Seallagain

Gaelic Grammar at a Glance

by

Catriona Nicòmhair Parsons
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CONTINUING EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
MĀTARAKA A UROA, TE WHARE WĀNANGA O OTĀGO

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Edited by Aindrias Hirt

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The cover art of a targe, a Gaelic shield, was inspired by the Scottish targe thought to commemorate the founding of the Gaelic Society of New Zealand in Dunedin, 1881, and held at the Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, Dunedin. Inscribed on this targe are the words “Comunn Gaidhealach, N.Z. 1881. Far Am Faigheadh Coigreach Baigh” (Gaelic Society, N.Z. 1881. Where the stranger would receive kindness).
This book is dedicated to the memory of Drs. Evelyn Robertson Entwistle (1930-2016) and Robert Entwistle (1930-2016). Evelyn, born in Glasgow, Scotland, and Robert, born in Carlisle, just across the English border, met while they were university students in Dundee; they married in 1956, and in 1961, emigrated to Dunedin, New Zealand. Evelyn and Bob both taught at the University of Otago, she in the field of Textile Chemistry and he in Nuclear Physics.

Both were faithful and hardworking members of the Gaelic Society until its closure in 2006. In 1973, after taking on the leadership of the Gaelic Choir, Evelyn attended a Gaelic School in Stornoway, Lewis, interested as she was in the Gaelic language and intent on ensuring authentic pronunciation by the choir. Bob served as Chief of the Gaelic Society 1976-78, 1984, 2000, and 2004-06 while Evelyn served as Chief in 1986.
INTRODUCTION

I first heard about Gaelic language and song teacher Catriona Parsons in January 2013 when Liam McIlvanney, the Stuart Professor of Scottish Studies at the University of Otago, asked me to consider offering her intensive Scottish Gaelic Language course during Summer School 2014. We anticipated that many in Dunedin with Scottish heritage would welcome the chance to study Gaelic, and so it proved. Catriona taught the Continuing Education Gaelic language course the following summer to a small but enthusiastic group, getting them to not only speak in Gaelic, but to sing in it as well. It was wonderful to bring the Gaelic language to Dunedin, inspiring people here to read, write, and speak in this ancient language.

When Catriona returned to teach during the 2016 Summer School, she not only taught the scheduled course, but an additional Gaelic language course that attracted an even larger group of eager learners. These students were so enthusiastic they kept meeting for weeks after the course had finished. Inspired by a great teacher as well as love of this language, the group now want to keep learning and is resurrecting the Gaelic Society of New Zealand as the Gaelic Society of Otago.

Over the summer of 2016, Catriona stayed on campus in the Summer School accommodation provided by University College, to the delight of all inhabitants. Gaelic was heard in that dining hall many times, as poetry, song, and greetings peppered the conversation. Gaelic was also heard in the University Staff Club where Catriona connected over afternoon tea with poet Sue Wootton and her students studying “Poetry in the City of Literature”, another Continuing Education course. There was great synergy between these groups – I guess it’s the power of words to connect and inspire. And I don’t know if it’s Catriona’s love of Gaelic, of communicating, or of people that warms everyone who comes in contact with her. Probably it’s all three. But whatever it is, this rich language lives again in the South largely due to her generosity and efforts.

We are truly honoured and grateful that Catriona has chosen to share this wonderful language resource, and I am delighted to support this publication.

*Tha sinn a’ toirt taing do Chatriona airson nan oidhirpean aice agus ’s e ar dûrachd gu soirbhich leatha ’s an òm ri teachd.*

Dr Elaine Webster

Director, Summer School & Continuing Education

University of Otago

Dunedin, New Zealand

June, 2016
When the Scot leaves his native land to go furth of Scotland and settle in some other part of the world, he invariably takes his culture and his customs with him, and this has been to the advantage and benefit of the rest of the world...The Gaelic language has its roots in antiquity; it was the ancient language of Scotland and even in this changing world is still preserved and treasured in some parts of the Highlands. Indeed there is a revival of interest in the old tongue all over Scotland and not only in Scotland but in many parts of the world the bond of language is holding many communities together. A Highlander finds in Gaelic a language in which he can better express his inmost thoughts and emotions, and appreciate his ancient traditions and culture...

In 1981, when William Brown, M.B.E. penned these words in the foreword to the Centennial Book of the Gaelic Society of New Zealand, the Gaelic language in Scotland was indeed beginning to experience a resurgence; and it wasn’t long too before a new and dedicated effort was underway to maintain and advance the language in Nova Scotia, Canada, the only place outside Scotland where a living Gaelic community has prevailed. It took some time and much effort, but in the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, Gaelic was finally granted equal status with English; and in 2006, the Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs was instituted by the provincial government.

A hundred years earlier, in 1881, those Gaels who were among the Free Church of Scotland immigrants to the Otago Peninsula, and who would help to build the city of Dunedin and found the University of Otago, set forth a plan for the formation of the New Zealand Gaelic Society. Its chief objectives were “to foster and perpetuate the Gaelic language, to encourage the cultivation of Gaelic literature and music, to establish branch societies throughout the colony of New Zealand, to generally take cognisance of all matters which may be considered of special interest to Highlanders”.

In the century between, the New Zealand Gaelic Society continued to meet and advance its principles. The centennial history of the Society, written by Evelyn Entwistle, includes a list of the Society Chiefs, thirty-three in all from 1881 to the 1980s, among them some important Gaels in New Zealand history. We learn of the notable pipers, dancers, Gaelic singers and Bards that the Society boasted through the years; and pictures throughout the history bring us into the world of the society in a personal way. This history describes a significant part of New Zealand’s Gaelic heritage; and a debt of gratitude is owed to such members as Drs. Robert and Evelyn Entwistle, both of whose funerals I attended in Dunedin in early 2016, for their faithfulness in promoting the Society into the 21st century. This book represents a modest effort to acknowledge their contribution.

