

Robert the Bruce

Three information gaps with different reading demands on topics around the life and times of Robert the Bruce produced by colleagues in Kirkcaldy in Fife.

The basic principle of information gaps is to encourage exploratory talk around questions and arrive at agreed answers which can be expressed orally and written down in note form. Usually pupils carry their written notes to another group and present the answers in the role of an expert. These materials can be used in a variety of ways depending on the reading ability and confidence in working together of the pupils you are working with. They are easy to tweak. This is how they were used in Fife:

"I used the Robert Bruce texts with a P5 class here in Kirkcaldy. We used three texts of differing levels of reading ability and roughly divided the class into three reading ability groups. The more able group read the passages themselves, the class teacher supervised the reading of the middle ability group and I read aloud the third most simple passage to the least able pupils. They then worked in pairs to answer the relevant questions by putting in key words only or pictures. The class then went into trios with one person from each group in each trio. Then they shared their answers with each other in complete oral sentences and another member of their trio, other than themselves, wrote their answer. Plenary session at the end was held with the whole class. Pupils could then create a fact file about what they learned or create a tourist information leaflet with their knowledge etc.

I have extended this for alternate weeks to revisit the texts in their original reading ability groups to summarise the texts by creating their own titles and discussion about what summarising means and what makes a relevant title along with creating their own questions for other children to be given when I do this lesson with next session. We then discussed the different types of questions and classified them according to the colours for De Bono's Thinking Hats.

I hope this is interesting and above all, useful to others"

Webaddress: www.collaborativelearning.org/robertthebruce.pdf

Last updated 25th February 2012

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

17, Barford Street, Islington, London N1 0QB UK Phone: 0044 (0)20 7226 8885

Website: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org>

BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of oracy. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of talk.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

Robert the Bruce had won the great battle against the English at Bannockburn.

This showed he was a strong ruler. Bruce swapped English prisoners for the return of his wife, daughter and friends. Important English prisoners were kept until money was paid to the Scots for their release.



Bruce had united all of Scotland but the war with England was not over. King Edward III of England did not want to be at peace. He carried on trying to fight the Scots. He did not want to accept Robert the Bruce as king of Scotland.

In 1320 Bruce wrote a letter to the Pope asking him to accept him as King of Scotland.



Even after winning the battle at Bannockburn in 1314, the war with England was not over. King Edward III of England refused to accept Robert as King and did not accept Scotland as an independent country.

Later in 1322, the English king and his wife were staying at an abbey in the north of England which was being guarded by his army. Bruce's Scottish Highland fighters charged upon them and took them by surprise. The English fled and so did Edward and his wife, leaving behind some treasure, including the Great Seal of England.



Important Scots noblemen supported Robert the Bruce and wrote a letter to the Pope. They said Scotland had a right to freedom and wanted the fighting to stop. This letter was called the Declaration of Arbroath. The Pope finally agreed to accept Robert the Bruce as King of Scotland. Edward was not pleased, but had to accept it and agree to make peace with Scotland.

During Bruce's time the church and its leader, the Pope, were thought to be very important people. What the Pope said was taken very seriously. In 1320 some important Scots people wrote a long letter to the Pope called the Declaration of Arbroath. This letter asked for Bruce to be recognised as the King of Scotland and for Scotland to be a free nation. The problem was that Bruce had been banned from the church because he had killed John Comyn in a church several years earlier. It was thought that if the Pope accepted Bruce as king, then Edward would also. The fighting between Scotland and England continued for several years and it was 1324 before the Pope finally accepted Robert the Bruce as King of Scotland. Edward was not pleased but had to agree to peace.

By 1329 Bruce was 54 years old and in poor health. He had always wanted to go on a long journey when Scotland was peaceful and safe. However, he was now not well enough to go. He asked that, after his death, one of his bravest knights called Sir James Douglas should take his heart and carry it on the journey. King Robert died in June 1329 and his heart was removed and put in a small casket. The casket was rescued from far away lands and buried at Melrose Abbey. Robert's body was buried at Dunfermline Abbey with other kings of Scotland.



Robert the Bruce -After Bannockburn - Answer Grid

1. Did the Scots win or lose at Bannockburn?	2. Why do you think the English would not accept Robert as King of Scotland?	3. Who is the Pope?
2. Why do you think Edward left behind treasure in the Abbey?	2. Do you think Scotland had the right to freedom? Give reasons.	3. Why was the Declaration of Arbroath written?
1. Why did the English let Bruce's wife free?	3. Why do you think Robert's heart was brought back to Melrose, Scotland?	3. Do you think Robert should have been buried beside other Scottish Kings?
1. How do you think Bruce felt when England kept on fighting?	2. Why do you think Edward had to accept the Pope's decision?	1. Give three words to describe Robert the Bruce.

