

Activity Six

Ulster-Scots: Descriptive Words

Suggested Learning Intentions

Children are learning:

- that many Scots words are used in everyday speech here in Ulster;
- that these words have been passed on in Ulster for over 400 years; and
- that Ulster-Scots is a language.

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

Scottish settlers coming here since the Plantation didn't just bring their family names with them. They also brought their speech to Ulster, introducing new words and phrases from their own Scots language. These words have survived here for hundreds of years, despite never being taught in schools. In some areas of Northern Ireland, such as North Antrim or the Ards Peninsula in County Down, people are often mistaken as coming from Scotland because they sound Scottish and use so much Ulster-Scots vocabulary in their everyday speech.

The Ulster-Scots vocabulary lists (Resources 3 and 4) can be photocopied, cut up, shuffled and placed face-down on the table. With the children playing in teams of two, one child with the Ulster-Scots words and the other with the English, the children have to match the Ulster-Scots words with their corresponding English words as quickly as possible against the clock.

Introduce the children to the Ulster-Scots descriptive words from Resource 3:

- Divide the children into groups or pairs and see how many of the Ulster-Scots descriptive words they can translate into English. Challenge the children to use the word in a sentence in the proper context.
- Compare responses as a class and discuss any differences in interpretation.
- Survey the class to see how many of the Ulster-Scots words they know the meaning of or use in their everyday life.
- Challenge the children to describe characters from books/films using Ulster-Scots vocabulary, for example, Draco Malfoy, Darth Vader, Mr and Mrs Twit, – and to think up new names for characters, for example, different Mr Men/ Little Miss characters or the dwarves from Snow White.