I believe that they, together with the founders and members of the Society through the years, would rejoice that in today’s world, descendants of immigrant Gaels can reach out to each other and share their love of the Gaelic language and its culture in global community: from Scotland to such places as Seattle, Washington, and Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina, in the United States; to Vancouver and Toronto, and Nova Scotia, Canada; to Sydney, Cape
Breton, Canada, and Sydney, Australia; and from all of these places – and many more – to New Zealand. Let us celebrate our joint heritage and communicate our delight in it, through our shared knowledge of the Gaelic language.

My grateful thanks are due Aindrias Hirt for formatting the text and recording the Gaelic phrases; and to Dr. Elaine Webster of the University of Otago Continuing Education program for supporting this project from the beginning.

Catriona NicÌomhair Parsons

June, 2016

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**Before You Begin**

As you enter upon the adventure of learning Scottish Gaelic, I recommend that you do so with a mind open to all kinds of possibilities. You will encounter the mind of a people with a world-view exemplified in the very structure of their language: in fact, all languages give clues to the way of thinking of those who speak them. Some languages, for instance, suggest that the passage of time may not be very meaningful in the specific culture. The structures you will find in Gaelic are both logical and expressive: though Gaelic has no verb “to have”, yet it can indicate ownership by using the verb “to be” together with the simple preposition “at” declined for person – a neat and efficient way of handling it!

I also recommend that you take your time and seek to grasp and understand the patterns of the language as they are unveiled, step by step, glimpse by glimpse, together with practice of the sounds and phrases as heard on the recording. If you are learning together with a group, so much the better. Gradually, you will be able to formulate your own sentences, both in speech and writing; you will become accustomed to the verb preceding the subject, the use of lenition, the “possession principle”, and the way that Gaelic makes use of how the vowels influence pronunciation of consonants to handle grammatical differences—in noun declensions, for instance – bàrd : a poet; bàird : poets. The title of this text follows the same pattern – seallagan : a glimpse, a glance; seallagain : glimpses, glances.

While this book intends to take the new learner through the structures of Gaelic step by step, it will also be useful for the advanced learner who needs to confirm specific grammatical points so as to develop greater confidence both in speech and writing.

Individuals of Gaelic ancestry throughout the world are learning their ancestral language; in this mobile world, the world of the internet, you will become part of a global Gaelic community.

**Gu soirbhich gu math leat!** All success to you!
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1 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

THE BASIC GAELIC SENTENCE

FIRST, think of grammar as the unique building blocks or STRUCTURES that allow you to make meaningful utterances in that language, or any language that you choose. If you’re an adult and haven’t learned Gaelic at mother-knee, and even if you have, sooner or later you’ll have to confront structure and how the structures of Gaelic and English are different. So we’ll start at the beginning, bearing in mind that we’re only talking BASICS now :

While English is a SUBJECT Verb Object (SVO) language
                  JIM woke John
Gaelic is a VERB Subject Object (VSO) language
                DHÛISG Seumas Iain

And if you want to say “JOHN woke Jim” in Gaelic, it becomes DHÛISG Iain Seumas. You simply switch “Seumas” and “Iain”. The subject ALWAYS comes after the verb in Gaelic, and, if there’s a direct object – because objects may be absent, it almost ALWAYS comes right after the subject.

2 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

THE ARTICLE

SECOND, beginners may have a hard time getting their heads around the idea that Gaelic only has a DEFINITE ARTICLE (“the” in English) with the noun* and has NO INDEFINITE ARTICLE (“a” or “an” in English). The trouble is, these last two little English words look awfully like forms of the Gaelic DEFINITE ARTICLE (a’, an)!

For example:

Dhûisg cat cù : A cat woke a dog – admittedly not a likely sentence!

Note there is NO article with the indefinite noun in Gaelic, only the bare noun itself – but, of course, there may be an adjective or two!

Now compare the same sentence with a definite article added :

Dhûisg AN cat AN cù : THE cat woke THE dog

Ciamar a chanas sibh... (How do you say), “The dog woke the cat”?

Ceart! Right!

More on the article later...

* A noun is a grammatical term designating a word that names something; a verb designates a word that denotes an action.
3 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

The Personal Pronoun

Here are the basic personal pronouns in Gaelic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular/Singilte</th>
<th>Plural/Iolra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST PERSON</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>sinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECOND PERSON</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thu</td>
<td>sibh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIRD PERSON</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>iad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neat, isn’t it? Here we have greater simplicity in Gaelic than in English. In English, the personal pronoun changes its form, for all but the second person, when it is the direct object in the sentence (I ➔ me; he ➔ him we ➔ us, etc.). But in Gaelic, the direct object form of the personal pronoun retains the same form as the subject. SO – remembering what you learned above about basic Gaelic sentence structure – put English “on” the following: Dhùisg mi thu, Dhùisg thu mi, Dhùisg sibh iad, Dhùisg iad e, Dhùisg i sinn.

NOW...put Gaelic on the following:

We woke you. I woke them. You woke her. He woke me. Jim woke us. They woke Iain.

Yes – sometimes Gaelic is less complex in form than English. But you are already aware that it has its own complexities! That’s when the fun really begins.

Gus an ath thuras...until the next time...