King Robert the Bruce had to try and win back all the Scottish castles that had been taken over by the English. It was hard to attack a castle because sometimes they were built on high rocks. From inside the castle you could see enemies coming when they were still far away, so it gave plenty of warning.



On 14th March 1314, Robert the Bruce's nephew attacked Edinburgh castle and recaptured it. A local man who knew a secret route, led the Scots up the steep rock and over the walls. Robert the Bruce ordered the castle to be destroyed so it could never be a place where the English could settle in and take over again.

Many of the Scottish castles had been taken over by the English. King Robert the Bruce knew he had to recapture them to gain control and claim this land for the Scots. Attacking stone castles was difficult, as the Scots had no siege engines for firing stones at their enemies. However, with Bruce's determination, the Scots managed first of all to free the castles then destroy them. Bruce himself led the capture of Perth castle by wading through the moat and using a rope ladder to climb the walls.

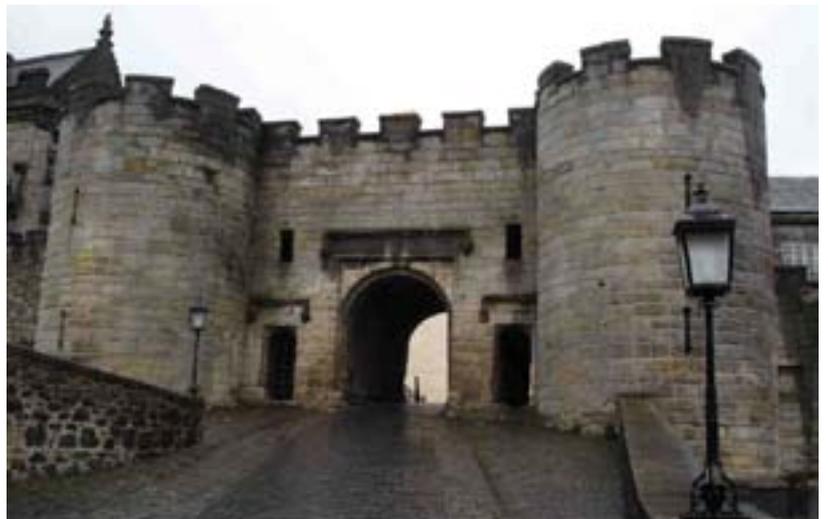
At Linlithgow, a farmer helped Bruce's army with a clever plan to recapture it from the English. The castle was full of armed English soldiers and had a great iron gate with spikes at the bottom of it called a portcullis. This could be lowered to close the entrance, not allowing anyone past. That night, all the Scots who lived nearby crept up to the walls of the castle and hid. Early next morning, farmer Binnock's servant drove a heavy cart of hay to the castle. Inside the pile of hay there were eight strong, armed men hiding. When the gate was opened, the cart rumbled through with farmer Binnock walking beside it. The horses were cut free leaving the Scots soldiers and the other Scots hiding nearby to run forward and take the castle.



Stirling castle was the most important castle in the country because it was positioned right in the centre of Scotland and guarded the routes between north and south. By 1313 it was the last castle in Scotland still to be in English hands. It was built of stone and protected on three sides by steep rock. The rock rose out of flat, marshy ground and was surrounded by lots of criss-crossing streams as well as the wind coming from the River Forth. As long as Stirling castle was held by the English, Scotland could not be free as it was the key to all of Scotland.

By 1314, King Edward II of England was forced to send a huge army north into Stirling to fight to keep Stirling castle and so the Battle of Bannockburn against the Scots had begun. The Scots had only 5000 soldiers and the English had 20000 soldiers. However, Bruce's small army had been well prepared for this battle.

On the night before the battle, Bruce placed his men on a slope where they could see the English coming. His army dug pits and camouflaged them with branches and twigs. The English cavalry charged and the horses fell into the pits. The riders fell off and were either trampled underfoot or stabbed with Scottish spears. The Bannock burn protected many groups of the Scottish soldiers from the attacking English soldiers but there was also a lot of close, fierce, hand-to-hand fighting. Many English prisoners were taken and the Scots won this important battle.



