



Éistibh

by Anna Frater

Lesson focus

Choose from the following activities to build your own Level Three or Four poetry lessons. The writing activities could be adapted for Senior students.

The poet and her work

Born in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis in 1967, Anne Frater was brought up in the village of Upper Bayble in the Point district of the island. Scottish Gaelic is her first language, and the language in which her poetry is written. Her poems were first published in *Gairm* magazine (1986) while she was a student at Glasgow University, from which she graduated with an honours degree in Celtic and French in 1990. After a year at Jordanhill College training as a secondary teacher, she returned to Glasgow University and was awarded a Ph.D. in 1995 for her thesis on Scottish Gaelic Women's Poetry up to 1750. Her work has appeared in two collections, *Fon t-Slige / Under the Shell* (1995), which won the literature prize for adult books at the Blairgowrie Mod in 1996, and *Cridh Creige* (2017). She worked in the media in various capacities (including researcher, subtitler and scriptwriter) before taking up a post for the University of the Highlands and Islands at Lews Castle College, where she now teaches Gaelic literature. She is married with two children.

Credit

Anne Frater, from 'Cridhe Creige / Rock Heart', *Acair*: 2017.

The poem is available at

http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/*****

Opening up the poem (reading and discussion)

Key questions (LIT 3-16a / LIT 4-16a, LIT 3-17a / LIT 4-17a, LIT 3-18a / LIT 4-18a, ENG 3-19a / LIT 4-19a)

What is the poet's attitude to the news?

Why does the poet think we should do with our 'devices'?
What two things does the poet think will happen when we do this?
What kind of 'voice' do you think the poet means in the second last line?

The poem exists in two languages – the Gaelic original, and an English translation, made by the author.

Look at the two versions of the poem. What visual differences do you notice between them?

Listen to the poem being read in Gaelic. [\[weblink\]](#)

If you speak Gaelic and English, what are the main differences between the Gaelic and English versions of the poem?

If you were to translate the Gaelic into English, would you do anything differently from the English version here?

If you don't speak Gaelic, how would you describe the sound of the poem being read – perhaps pleasant, harsh, gentle, rhythmic, poetic, chatty, musical... ?

A translation is a version of another poem.

Can you think of other English words that you could use instead of these ones?

trust

devices

beat

come

silence

If you speak another language, including Scots, translate the poem into it.

Are there any differences between your translation and the Gaelic or English versions of the poem? Are there any parts of the poem that are difficult to translate?

Research (LIT 3-14a / LIT 4-14a, LIT 3-15a / LIT 4-15a)

Gaelic

What do you know about Gaelic? Think about where it is spoken

where and when you come across Gaelic, spoken and / or written

Gaelic place-names you know, local to you, or in other parts of Scotland

writers who write or wrote in the language

singers and musicians who use the language in their work

Do you think Gaelic should be taught and used more widely in Scotland? Why?

News

What does 'news' mean to you?

Where do you go to find news?

Do you mostly read, hear or watch the news?

How often do you check the news?

What kind of news interests you? Why?

What kind of news doesn't interest you? Why not?



Trust

How do you know if you can trust that a news story is true?

How important is it to you that a news story is true?

Choose an item of news that interests you.

Which elements of this piece do you trust? Why?

Which elements of this piece do you not trust? Why?

How is trust established between a reader and a writer?

You might think about the platform it appears on, the publisher, the person presenting the news, other people's opinions about these, what you already know about the subject of the story, and so on.

Climbing inside the poem

(performance and discussion) (LIT 3-02a / LIT 4-02a, LIT 3-09 / LIT 4-09, EXA 3-01a, EXA 4-01a)

Devices

Which devices do you use?

Which device do you use most often?

Do you prefer using this device in company, or on your own? Why?

Do you ever switch your devices off for an extended period of time? Could you?

How would you feel if you could no longer use your devices?

You could read and discuss these two articles about teenagers not using social media and mobile phones.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/29/teens-desert-social-media>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/07/screen-break-how-are-french-schoolchildren-coping-with-phones-ban>

Debate

As a group or class, discuss the idea of 'fake news'.

What do we mean by 'fake news'?

Can you think of any examples of 'fake news'?

Choose a current written news article from a website or newspaper.

Discuss the article in terms of the facts it presents, how the writer interprets these facts, and the opinions the writer expresses based on this interpretation of the facts.

Work in two groups. One group should defend the piece as trustworthy – presenting everything in it as convincing and believable. The other group should attack it as 'fake news' – presenting everything as unconvincing and unbelievable.

Afterwards, each group should consider what they have learned about the piece from the other group. Pupils can also discuss their own personal views on the piece.

Building on the poem

(writing) (LIT 3-20a / LIT 4-20a, LIT 3-24a / LIT 4-24a, ENG 3-27a / ENG 4-27a, ENG 3-30a / ENG 4-30a, ENG 3-31a / ENG 4-31a)

Write a poem using the structure of *Éistibh* / Listen.

stanza 1, describe the kind of information we receive daily – you could make a list of headlines, websites, songs, influencers, trending topics and so on

stanza 2, describe switching off information-carrying devices – you could describe what happens as your devices shut down

stanza 3, describe what happens when we no longer receive all this information – you could describe what you notice around you, so think about where you could be, indoors or outdoors – see if you can think of something to surprise the reader

or

stanza 1, “If...” [something is the case – assert a premise]

stanza 2, “are we not as well / to...” [what we should do because of this – a response to this premise]

stanza 3, “Maybe...” [what might then happen – the possible outcome of this action]

Further reading and links

Selected Books by Anne Frater

Fo'n t-Slige / Under the Shell (Gairm, 1995)
Cridhe Creige / Heart Rock (Acair, 2017)

Websites

<https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poet/anna-frater/>

<http://scottishbooktrust.com/profile-author/2679>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Frater