4 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

Gender

No doubt you paid attention to the personal pronoun (third person, singular) and noticed:

   e : he, him, it
   i : she, her, it

Yes – like French, modern Gaelic has no neuter; nouns are either treated as masculine or feminine. This is called GRAMMATICAL GENDER, unlike the vast majority of English nouns which have NATURAL GENDER.
5 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

Lenition

You’re most likely already aware that something interesting and un-English happens with the letter h in Gaelic. In the first place, Gaelic has to make do with eighteen letters of the Roman alphabet instead of the twenty-six that English uses: a b c d e f g [h] i l m n o p r s t u and of these, the following is true:

h is used as a grammatical marker when it immediately follows an initial consonant; for example, it may indicate the past tense form of a regular verb: see how the insertion of h transforms the meaning in the following:

Dùisg! : Wake (up)! Dùisg Seumas! : Wake Jim (up)!

Notice that the verb without h is the imperative form (more on this when we look at verbs more closely). Add h after the initial consonant (which indicates that the pronunciation changes), and you have the past tense:

Dhùisg Seumas : Jim woke. Dhùisg Seumas Iain : Jim woke Iain.

SO...you’re going to find h occurring like a colour in a tapestry but always strategically when it follows an initial consonant. The insertion of h in spelling indicates a transformation of sound. This phenomenon is called lenition by modern linguists; its older name is aspiration. No true Gaelic word begins with h.

NOTE : the consonants l, n, r are exempt from being succeeded by h. So the consonants which may “suffer” lenition are: b, c, d, f, g, m, p, s, t.

More on h later...

6 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

Pronunciation

Pronunciations of Gaelic words are always puzzling to the uninitiated. But there’s a key to every puzzle, even in languages! In Gaelic, contiguous sounds (sounds that follow each other directly) influence each other to a far greater degree than in English. Let’s start with the vowel sounds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Close</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>←</td>
<td>→</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Back Vowels”

a o u
(Broad/Velar Vowels)

“The Front Vowels”

e i
(Slender/Palatal Vowels)
The old grammarians saw that there were two main sets of vowels: a, o, and u are pronounced with the back of the tongue slightly raised, which they called the “broad” vowels; modern linguists refer to them as back vowels. Vowels i and e are pronounced with the front part of the tongue slightly raised, the so-called “slender” vowels; modern linguists refer to them as front vowels. Progressive rounding of the lips transforms a into o and then u. In both “lines” of vowels, as the tongue squeezes against the roof of the mouth, it pinches the sound, making vowels more “close”. As the tongue drops, the throat becomes more “open”.

The consonants c, d, g, l, n, s, and t are particularly influenced by adjacent vowels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cú</td>
<td>ceart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dà</td>
<td>dé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dé</td>
<td>leann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nòs</td>
<td>nèad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guth</td>
<td>gin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sonas</td>
<td>sith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tús</td>
<td>teth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare the two Gaelic words:

**cala céilidh**

Notice how in the first word, the I has a back/broad vowel before it (a) and after it (a); in the second word, the I has a front/slender vowel before it (i) and after it (i). The spelling gives us unequivocal information on how to pronounce the I in between. Notice that when **cala** is pronounced, the tip of the tongue strikes the top teeth but the tongue spreads in the back to make the specific back I-sound; the I in **céilidh** is like the English sound in “let” where the tongue tip touches the alveolar ridge (tooth ridge). The old grammarians dubbed this spelling rule: **Caol ri caol, leathann ri leathann** or “Slender to slender, broad to broad”. So consonants must be flanked in spelling by vowels of the same type (either front or back). This explains why Gaelic words sometimes seem to have one too many vowels in the spelling! However, the final e is pronounced in Gaelic.

---

**7 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**OPEN AND CLOSE VOWELS**

Still on vowels...You will have noticed the use of grave (´) and acute (´) accents as in French. In Scotland, they’ve gone altogether to the grave accent for long – naturally stressed – vowels. In Nova Scotia, we have retained the acute accent, based on the difference in sound between the following long vowels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ò /ɔ:/</td>
<td>mòr, òr, òl, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó /o:/</td>
<td>mór, có, bó, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And (like French):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>È /e:/</td>
<td>féith,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>É /é:/</td>
<td>dé, gréim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The acute accent is also traditionally placed on the a of simple preposition á : “out of”, “from”.

Also...Gaelic word stress is almost always on the first syllable: **Ciad mile fàilte!** (A hundred thousand welcomes!). In Scotland, the word for one hundred is still spelled **CEUD**; in Nova Scotia, the spelling (**CIAD**) reflects that the earlier é-sound of the eu has become diphthongized in almost all dialects.
8 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

BACK TO “H”

We’ve called h a grammatical marker. Remember Gaelic has only masculine and feminine nouns. So watch this...

a) We’re going to put the adjective math (good) with each of these words: feasgar (masculine, m.; in Gaelic, fireannta) and madainn (feminine, f.; in Gaelic, boireannta).

Please notice that the noun precedes the adjective!

Feasgar math! : Good afternoon! Madainn mhath! : Good morning!

Similarly:

Là math! : Good day! Oidhche mhath! : Good night!

As you can see, adjectives following masculine nouns do not “suffer” lenition. So it’s important as you learn vocabulary to pay attention to which nouns are treated as feminine.

b) If we put the adverb glé (very) with a series of adjectives beginning with the lenitable consonants – b, c, d, f, g, m, p, s, and t – you will begin to learn how to make the transformed sounds:

- Brònach (sad) → glé bhbrònach
- Brèagh (beautiful) → glé bhbrèagh
- Còir (kind) → glé chòir
- Ciallach (sensible) → glé chiallach
- Dùilich (difficult, sorry) → glé dhùilich
- Deiseil (ready) → glé dheiseil
- Fuar (cold) → glé fhuar (notice how we lose both f and h sounds!)
- Flìuch (wet) → glé fhìuch (ditto!)
- Gasda (excellent, decent) → glé ghàsda
- Geal (white) → glé gheal
- Mòr (big) → glé mhòr
- Min (smooth) → glé mhìn
- Pròiseil (proud) → glé phròiseil
- Prìseil (precious) → glé phríseil
- Sòna (content) → glé shòna (notice how we lose any s-sound!)
- Sitheil (peaceful) → glé shìtheil (ditto!)
- Toilichte (pleased, glad) → glé thoilichte (notice how we lose the t-sound!)
- Teth (hot) → glé theth (ditto!)

