lachie's Croft, Landscape and I, Old Highland Woman</i>	Norman MacCaig <i>Aunt Julia, Hotel room, 12th floor, Basking shark, On Lachie's Croft, Landscape and I, Old Highland Woman</i>
Jackie Kay <i>Gap Year, Keeping Orchids, Whilst Leila Sleeps, Grandpa's Soup, Darling, Maw Broon Visits a Therapist</i>	Liz Lochhead <i>My Rival's House, Last Supper, Box Room, For My Grandmother Knitting, The Spaces Between, Sorting Through</i>
Edwin Morgan <i>In the Snack-bar, Trio, Glasgow Sonnet I, Strawberries, Love, Death on Duke Street</i>	Don Paterson <i>Waking with Russell, 11:00: Baldovan, The Circle, The Thread, The Swing, Why Do You Stay Up So Late?</i>

Rationale

The changes to existing collections were led by the responses in the surveys. Beyond that, considerations such as coherence of the grouping, assessable content and availability of texts were key elements of the decision-making process. For each of the poetry groupings, there are three new poems. For some groupings we have re-introduced a text that was previously on the list. This is due to the popularity of the texts, as evidenced by the survey.

The Critical Reading specimen question papers will be updated before the end of session 2024–25 to reflect the changes to the list.

The refreshed list

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>Jackie Kay <i>Gap Year, Keeping Orchids, Whilst Leila Sleeps, Grandpa's Soup, Darling, Maw Broom Visits a Therapist</i></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> <p>Liz Lochhead <i>My Rival's House, Last Supper, Box Room, For My Grandmother Knitting, Spaces Between, Sorting Through</i></p>

National 5 English	Higher English
<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>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.

Appendix A: 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 sprung!
'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 belang 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,
Syn 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](#))

Appendix B: 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

Appendix C: Other texts and writers considered

During our research for the Scottish set text list refresh project, we have read many excellent and engaging Scottish texts. Ultimately, they couldn't all be included in the final list.

However, there is plenty of scope in the curriculum for teaching beyond the Scottish text list. For those particularly interested in Scottish literature or keen to try some new texts for Critical Essay or other areas of the English curriculum, we hope the texts below may be of some interest.

The Young Team by Graeme Armstrong — a powerful award-winning novel which explores gang-culture and substance abuse in contemporary Scotland, containing the authentic voice of lived experience.

Lament for Sheku Bayoh by Hannah Lavery — a powerful dramatic response to the real-life tragic events surrounding the death of Sheku Bayoh. This play is a reflection on identity and racism in Scotland today.

The Outrun by Amy Liptrot — a non-fiction account of substance addiction in London and recovery back home in the natural world of Orkney's remote spaces.

Glasgow Boys by Margaret McDonald — a coming-of-age story which explores the power of love, identity, community and young masculinity within the modern Scottish working class.

Enough of Him by May Sumbwanyambe — play based on the true story of Joseph Knight, an African man enslaved by plantation owner Sir John Wedderburn and brought to Scotland to serve in his Perthshire mansion.

Macbeth (an undoing) by Zinnie Harris — a retelling of the classic Scottish play that puts Lady Macbeth at the heart of the story.

The Gracekeepers by Kirsty Logan — a dystopian novel which explores environmental themes in a near-future world of rising water levels.

Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off by Liz Lochhead — dramatic Scots-language re-telling of the life and times of the Scottish Queen.

The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox by Maggie O'Farrell — set predominantly in Edinburgh, a haunting story which explores truth and secrets.

Another Time, Another Place by Jessie Kesson — a powerful story of a young woman's encounter with Italian prisoners of war in rural Scotland at the end of the Second World War.

Dirt Road by James Kelman — this novel follows a Scottish father and son who take a road trip to Memphis in an attempt to recover from painful loss.

O Caledonia by Elspeth Barker — a gothic coming-of-age story set in a Scottish castle.

Various short story writers with a wide variety of output, including: James Kelman, Alasdair Gray, Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Janice Galloway, AL Kennedy, Leila Aboulela, Kirsty Logan.

Very many poets and individual poems, many of them discovered in the free online pages of the Scottish Poetry Library <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/>. The following are perhaps worthy of special mention:

Pàdraig MacAoidh / Peter Mackay — is a native Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Lewis. He is a poet, writer and broadcaster whose work is influenced by the diverse linguistic heritage of his birthplace. His poems are written in Gaelic but Peter his own English translations. His debut collection of poetry, *Gu Leòr / Galore*, was published by Acair.

Harry Josephine Giles — in 2022, they won the Arthur C. Clarke Award for their verse novel *Deep Wheel Orcadia*. Their latest publication *Them!* Is a collection of poems about trans life which explores poetic form in a highly creative way.

William Letford — published his first collection of poetry while working as a roofer. He has two further collections and his work has been adapted into film, for the stage and for radio.

Meg Bateman — finely observed emotionally-powerful Gaelic poems with a clear sense of form.

Hannah Lavery — poet and playwright. She has been the Edinburgh Makar since 2021 and her first poetry collection *Blood Salt Spring* was published in 2022.

Derick Thomson — a highly significant writer of Gaelic free verse, for example: *Clann-Nighean an Sgadain (The Herring Girls)*, and *Cisteachan-laighe (Coffins)*.

Janet Hamilton — taught herself to read and write, but went on to write highly effectively about working life in Victorian Scotland.

Claire Askew — has three poetry collections including her most recent *How to Burn A Woman* and has been shortlisted for several major awards.

Helen Adam — developed her own take on the traditional ballad form, but was also part of Allen Ginsberg's circle in New York.

Jackie Kay — already on the list, but one other Kay poem perhaps worth special mention is: *A Banquet for the Boys*, a sonnet written after her son was injured by the police during a Black Lives Matter march in London.

Robert Burns — appears in both National 5 and Higher poetry collections, but a writer of such national importance has, of course, many other poems which would be highly valuable for study, for example: *Address to the Toothache*, *The Battle of Sherramuir*, *The Braw Wooer*, *McPherson's Farewell*, *Tam Glen*, *Duncan Gray*, *Killiecrankie*, *To a Louse*, *Scots Wha Hae*, or, *Robert Bruce's Address to his Troops at Bannockburn*, *Tam o' Shanter*, *Address of Beelzebub*, *A Man's a Man*, *Address to the Unco Guid*, *Wounded Hare*, *O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast*.