

## Duilleag Mìneachaidh

## 1. Ag aithris sgeulachdan | Telling stories

We read a bit about **taigh-cèilidh** 'the ceilidh house' in **A1 Cuspair 1**. As well as singing, playing instruments, and dancing, people would be **ag aithris sgeulachdan** 'reciting stories' at the taigh-cèilidh. This would keep the old stories going and would strengthen the Gaelic skills of those present. Some of the traditional stories we still have in **beul-aithris** 'folklore' are very old.

First, we will hear different words meaning **sgeulachd** 'story' in Gaelic:

**sgeulachd** *f* | story

**sgeul** *m* **sgeòil** *gen* | story

**stòiridh** *f* | story

**naidheachd** *f* | news, story

**seanchas** *m* | lore, saga, anecdote

**uirsgèul** *m* | tale, novel

The two similar words for story **sgeulachd** and **sgeul** have different genders, **sgeulachd** is feminine but **sgeul** is masculine. They should be used as follows:

- an **sgeulachd** mhath → san sgeulachd mhaith → deireadh na sgeulachd maith
- an **sgeul** math → san sgeul mhath → deireadh an sgeòil mhaith

As these words are quite similar, you may see **sgeul** used as feminine in some dialects.

Lots of stories use nice phrases at the beginning and end of the story, similar to traditional stories, or 'fairytales', in English.

**Latha bha seo...** | One day...

**Uair dhan robh saoghal...** | Once upon a time...

**O chionn fhada an t-saoghail...** | Long long ago...

**Fada ro linn do sheanar...** | Long before your grandad's time...

**Nuair a bha an saoghal òg...** | When the world was young...

There are two regular verbs that we use to say that we are **ag innse** 'telling' or **ag aithris** 'reciting' stories. We can see the tenses of these verbs here:

### Innis! | Tell!

#### TRÀTH CAITHTE

An do dh'innis? ✓ Dh'innis

Nach do dh'innis? ✗ Cha do dh'innis

... gun do dh'innis ... nach do dh'innis

#### TRÀTH TEACHDAIL

An innis? ✓ Innsidh

Nach innis? ✗ Chan innis

... gun innis ... nach innis

### Aithris! | Recite, report!

#### TRÀTH CAITHTE

An do dh'aithris? ✓ Dh'aithris

Nach do dh'aithris? ✗ Cha do dh'aithris

... gun do dh'aithris ... nach do dh'aithris

#### TRÀTH TEACHDAIL

An aithris? ✓ Aithrisidh

Nach aithris? ✗ Chan aithris

... gun aithris ... nach aithris

### ag innse | telling

#### TRÀTH CUMHACH | CAITHTE GNÀTHACH

An innseadh? ✓ Dh'innseadh

Nach innseadh? ✗ Chan innseadh

... gun innseadh ... nach innseadh

#### + MI + SINN

✓ Dh'innsinn ✓ Dh'innseamaid

✗ Chan innsinn ✗ Chan innseamaid

... gun innsinn ... gun innseamaid

### ag aithris | reciting, reporting

#### TRÀTH CUMHACH | CAITHTE GNÀTHACH

An aithriseadh? ✓ Dh'aithriseadh

Nach aithriseadh? ✗ Chan aithriseadh

... gun aithriseadh ... nach aithriseadh

#### + MI + SINN

✓ Dh'aithrisinn ✓ Dh'aithriseamaid

✗ Chan aithrisinn ✗ Chan aithriseamaid

... gun aithrisinn ... gun aithriseamaid

We often hear the **gnìomhair neo-iomlan** 'defective verb': **arsa** 'said' used by people who are reciting stories or reporting what they, or someone else said. This is like the old fashioned: 'says/said I', 'says/said he' or 'says/said she' used when recounting what was said. There is only the one past tense form, this verb can't be used to ask questions, or give negative statements and does not have future or conditional tenses:

- 'Thalla dhachaigh' **ars'** am bodach. | 'Away home' says the old man.
- 'Dèan thusa na thogras tu' **arsa** mise ris. | 'You do as you please' says I to him.

**arsa / ars'** v | said

**ars' esan** | said he

**ars' ise** | said she

"Thalla dhachaigh" **ars'** am bodach | "Away home" said the old man.