The adverb ro : “too” behaves like glé. For example, ro chòir, ro fhuar, etc.

Is this fun, or what? After this, English may seem – well, somewhat functional, but not very colourful...
9 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

NAMES

Where else can h strategically occur? Well, here’s one place...

a) First of all, take the following Gaelic names for ladies:

Barabal, Catriona, Diorbhail, Flòraidh, Màiri, Poilín, Sine, Treasag

Like long-ago Latin, Gaelic has an address form. When you want to say to a friend, “How are you?” and address her by name, you might say:

Ciamar a tha thu, a Bharabal? (a Chatrixona/ a Dhiorbhail / a Flòraidh / a Màiri / a Poilín / a Sine / a Treasag)?

b) Now take the following Gaelic names for men – notice what happens after the last broad vowel in the address form of the name – and note the change of pronunciation in the final syllable of each name:

Aonghas, Brian, Calum, Dòmhnall, Fionnlagh, Murchadh, Pàdraig, Seumas, Tormod

SO... Ciamar a tha thu, ’Aonghais? (with elision of the vowels); Ciamar a tha thu, a Bhrain? (a Chaluir / a Dhòmhnail / ’Fhionnlaigh – since fh is silent, elision occurs) / a Mhurchaidh / a Phàdraig / a Sheumais / a Thormoid)

With Ailean, Cailean, -ea ➞ -ei : Ciamar a tha thu, ’Ailein?...a Chailein?

With Coinneach, -ea ➞ i before final -ch; so we have : a Choinnich?

10 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

GREETING

Now let’s see what happens when two friends meet. Notice the use of the little word ann, much used in Gaelic. Literally, it means “in it”. Let’s check the new vocabulary below first:

Dòmhnall : Madainn mhath, a Sheumais!
Seumas : Madainn mhath, a Dhòmhnail! Ciamar a tha thu an diugh?
Dòmhnall : Glé mhath. Ciamar a tha thu-théin?
Seumas : Tha mi meadhonach. Tha là fuar ann.
Dòmhnall : Tha, gu dearbh! Tha an geamhradh ann fhathast!

FACLAN (WORDS)

an diugh : today an geamhradh : the winter fhathast : yet, still thu-théin : yourself
là : day meadhonach : middling gu dearbh : indeed

A-nis, feuchaibh théin – now, you, yourselves try!
11 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

Further on Sound and Structure...

a) There are three (3) words in Gaelic where initial *fh* is pronounced *h* instead of being silent (see Seallagan 8b, above). Two of them are *fhathast* and *fhéin*. You’ll get the third one at the proper time!

b) Notice these phrases (in Seallagan 10) above:

- *Tha là fuar ann* (literally, “a cold day is in it”); the English equivalent is “It’s a cold day”
- *Tha an geamhradh ann fhathast* (the winter is in it yet); the English equivalent is “It’s still winter”. Notice how English needs to use the “dummy” word “it” because it must begin a declarative sentence with a subject. Here are some more examples:

  - *Tha là brèagh ann an diugh*
  - *Tha Seumas ann fhathast* (ann frequently makes better sense translated as “here”)
  - *Tha madainn bhrèagh ann*
  - *Tha feasgar glé fhliuch ann*

Now put Gaelic “on” these sentences:

- Good morning, Brian! Good afternoon, Mary! Wake up, Jim! How are you today, Donald? I am middling today, Barbara. How is yourself?
- Wake Jim up. Jim woke up.
- It’s very cold today. It’s a cold day. Winter is still here (“winter” is definite; why?) I’m very sorry, Calum. Sine is very beautiful. You’re very kind, Sine.
12 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

How Are You?

Notice the use of *thu-fhéin* in the conversation in Seallagan 10, above, when Donald comes back with his own question whose English equivalent is “How are you?” Gaelic has grammatical ways of indicating emphasis, in this case the addition of *fhéin* to the personal pronoun; and once again, it is a simpler paradigm than the comparable English one which (mostly) uses the possessive adjective before self:

- *mi-fhéin* (mi-fhin*): my self
- *thu-fhéin*: yourself
- *e-fhéin*: himself (shouldn’t it logically be “his-self”?); itself ("its-self")?
- *i-fhéin*: herself (it works because “her” is both object pronoun and possessive pronoun in English!); itself
- *sinn-fhín*: ourselves
- *sibh-fhéin*: yourselves (in some dialects: *sibh(p)-fhéin*)
- *iad-fhéin*: themselves ("their-selves”?)

It’s fun, I think, to compare the target language to whatever languages the learner knows, but more than fun; this kind of comparison helps to reinforce the learning process and to impress the new structures on the brain of the learner.

13 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

Basic (Substantive) Verb “To Be”

Here are the paradigms of the basic verb “to be” – present, past, future. Practice putting them together with the appropriate personal pronouns: *mi, thu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad* (see Seallagan 3, above). We will save the conditional tense until later.

Notice that “to be” is an irregular verb. But a wonderful fact about Gaelic is that, apart from this basic verb and the copula (see below), it **only has ten (10) other irregular verbs**! Wow! Compare this to French; compare it to Russian! Gaelic verbs have no overtly plural forms. So Gaelic is efficient in avoiding duplication since the following plural noun makes the meaning clear.