Robert the Bruce - Battles for Castles - Answer Grid

2. What is a siege engine?	1. Why was it difficult to attack a castle?	3. Why was it important to recapture Stirling castle?
3. How did the Scots win the Battle of Bannockburn when they had far fewer soldiers?	3. What did Bruce's men do to defeat the English soldiers and cavalry at Bannockburn?	2. Why did Bruce think it was important to have Scots people in the castles?
1. How did the Scots get into Edinburgh Castle?	3. Do you think the Battle of Bannockburn was well planned or not? Why?	2. What do you think of the farmer's idea
1. Did you think it was wrong or right for Bruce to then destroy the castle?	1. Do you think Scots or English should be in control of Edinburgh castle? Why?	2. How did the Scots not get spiked by the portcullis?.

Robert the Bruce

Who was he? 1

Hundreds of years ago there was a king of Scotland and his name was Robert the Bruce. It was a good thing that he was both brave and wise, because the times in which he lived were wild and dangerous. The King of England was at war with him, and had led a great army into Scotland to drive him out of the land. The King of England wanted to make Scotland a part of England.



Robert the Bruce fought battle after battle with England. Six times Robert the Bruce had led his brave little army against his much bigger English armies. Robert the Bruce and his men were beaten six times, until finally they were driven into flight. Now the army of Scotland was scattered all over the countryside and the king was forced to hide in the woods and in lonely places among the mountains.

Robert the Bruce

Who was he? 2

Robert the Bruce was a nobleman and born in 1274 into a family that owned land in Scotland. In 1304, Robert's father died, he inherited his family's claim to the throne and wanted to win the Scottish crown. He fought many battles with English armies to make sure that he did not lose any land to them and tried to keep Scotland free from English rule.



By 1306, there had been nearly ten years of fighting between the English and the Scots. Two lords, Robert the Bruce and John Comyn, fought alongside William Wallace who inspired them to fight for freedom. After the death of Wallace, Robert the Bruce set up a meeting in a church with John Comyn, to ask for his help against the English. The two men did not trust each other and the meeting ended up in a quarrel. Robert stabbed John Comyn and Comyn died. This killing in a church shocked people and created enemies for Robert. Comyn's family and Edward 1 of England wanted Robert punished and hunted him down.

However, the people of Scotland wanted their freedom and Robert was crowned King of Scots at Scone Abbey near Perth.



Robert the Bruce was born in 1274 and died in 1329. His family owned land in Scotland that could be kept if they supported the king. When Robert's parents died, Robert no longer felt he had to support the king of England but wanted to make sure he didn't lose any land. Robert inherited his family's claim to the throne and was crowned King of Scots in 1306. He had many battles against the English armies.

Although Bruce was now king, he was still in danger and not sure if he could carry on fighting. By murdering John Comyn, he had turned many families against him. The king of England announced that anyone involved with Bruce would be executed without trial. In June 1306, Bruce raised an army to fight against the English who had ruled over Perth. The English made a surprise attack at dusk, just as it was getting dark, and Bruce with a few supporters had to escape to the country on horseback. Bruce and his men were always far outnumbered by the larger English armies and were not likely to win the battles, so he fled to the hills. When Bruce was hiding in a cave he saw a spider trying to spin its web from one side to the other. Time after time it tried to reach the other side, but it did not give up. At last it succeeded and had a completed web. Bruce thought this was a good sign and helped him to make up his mind that he must keep trying to make Scotland free. He was sure that one day, just like the spider, he would win.

Bruce kept on fighting and often moved around different parts of the countryside to trick his enemies. Bruce could then choose when and where to attack and could use his knowledge of the land to his advantage. He frequently attacked at night-time and took the enemy by surprise. Gradually more Scots joined his army and he reclaimed most of the Scottish castles back from English rule.

Robert the Bruce - Who was he? - Answer Grid

<p>1. Why was it a dangerous time all these years ago?</p>	<p>2. Why did Robert want to fight against the English?</p>	<p>2. How do you think William Wallace inspired Robert?</p>
<p>3. Why was Robert at risk of loosing his land?</p>	<p>3. How did the English beat the Scots at Perth?</p>	<p>1. Who did Robert the Bruce fight against?</p>
<p>1. Why were Robert' s armies beaten?</p>	<p>2. Why were people shocked at Comyn's death?</p>	<p>2. Do you think Robert should've been crowned king?</p>
<p>3. What did Robert think about when he saw the spider?</p>	<p>3. Do you think it's fair to trick your enemy?</p>	<p>1. Do you think people should fight for their country?</p>