## 2. An cuala tu a-riamh...? | Did you ever hear...?

An cuala tu a-riamh mu **Fhionn MacCumhail** agus **An Fhèinn**? 'S e gaisgich mhòra a th' annta ann an cultar na Gàidhlig, coltach ri gaisgich na Grèige mar *Hercules*.

O chionn fhada an t-saoghail bha fear air an robh Fionn MacCumhail. 'S e duine air leth a bh' ann. Bha e calma agus bha e làidir. 'S e gaisgeach a bh' ann. Bha e na cheannard air treubh mhòr de ghaissgich ris an canadh iad **An Fhèinn**.

Nuair a bha e na bhalach òg, bha e a' fuireach còmhla ri seann **draoidh** air an robh Finéagas. Bha Finéagas air a bheatha a chur seachad a' sireadh bradan **seunta**. B' e **Am Bradan Fios** an t-ainm a bh' air a' bhradan seo air sgàth 's gum biodh fios iomlan air gach rud fon ghrèin aig an neach a bhlaic e. "Bhon a tha mi air a bhith **air tòir** an èisg seo fad mo bheatha, chan fhaod ach mi fhèin a-mhàin a bhlasadh ma ghlacas sinn e", arsa Finéagas ri Fionn.

Aon latha goirid às dèidh sin, ghlac Finéagas am bradan is dhèigh e ri Fionn "Tha e agam! Tha e agam! Ghlac mi Am Bradan Fios!". "Cuir thusa teine gu dol, Fhionn, airson am bradan a bhruich", arsa Finéagas ri Fionn. Rinn Fionn mar a chaidh iarraidh air. Nuair a bha Fionn a' bruich an èisg air an teine, chunnaic e **bolg** ag èirigh air a' bhradan agus **spreadh** e le òrdag e. Ach loisg e òrdag agus chuir e na bheul i. **Gun fhiosta dha**, bha Fionn air Am Bradan Fios a bhlasadh! "Dè idir a rinn thu!", arsa Finéagas ri Fionn nuair a chunnaic e na bha air tachairt, "Bidh fios iomlan agadsa a-nis air gach rud air an t-saoghal."

Bhon latha sin a-mach, cha leigeadh Fionn a leas ach òrdag a chur na bheul, agus bìdeadh oirre, agus bhiodh fios aige air gach rud fon ghrèin. Bhiodh e comasach dha innse dè bhiodh a' tachairt mus tachradh e, no innse càit an robh duine a bh' air chall, no innse dè bha cuideigin ris, ged a bhiodh an duine sin mìltean thar mìltean air falbh bhuaithe.

Long long ago there was a man called Finn MacCool. He was an exceptional person. He was hardy and he was strong. He was a hero. He was the leader of a great tribe of heroes known as **The Fingalians**.

When he was a young boy, he was living with an old **druid** called Finéagas. Finéagas had spent his life searching for an **enchanted** salmon. **The Salmon of Knowledge** was the name of this salmon because total knowledge of everything under the sun would be had by the person who tasted it. "Since I have been **in pursuit of** this fish all my life, nobody but me may taste it if we catch it", says Finéagas to Finn.

One day shortly after that, Finéagas caught the salmon and he called to Finn "I have it! I have it! I caught the Salmon of Knowledge!". "You get a fire going, Finn, to cook the salmon", says Finéagas to Finn. Finn did as he was asked. When Finn was cooking the fish on the fire, he saw **a blister** rising on the salmon and he **burst** it with his thumb. But he burnt his thumb and he put it in his mouth. **Unbeknown to him**, Finn had tasted the Salmon of Knowledge! "What ever have you done!", says Finéagas to Finn when he saw what had happened, "You will now have total knowledge of everything in the world."

From that day on, Finn only need put his thumb in his mouth, and bite on it, and he would know everything under the sun. It would be possible for him to tell what would happen before it happened, or say where someone was who was lost, or tell what someone was doing, although that person would be miles and miles away from him.

### 3. Na seann sgeulachdan | The old stories

There are lots of other characters and creatures which frequently appear in Gaelic stories, and which will be known to the wider population of Scotland as well. The **each-uisge** 'kelpie' is certainly the most famous of them. Most of us will know the big metal sculpture of **Na h-Eich-uisge** 'The Kelpies' in Falkirk!

In this box, we see some of the creatures and the abilities that are common in folklore and traditional stories.