---

*Common pronunciation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Statement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tha</td>
<td>Bha</td>
<td>Bithidh, bidh*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Statement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chan eil</td>
<td>cha robh</td>
<td>cha bhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a bheil?</td>
<td>an robh?</td>
<td>am bi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nach eil?</td>
<td>nach robh?</td>
<td>nach bi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Dependent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…gu bheil</td>
<td>…gu robh</td>
<td>…gum bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Dependent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…nach eil</td>
<td>…nach robh</td>
<td>…nach bi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relative Form</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…a tha</td>
<td>…a bha</td>
<td>…a bhitheas, bhios*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do we say “Yes” and “No”? By using the positive and negative forms of the verb in the appropriate tense! For example, **A bheil thu fuar? Tha / Chan eil; An robh là math ann? Bha / Cha robh; Am bi thu a’ dol ann? Bithidh / Cha bhi.**

Notice how, after the relative pronoun a (meaning “that”, “who”, “which”), the future has its own special form.

Also note : in the Imperative forms, the singular → <strong>Bi toilichte!</strong> (Be glad!); the plural/polite → <strong>Bithibh toilichte!</strong> (Be you (pl.) glad!); The Negative imperative → <strong>Na bi/bithibh...</strong> Don’t be...

**CLEACHDADH (PRACTICE)**

**Cuir dhan Bheurla** (put into English). Note the new vocabulary in the Faclan (words) section, below :

a) Tha mi-fhin’s tu-fhéin a’ dol ann.
b) A bheil sibh a’ dol ann?
c) Ciamar a tha an là? Tha e glé fhiuch!
d) Nach eil an geamhradh seo fuar? Tha, gu dearbh!
e) Chan eil sinn a’ dol ann idir.
f) Tha mi glé thoilichte gu bheil sibh ann!
g) Tha mi duilich nach eil side mhath ann an diugh.
h) Nach eil i teth an diugh!

*Unstressed form.
†Unstressed form.
**FACLAN (WORDS)**

a’ dol : going    là : today    (article + noun) seo : this (demonstrative adjective)

idir : at all (negative intensive)    a-nis : now    gu dearbh! : indeed! (positive intensive)

side, f. : weather (final e is pronounced)    agus : and (short forms are ’s and is)

A-nis...make new sentences by changing the verbs into the past tense.

**NOTES :**

a) Notice how thu loses its lenition when preceded by s.

b) A’ dol requires completion by ann if no definite destination is indicated.

c) In my dialect (Isle of Lewis), we use e for “it” in reference to the weather; in Nova Scotia usage, i is used (see Seallagan 4 above). So you are right in either case! ALL dialects have equal validity.

**14 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**QUESTIONS**

It’s time we introduced the “question-words”, the interrogatives :


Càite : Where? (cia àite : “what place?”)

ALL these are followed by the relative pronoun a (“that”); if the interrogative ends in a vowel, then by elision the relative is absorbed, except with cuine and càite where it is best to write it cuin’a... and càit’a... :

Ciamar a tha sibh an diugh?    (How are you today?)

Có (a) th’ ann?    (Who is it? – literally, “who is in it?”)

Co ás a tha iad?    (Where are they from?)

Dé (a) tha thu a’ dèanamh    (What are you doing?)

Carson a tha sibh an seo?    (Why are you here?)

Cuin’a tha e a’ falbh?    (When is he going away?)

Càit’ a bheil e a’ dol?    (Where is he going?)
Càit’ always takes the question form (a bheil, an robh, am bi – see the table in Seallagan 13) of whatever verb follows!

**CLEACHDADH (PRACTICE)**

Cuir dhan Bheurla (put into English). Note the new vocabulary below in the Faclan section at the end of the book, p. 93.

a) Ciamar a bhios an t-side? (an t-side : the weather). More on the article later!
b) Có (a) bhios ann?
c) Co às a bhitheas iad?
d) Dé (a) bhios sinn a’ dèanamh?
e) Carson a bhios tu duilich?
f) Cuin’ a bhios e a’ falbh?
g) Càit’ am bi sibh a’ dol?

Cuir dhan Ghàidhlig (put into Gaelic):

a) How was the winter?
b) It was a cold day.
c) Were you sorry?
d) Where were they from?
e) Why are you (pl.) going away?
f) I won’t be going away at all!
g) What were you doing?
h) Where is Jim going?

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**15 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**CLEACHDADH (PRACTICE)**

Còmhradh (Conversation):

Strainnsearan a’ coinneachadh (Strangers meeting):

A. Madainn mhath!
B. Madainn mhath! Ciamar a thà sibh?
A. Glé mhath, tapadh leibh. Ciamar a thà sibh(p)-fhéin?
B. Chan eil dona, tapadh leibh. ’S mise Raonaid NicChoinnich – Có sibhse?
A. ’S mise Eilidh Nic ’IlleBhràth. Co às a thà sibh, a Raonaid?
Raonaid: Tha mi á Dún Éideann. Co ás a tha sibh-p-fhéin, ‘Eilidh?
Eilidh: Tha mi á Ceap Breatainn. Dé tha sibh a’ dèanamh an seo?
Raonaid: Tha mi ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig.
Eilidh: Tha ’s mi-fhin. A bheil sibh a’ dol dhan chlas an dràsda?
Raonaid: Tha, gu dearbh!
Eilidh: Dé bhios sinn a’ dèanamh anns a’ chlas an diugh?
Raonaid: Bìdh sinn ag obair air còmhraidh.
Eilidh: Glé mhath!

