

The Declaration of Arbroath: an illustrated activity booklet Educators'/Parents' Notes

These notes accompany 'The Declaration of Arbroath: an illustrated activity booklet' – a learning resource produced by Historic Environment Scotland and National Records of Scotland, with illustrations by the writer and artist Andrew Redmond Barr, to celebrate the 700th anniversary of one of Scotland's most important historical documents.

The booklet explains the links between the Declaration of Arbroath and Arbroath Abbey and the role they play in Scottish history and identity. Learners can find out about this historic document and its modern relevance by completing activities and using their imaginations to draw, design create and colour in.

Audience:

- the booklet is broadly aimed at primary school age children but is also suitable for other young learners
- the activities are designed to be open ended so they can be undertaken by children of mixed abilities

Format:

- it is divided into seven sections, each with explanatory text and an activity
- the sections include why the Declaration was written, what it was trying to achieve, what difference it made and its relevance today
- as well as activities to complete, the illustrations can be coloured in

Using the booklet:

- the explanatory text for each section is aimed at learners but can also be read by educators/parents to younger children
- the activities are generally on one single page, so multiple copies of individual pages can easily be printed/copied without having to print the whole booklet
- educators can choose which activities to use with their pupils to support their teaching
- there is a thematic order to the booklet, but the activities can be completed in any order

Links to Curriculum for Excellence:

- the booklet has not been written for a specific level of Curriculum for Excellence in order to provide as much flexibility as possible
- the content can link to Curriculum for Excellence Benchmarks for Literacy, Social Studies, Expressive Arts and Health and Wellbeing for planning purposes. Further information can be found at:
 - <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/curriculum-for-excellence-benchmarks>
- the content can support:
 - Social Studies: developing an understanding of the history, heritage and culture of Scotland, as well as personal values and beliefs; about principles of democracy and citizenship; and an appreciation of local and national heritage

- Literacy & English: writing clear explanations and communicating information or opinions with opportunities for creative and persuasive writing
- Topics such as the Scottish Wars of Independence, Medieval Scotland, William Wallace & Robert Bruce and Scotland
- activities can be a starting point for Expressive Arts (personal design), Health & Wellbeing (resilience, self-esteem, how we feel about ourselves and our surroundings) and Citizenship (conflict resolution, responsibilities)
- the booklet also provides excellent opportunities for Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) but lessons could be stand-alone too.

Further learning and links:

- the activities in each section can also be used to link learning to a modern context:
 - Section 1: What is the Declaration of Arbroath?
 - Find out about the role of National Records of Scotland in collecting, preserving and producing information about Scotland's people and history. What careers are involved? (Archivists, conservators, statisticians)
 - Section 2: What's it got to do with Arbroath?
 - Discuss the Right to an Education – Article 28 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Debate the importance of historic sites. How would pupils feel if they found out an historic site like Arbroath Abbey was to be demolished to make way for a car park? How would they feel if the site was gone?
 - Section 3: What does the letter say?
 - Discuss persuasive writing/language and how to present an argument
 - Look at modern means of communication/use of social media to spread news – real and fake – and reasons for this
 - Section 4: Why was the Declaration written?
 - Discuss what influence we have at a local, regional and national level to make change happen to create a better place to live
 - Find out what a petition is and how it can be used to achieve change as part of the Parliamentary process in Scotland at:
 - <https://www.parliament.scot/gettinginvolved/petitions/index.aspx>
 - Section 5: Who supported the Declaration?
 - Discuss how we identify ourselves today or what makes us who we are
 - Discuss the concept of democracy. How do we decide on matters today? Who makes decisions on our behalf?
 - Section 6: Did it make a difference?
 - Think about what it means to be resilient. What can you learn from failure or not giving up? What other ways can you achieve things?
 - Section 7: Is the Declaration still important?
 - Explore the concept of Scottish identity and stereotypes
 - Discuss heritage, both tangible e.g. buildings and intangible e.g. oral history, traditions. Who decides what Scotland's heritage is?
- Historic Environment Scotland and National Records of Scotland have a range of free online resources that can be used to explore the Declaration of Arbroath and Arbroath Abbey and the historical context of the Scottish Wars of Independence. These are available at:
 - www.historicenvironment.scot/learn
 - www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/services-for-schools