



AIM

By land ownership, Scotland is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Half of Scotland is owned by just over 600 people. A mix of historical events and laws led to this situation. This lesson aims to give pupils a sense of how that unfairness came about and what is being done to change it.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Why do so few people own so much of Scotland?
- What is the history of the land near you?
- What is being done to make it fairer?

SKILLS

- Communicating
- Role play, Imagination
- Analysing

TIMING

- 60 minutes

CURRICULUM AREA

- Social Studies
- Expressive arts - drama

RESOURCES

- Pupil sheets – Land Timeline, Clearance story



COMMUNITY*

LAND SCOTLAND

STARTER – LAND TIMELINE

Large areas of Scotland are owned by just a few landowners. The reasons are partly to do with events long ago. In recent years laws have been passed to help share the land more equally.

In pairs, pupils cut out and order the events on the timeline. A teacher version is in the resources. Which events do they think are the most important? Discuss.

DEVELOPMENT - WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH PROPERTY? RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In many parts of rural Scotland people were moved from the land during the Clearances between 18th and 19th century. Many were moved to the coast, to the city or even emigrated.

The BBC clip and summary at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zxwxvcw/articles/zr7pmfr> is a useful introduction. Among the photos on the BBC page is one showing the names incised on the church window of Croick church. The Clearance Story below tells how they got there.

In groups ask the pupils to create a mini drama scene from the Clearances. Ideally this could be done outdoors. It could be done as a short film. The story from Glen Calvie could be the basis for the drama, they could use a local story or they could make up their own.

PLENARY

Hot Seating This is a way to get pupils to think more about their stories. Ask groups to nominate one person to come out to the 'hot seat' and answer questions in role - (how, what, where, why, when who etc.)

AIFL STRATEGY

3,2,1. Ask pupils for 3 things they didn't know before, 2 things that surprised them, 1 thing they will share outside the class.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Pupils are able to give one example from the past affecting land ownership.

DIFFERENTIATION

The clearance story could be read aloud by the teacher. Pairing pupils with stronger readers for the introductory

EXTENSION

Local history - Find out about any past events or people relating to the land locally. Are there any stories about the land or people who once lived there?

Crofter poem - this resource can be used for a literacy activity.

Place Names – this resource can be used to find out the meanings and origins of local place names.

COMMUNITY* LAND SCOTLAND

LESSON 3 - LAND, SCOTTISH LAND TIMELINE

Cut out the events and put them into order

Thousands of people, particularly in the Highlands, are removed from the land to make way for sheep during The Clearances.

After the Ice Age the first settlers were hunter gatherer tribes. No one had ownership of the land at this time.

The Kingdom of Scotland is a tribal society of various peoples including Gaels, Picts and Norse. Most of the land is owned in common.

The old Parliament of Scotland allowed people to have their ownership recorded in the Register of Sasines for the first time.

Crofters are given the right to buy their land.

Land Reforms by the new Scottish Parliament give communities special rights to buy land and a fund to help with the cost.

Crofting communities formed after the Clearances were given land rights. Crofts could be transferred within families and passed to future generations.

The ancient ceremony of 'sasine' involved handing over a clod of earth and stones to show the transfer of land from one owner to another.

After the death of the Norse Princess Margaret 'the Maid of Norway', a law is made that only the oldest male son could inherit land.

King David I introduces a feudal system. The King granted land to his supporters. The church was given land too (up to a quarter of Scotland).

This is an account of the clearance of a township in *Glen Calvie* in *Sutherland* in June 1845. During this period landowners were turning over much of their land to a new system of sheep farming. Many families were being asked, or forced, to leave their homes. The people of *Glen Calvie* lived in modest houses made with turf. They grew barley and oats and herded cattle and sheep. They paid rent to the Duke of *Sutherland*. They were law-abiding, God-fearing tenants who always paid the rent.

When word came that their valley was to be 'cleared' they met their fate with quiet dignity. Eighteen families (around 92 people) walked out of the glen. Two or three carts were filled with children, bedding and belongings. They stopped in the grounds of *Croick* church. It was wet and cold but they would not shelter in the church itself so they set up camp nearby. Around a small fire, mothers and children huddled.

Some of them scratched their names and brief messages into a glass window of the church. One message says, 'This House is Needing Repair', another says, 'Calvie People the Wicked Generation'. The people who trusted their church and their chief could not believe that those who had always protected them were now turning them out of their homes. To some of them their misfortune was the result of their own sinful behaviour! And these native *Gaelic* speakers were writing their comments in English, almost as if they realised their highland culture would leave the valley with them.

After several days the people left. Few records exist of where they went and how many survived.

A newspaper reporter for *The Times* witnessed the events and wrote about them. You can read the report here: <https://www.scotclans.com/scotland/scottish-history/modern-scotland/1785-clearances/witness-account-by-a-correspondent-for-the-times/>
Make up a 2-minute drama scene about the clearance of *Glen Calvie*. Give each person a character (mother, father, child or grandparent). Decide on the setting, action, start and ending. Rehearse the scene using improvised dialogue (speaking).