**FACLAN**

stráinnsear, -an : stranger(s)  a’ coinneachadh : meeting  air : on  cleachadadh : practice
Eilidh : Ellen, Helen  Mac : son  Nic : daughter  Raonaid : Rachel  ag obair : working
ag ionnsachadh : learning  an dràsda : now (right now)  dhan chlas : to (the) class
tapadh leat/leibh : thank you (singular/pl., polite)  anns a’ chlas : in the class
còmhraidh : conversation  Dùn Éideann : Dunedin (NZ), Edinburgh (Scotland)
Ceap Breatainn : Cape Breton

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**16 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**EMPATHETIC ENDINGS**

A-nís (now)...I’m sure you’ve noticed some things in the previous conversation! **Mise, sibhse**, for example. Yes – another intensifier, but they are actually **emphatic endings** for the personal pronouns – here they are in full:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mise</td>
<td><em>I, me</em></td>
<td>sinne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thusa</td>
<td><em>you (singular; actually, “thou”)</em></td>
<td>sibhse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esan</td>
<td><em>he, it</em></td>
<td>iadsan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ise</td>
<td><em>she, it</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s conventional to use **mise, sibhse** in introductions between strangers. On meeting a child, or meetings between younger peers, the informal **thusa** is more likely used than **sibhse**. Now,
as an exercise, personalize the above introductions – yourself and someone you’ve just met. And try some other responses...

**THE COPULA**

Here we introduce ourselves with a form of the verb “to be” known as the Copula – also known in Gaelic as “the assertive verb ‘to be’”, where one thing is asserted to be equivalent with another; for example, *is mise lain* (normally shortened to *’S mise lain* – meaning “I am lain”). More on the copula later...

More responses to “Ciamar a tha thu / sibh?” So far we’ve had:
- *glé mhath* (very good/well) and
- *chan eil dona* (not bad)

Now add:
- Tha mi *gu dòighell!* (I’m great! – *dòighell* means “orderly”, “well-arranged”)
- Tha mi *meadhonach* (I’m middling)
- Tha mi *gu math* (I’m well, I’m fine – add *gu* to an adjective to make it an adverb)
- Tha mi *cuimseach math* (I’m moderately well – equivalent to “okay”)
- *Chan eil mi a’ gearan* (I’m not complaining)

**VERBAL NOUNS**

We’ve been adding verbal nouns (also known as gerunds) so we can make utterances with progressive tenses; for example “I am/was/will be going”, and so on. So far, we’ve seen the following verbal nouns: a’ *dol* (going); a’ *falbh* (going away); a’ *coinneachadh* (meeting); a’ *dèanamh* (doing); a’ *gearan* (complaining); ag ionnsachadh (learning); ag obair (working)

The prefix *a’* – and *ag* before vowels, comes from the preposition *aig* (at, at going, at meeting, etc.), in the process of going, meeting, etc. So it is an ongoing, not a completed, action. Compare with Appalachian English “I’m a-goin’” or “I’m a-comin’”....

Notice how Gaelic handles “Yes” and “No” in the following conversation.

**CLEACHDADH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alasdair</th>
<th>A bheil thu a’ dol dhan chlas an dràsda?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cailean</td>
<td>Chan eil. A bheil thu-fhéin a’ dol ann?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alasdair</td>
<td>Tha, gu dearbh. Bidh sinn a’ seinn an diugh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cailean</td>
<td>Am bi sinn a’ seinn aig a’ chéilidh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alasdair</td>
<td>Bithidh. Tha sinn ag ionnsachadh òran luadhaidh anns a’ chlas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cailean</td>
<td>’S math sin! Bidh mi a’ tighinn, ma tha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alasdair</td>
<td>Am bi Dòmhnall a’ tighinn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cailean</td>
<td>Cha bhi. Tha esan anns a’ bhaile an dràsda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a’ seinn : singing  a’ tighinn : coming  òran : song  ‘s math sin! : that’s good!
anns a’ bhaile : in the town (in town)  òran luadhaidh : waulking/milling song
ma tha : then; literally, “if (it) is (so)”

Note: we find another example of the copula, the assertive verb “to be”, in the phrase ‘S math sin!, literally “Good is that” where the adjective is brought forward for emphasis; in English, “that’s good!” Compare to the structure of Tha sin math (that is good) which has no special emphasis. As you can hear from the sound of ‘S math sin, it gave the word “smashing!” to the English language.

17 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

MORE ON LENITION

We haven’t mentioned lenition for a while! To sum up, remembering always that lenition is indicated by the letter h and written immediately after the first consonant (except l, n, r), we have learned so far that lenition occurs in the following situations:

a) In the adjective following a feminine noun : madainn mhath, side bhlàth

b) After the adverbs glé and ro : glé bhàgh, ro fhuar

c) In the address form of nouns, commonly in proper names: a Mhàiri, a Sheumais

We have now encountered prepositional phrases like dhan chlas, anns a’ chlas, anns a’ bhaile, aig a’ chéilidh and clearly lenition is in play there. It’s time to consider simple prepositions – which, of course, are never that simple! It will be important to learn as you go which ones are appropriate and where.

Seo iad… (Here they are...) :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aig</th>
<th>at</th>
<th>air</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>á</th>
<th>out of</th>
<th>de</th>
<th>of/off</th>
<th>mu</th>
<th>about</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>le</td>
<td>by, with</td>
<td>ri</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>gu</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>to, for</td>
<td>troimh</td>
<td>through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ann an</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>fo</td>
<td>under</td>
<td>bho/o</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>roimh</td>
<td>before</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In indefinite prepositional phrases, the following prepositions will lenite the lenitible consonants: fo, de, do, bho/o, mu, troimh, roimh; for example, do chlas, bho bhaile, roimh chéilidh (to a class, from a town, before a ceilidh), etc.