**each-uisge** *m* | kelpie, water-horse  
**sìthiche(an)** *m* | fairy  
**ùraisg** *m* | brownie, goblin  
**fuamhaire** *m* | giant, Fomorian  
**an t-Seilche** *f* | loch-dwelling monster

**an dà-shealladh** *m* | the second sight  
**an droch-shùil** *f* | the evil eye  
**manadh** *m* | omen, sign  
**taibhse** *f* | apparition, ghost  
**bòcan** *m* | ghost, spectre, goblin

### 4. Sgeulachdan na Fèinne | The Fingalian Tales

We learned a little about **Finn MacCool** and **An Fhèinn** in the first part of the lesson, but there were plenty other renowned heroes in The Fingalians!

**An Fhèinn** *f* | The Fingalians  
**na Fèinne** *gin* | of the Fingalians  
**Fionn MacCumhail** | Finn MacCool  
**Cù Chulainn** | Cuchulain

**Diarmad Ó Duibhne** | Diarmid O'Dyna  
**Gràinne** | Grania, daughter of King Cormac  
**Oisean** | Ossian, Finn MacCool's son  
**Meadhbh** | Queen Maeve of Connacht

There are lots of famous stories about the Fingalians, Diarmid and Gràinne, Ossian after the Fenians, The Heroics of Cù Chulainn, among others. The story about **Diarmad agus Gràinne** is similar to other stories in the literature of Europe about **triantain ghaoil** 'love triangles': *Tristan and Iseult*, for example.

**mac piuthar Fhinn** | the son of Finn's sister  
**bathais** *f* | forehead  
**ball-seirc** *m* | beauty spot  
**gus nach fhaicte** \_ | so that \_ wouldn't be seen  
**thar a chèile** | fall out, in dispute

**geas** *m* | spell, enchantment  
**glasadh an latha** | daybreak  
**muin-goibhre** | goat's back  
**leac an dorais** | doorstep  
**deud-fios** | tooth of knowledge

## 5. Thug mi m' aghaidh air... | I headed for...

We saw idiomatic phrases for saying that we are **a' falbh** 'leaving' or **a' dol a dh'àiteigin** 'going somewhere' in **A2 Cuspair 13**. But there are lots of different ways to say this in Gaelic. We'll look at some of these phrases here.

We can use **gabh** in phrases along with the preposition **air**, to mean that we went somewhere:

### An do ghabh sibh an tràigh oirbh madainn an-diugh?

✔ **Ghabh.** Ghabh sinn an tràigh oirnn sa mhadainn fhad 's a bha muir-tràigh ann.

✘ **Cha do ghabh.** Cha do ghabh sinn àite sam bith oirnn madainn an-diugh.

**Gabh!** | Take!

**a' gabhail** | taking

TRÀTH CAITHTE

An do ghabh? ✔ Ghabh

Nach do ghabh? ✘ Cha do ghabh

... gun do ghabh ... nach do ghabh

TRÀTH TEACHDAIL

An gabh? ✔ Gabhaidh

Nach gabh? ✘ Cha gabh

... gun gabh ... nach gabh

TRÀTH CUMHACH | CAITHTE GNÀTHACH

An gabhadh? ✔ Ghabhadh

Nach gabhadh? ✘ Cha gabhadh

... gun gabhadh ... nach gabhadh

+ MI

+ SINN

✔ Ghabhainn

✔ Ghabhamaid

✘ Cha ghabhainn

✘ Cha ghabhamaid

... gun ghabhainn

... gun ghabhamaid

### An do rinn sibh air an tràigh madainn an-diugh?

✔ **Rinn.** Rinn sinn air an tràigh sa mhadainn fhad 's a bha muir-tràigh ann.

✘ **Cha do rinn.** Cha do rinn sinn air àite sam bith madainn an-diugh.