Most often, however, the prepositional phrases will use the definite article which usually appears as a’, except where the preposition ends in a vowel or a silently lenited f + vowel
follows. It also occurs when the article appears as ‘n, followed by the noun with the initial consonant lenited. For example:

- aig a’ chéilidh (at the ceilidh)
- bho ’n bhaile (from the town)
- do ’n chlas (to the class)
- troimh ’n fheasgar (through the afternoon)

**Note:**
In modern colloquial Gaelic, do’n ➞ dhan; for example, dhan bhaile (to the town), dhan chlas (to the class).

**Also Note:**
Gaelic likes vowel sounds between consonants (but not as much as does Japanese where screwdriver ➞ sekaru deraiba – my spelling!); so it’s not surprising if one hears an extra vowel in dhan a’ bhaile, dhan a’ chlas – and even spells it that way! You’ve seen this happen already in gu dearbh with the “intrusive vowel” between r and bh.

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### 18 SEALLAGAN — GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

#### CLEACHDADH : EADAR-THEANGACHADH (TRANSLATION)

A’ leughadh agus a’ cur dhan Bheurla (reading and putting into English):

Nuair a bha mi a’ coiseachd dhan a’ bhaile an diugh bha mi cho sona. Bha a’ ghrian a’ deàrrsadh anns an speur agus bha mi a’ coimhead a h-uile duine a’ dol seachad. Bha snodha-gàire air fedhainn agus gruaim air fedhainn eile. Bha feadhainn ann an cabhaig agus feadhainn eile a’ coiseachd gu mall. Bha feadhainn a’ cantainn “Madainn mhath! Ciamar a tha thu?” agus feadhainn nach robh a’ cantainn sion. Anns a’ phàirc, bha clann a’ cluich agus coin a’ ruith. Bha mi a’ smaoineachadh gu robh iadsan sona cuideachd.

#### FACLAN

- nuair a : when
- a’ coiseachd : walking
- cho sona : so happy/content
- a’ ghrian : the sun
- a’ deàrrsadh : shining
- anns an speur : in the sky
- a’ coimhead : watching/looking at
- duine : man/person/husband
- seachad : past/over
- a’ cantainn (also a’ cantail) : saying
- cù (coin): (a) dog(s)
- snodha-gàire : smile
- a h-uile duine : everyone
- gruaim : gloom/frown
- eile : other/another
- feadhainn : some/several
- mall : slow
- gu mall : slowly
- sion : anything
- ann an cabhaig : in a hurry
- a’ cluich : playing
- clann : children
- anns a’ phàirc : in the park/field
- cuideachd : too/also/as well
- a’ smaoineachadh : thinking
CEISDEAN
a) Càit’ an robh e a’ coiseachd?
b) Cuin’ a bha e sona?
c) An robh là grianach ann? (grianach ᐈ “sunny”)
d) Dé bha e a’ coimhead?
e) An robh a h-uile duine sona?
f) An robh a h-uile duine a’ coiseachd gu mall?
g) An robh a h-uile duine a’ cantainn, “Madainn mhath!”?
h) Càit’ an robh clann a’ cluich?
i) Dé bha coin a’ déanamh? (a’ déanamh ᐈ “doing”)
j) Dé bha e a’ smaoineachadh?

19 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

MORE ON THE “SMALL”, SIMPLE PREPOSITIONS

It was noted above that do, ri, gu can all be translated as “to”; however, they cannot be used (entirely) interchangeably. One has to pick up the idiomatic usages as one goes along; for example:

a) ALL the following communicative verbs a’ bruidhinn (speaking / talking), a’ cantainn / a’ cantail / ag ràdh(ainn) (saying); ag éibeachd / ag éigheachd (shouting); ag éisdeachd (listening); a’ trod (scolding) take the word ri:
   Bha mi a’ bruidhinn ri Seumas (I was speaking to Jim)
   ALL EXCEPT ag innse : telling, which takes do
   Bha mi ag innse sin do Sheumas (I was telling that to Jim / I was telling Jim that – where “Jim” is the indirect object and “that” is the direct object)
   The Gaelic structure MUST be as in this example!
   Also, in Seallagan 17, above, you will have noted that do lenites with an indefinite noun.
b) You will have noticed that do is generally the “motion toward” preposition:
   Tha mi a’ dol do chlas / dhan chlas (I’m going to a class / to the class)
   In modern Gaelic pronunciation, do + indefinite noun ᐈ a (pronounced “uh”); so, we have:
   Tha mi a’ dol a Haileafacs / a Shuidnidh / a Dhùn Éideann / a dh’ Alba(inn) / a dh’ Éirinn (I’m going to Halifax / to Sydney / to Dunedin (or Edinburgh) / to Scotland / to Ireland)
Note the outside lenition of vowel using dh’. In Scottish Gaelic usage, the feminine dative has generally been lost; hence, you have a dh’ Alba (to Scotland). Nova Scotia retains the feminine dative (see Seallagan 36, below).

Note: ALL countries and languages are treated as feminine.

c) However, gu can be used in the sense of “motion toward”, most usually with single placenames; for example, Tha mi a’ dol gu Suidnidh (I am going to Sydney – note NO lenition after gu).

Most usually, gu is used before a complex placename phrase, where the second placename is in the genitive (possessive) case. For example:

Tha mi a’ dol gu Talla MhicLeòid (I’m going to MacLeod Hall – Hall of MacLeod)

Gu is the preposition used in “sending (something, like a letter) to someone”. For example, a’ cur gu...

You are also more likely to say gu Sealan Nuadh (to New Zealand).

Note: the idiom: Tha mi a’ falbh gu ruige Haileafacs (I’m going as far as Halifax).

So far, so good – but there’s oh, so much more involved in the “small”, “simple” prepositions! Stay tuned...

20 SEALLAGAN — GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

CONTINUING WITH THE SIMPLE PREPOSITIONS

A’ leantainn air na roimhearan beaga (continuing with the “little prepositions”). Note: Gaelic says “continuing on”; English says “continuing with”:

aig, ann : at, in.

a) With an indefinite noun:

Tha mi aig taigh / Tha mi ann an taigh
I am at a house / I am in a house

b) With definite noun:

Tha mi aig an taigh (I am at home – literally, “at the house”)

Thoiribh an aire. Take note: t, d do NOT lenite in a definite prepositional phrase

Tha mi anns an taigh (I am in the house – NOT “in the home”!)