**Dèan!** | Do!, Make!

**a' dèanamh** | doing

TRÀTH CAITHTE

An do rinn? ✔ Rinn

Nach do rinn? ✘ Cha do rinn

... gun do rinn ... nach do rinn

TRÀTH TEACHDAIL

An dèan? ✔ Nì

Nach dèan? ✘ Cha dèan

... gun dèan ... nach dèan

TRÀTH CUMHACH | CAITHTE GNÀTHACH

An dèanadh? ✔ Dhèanadh

Nach dèanadh? ✘ Cha dèanadh

... gun dèanadh ... nach dèanadh

+ MI

+ SINN

✔ Dhèanainn

✔ Dhèanamaid

✘ Cha dèanainn

✘ Cha dèanamaid

... gun dèanainn

... gun dèanamaid

There is another phrase similar to this which uses the regular verb **tog** 'lift, build' and the preposition **air**:

An do thog	mi	orm	-	?	➔	✔ Thog	mi	orm
Nach do thog	thu	ort	dhan tràigh			✘ Cha do thog	thu	ort
An tog	e	air	a Ghlaschu			✔ Togaidh	e	air
Nach tog	i	oirre	gu Inbhir Nis			✘ Cha tog	i	oirre
An togadh	sinn	oirnn				✔ Thogadh	sinn	oirnn
Nach togadh	sibh	oirbh				✘ Cha togadh	sibh	oirbh
	iad	orra					iad	orra

Lastly, we can use the regular verb **cuir** 'put' with **aghaidh** 'face' and the preposition **air** as follows:

**An do chuir iad an aghaidh air Glaschu fhathast?**

✔ **Chuir.** Chuir iad an aghaidh air Glaschu an-dè.

✘ **Cha do chuir.** Ach cuiridh iad an aghaidh air Glaschu a dh'aithghearr.

**A bheil thu a' dol a chur d' aghaidh air àite sam bith as t-samhradh?**

✔ **Tha.** Tha mi a' dol a chur m' aghaidh air an Eilean Sgitheanach.

**Cuir!** | Put!

**a' cur** | putting

TRÀTH CAITHTE

An do chuir? ✔ Chuir

Nach do chuir? ✘ Cha do chuir

... gun do chuir ... nach do chuir

TRÀTH TEACHDAIL

An cuir? ✔ Cuiridh

Nach cuir? ✘ Cha cuir

... gun cuir ... nach cuir

TRÀTH CUMHACH | CAITHTE GNÀTHACH

An cuireadh? ✔ Cuireadh

Nach cuireadh? ✘ Cha cuireadh

... gun cuireadh ... nach cuireadh

+ MI

✔ Chuirinn

✘ Cha chuirinn

... gun cuirinn

+ SINN

✔ Chuireamaid

✘ Cha chuireamaid

... gun cuireamaid



## 6. Càirdeasan teaghlaich | Family relationships

Often in stories, or when we are telling news about someone else, we will explain who they are and who is related to them. We learned a bit about names **anns an tuiseal ghinideach** 'in the genitive case' in **Cuspair 17**.

**bràthair m' athar** | my father's brother, my paternal uncle  
**bràthair mo mhàthar** | my mother's brother, my maternal uncle  
**piuthar m' athar** | my father's sister, my paternal aunt  
**piuthar mo mhàthar** | my mother's sister, my maternal aunt  
**mac mo bhràthar** | my brother's son, my fraternal nephew  
**mac mo pheathar** | my sister's son, my sororal nephew  
**nighean mo bhràthar** | my brother's daughter, my fraternal niece  
**nighean mo pheathar** | my sister's daughter, my sororal niece

**athair** *m* | father

**màthair** *f* | mother

**bràthair** *m* | brother

**piuthar** *f* | sister

**mac** *m* | son

**nighean** *f* | daughter

**athar** *gen* | father

**màthar** *gen* | mother

**bràthar** *gen* | brother

**peathar** *gen* | sister

**mic** *gen* | son

**nighinn** *gen* | daughter

**athraichean** *pl* | fathers

**màthraichean** *pl* | mothers

**bràithrean** *pl* | brothers

**peathraichean** *pl* | sisters

**mic** *pl* | sons

**nigheannan** *pl* | daughters

We heard **mac piuthar Fhinn** 'Finn's sister's son' in the story about **Diarmad agus Gràinne**. Gaelic doesn't have separate words for uncle, aunt, nephew or niece, as Gaels traditionally made the distinction between **bràthair m' athar** 'paternal uncle' and **bràthair mo mhàthar** 'maternal uncle'. The phrase **mac piuthar Fhinn** means 'Finn's (sororal) nephew' and uses the genitive case to convey this belonging.

From the examples in the box above you may expect **mac peathar Fhinn** 'Finn's sister's son', or 'the son of the sister of Finn' but in genitive phrases like this only the last noun, **Fionn**, takes the genitive case.

- **mac piuthar Fhinn**
- **nighean bràthair Dhòmhnail**