Note the addition of final s to ann in a definite phrase! This is important. So ann an looks like “in the” when it doesn’t mean that unless an s is added to ann. So Tha mi anns an taigh (I am in the house), but Tha mi ann an taigh (I am in a house).

This is also true of á → ás; ri → ris; le → leis; see below.
air: we saw above a usage of air in the phrase a’ leantainn air. Also, note the following:

A’ bruidhinn air: speaking or talking about someone or something. English usage has begun to creep into Gaelic with the use of mu dhéidhinn / dheóghainn (concerning, about). Apart from anything else, mu dhéidhinn would be followed by the possessive (genitive) case (see below) while the Gaelic construction with air is much simpler! For example, Bha iad a’ bruidhinn air Seumas (They were speaking about Jim)

Có air a bha sibh a’ bruidhinn? (Who were you speaking about?)
Co air a bha sibh a’ bruidhinn? (What were you speaking about? – where co comes from older form cia, with no accent on the o)

Bha e a’ bruidhinn air eachdraidh nan Gàidheal (He was speaking about the history of the Gaels)

Note: a’ feitheamh air (waiting for); ag iarraidh air (requesting of)

fo, bho : under, from (dialectically, you may hear fo used for bho):

a) With an indefinite noun:
   Tha e fo bhòrd (He/it is under a table)
   Chuala mi bho charaid (I heard from a friend)
   Tha mi fo chùram (I’m under – weighed down by – care/anxiety)

b) With definite noun:
   Tha e fo ’n bhòrd (He/it is under the table)
   Chuala mi bho ’n charaid a bh’ agam ansn an oilthigh... (I heard from the friend (that) I had (literally “that was at me” : see Seallagan 21, below) in (the) university)

de: of, off. This one is a little tricky because learners may not be sure whether they should use the possessive (genitive) case or a phrase with the word de. Some common (definite) phrases with de are:

   Tha dhen bharail... (I am of the opinion...)
   ...beagan dhen airgead... (...a little of the money...)
   ...mórán dhen naidheachd... (...much of the news...)

One might also use phrases like:

   Tha glé bheag de dh’ airgead agam (I have very little (of) money)

Note lenition of the vowel as with do.

Also note how de + singular article = dhen; compare this to do + singular article = dhan (above).

For le, see Seallagan 21, below

Look out for more examples from your reading! I should mention that you should be reading children’s books. They are perfectly designed to teach new learners. The pride you’ll have in yourself for learning Gaelic will be well worth it!
Á, ás: “out of”, although we usually translate into English as “from”.

**Tha mi á Suidnídh** (I’m from Sydney)

**Tha mi ás na Stàitean Aonaichte** (I’m from the United States – the U.S.)

Note the addition of **s** before a definite noun phrase – also in **Co ás a tha sibh?** (Where are you from?). This is literally, “What out of (is it) that you are?”

### 21 Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance

#### Idiomatic Expressions

One of the neatest elements of Gaelic structure is that all the simple prepositions can be declined for person! This leads to all kinds of idiomatic expressions. So from **aig**, **air**, **ann**, **ri**, and **le** we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>agam</th>
<th>at me</th>
<th>orm</th>
<th>on me</th>
<th>annam</th>
<th>in me</th>
<th>rium</th>
<th>to me</th>
<th>leam</th>
<th>by/with me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agad</td>
<td>at you</td>
<td>ort</td>
<td>on you</td>
<td>annad</td>
<td>in you</td>
<td>riut</td>
<td>to you</td>
<td>leat</td>
<td>by/with you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aige</td>
<td>at him/it</td>
<td>air</td>
<td>on him/it</td>
<td>ann</td>
<td>in him/it</td>
<td>ris</td>
<td>to him/it</td>
<td>leis</td>
<td>by/with him/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aice</td>
<td>at her/it</td>
<td>oire</td>
<td>on her/it</td>
<td>innte</td>
<td>in her/it</td>
<td>rithe</td>
<td>to her/it</td>
<td>leatha</td>
<td>by/with her/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>againn</td>
<td>at us</td>
<td>oirnn</td>
<td>on us</td>
<td>anninn</td>
<td>in us</td>
<td>ruinn</td>
<td>to us</td>
<td>leinn</td>
<td>by/with us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agaibh</td>
<td>at you (pl.)</td>
<td>oirbh</td>
<td>on you (pl.)</td>
<td>annaibh</td>
<td>in you (pl.)</td>
<td>ruibh</td>
<td>to you (pl.)</td>
<td>leibh</td>
<td>by/with you (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aca</td>
<td>at them</td>
<td>orra</td>
<td>on them</td>
<td>annta</td>
<td>in them</td>
<td>riutha</td>
<td>to them</td>
<td>leotha</td>
<td>by/with them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** all of these forms may take emphatic endings; for example, **agamsa**, **agadsa**, **aigesan**, **aice-se**, **agaibhse**, **acasan**; and the “self” ending; for example, **agam-fhin**, **agad-fhéin**, **aige-fhéin**, **aise-fhéin**, **againn-fhin**, **agaibh-(p)-fhéin**, and **aca-fhéin**.

a) Knowledge, having, and remembering:

**Tha fios agam** (literally, “Knowledge is at me”). In English, we say, “I know” when it concerns knowledge of things or events

**Tha fios agam air sin** (literally, “Knowledge is at me on that” → I know that)

**Chan eil fios agam** (I don’t know). In speech, this is shortened to **Chan eil fhios ‘am**

**A bheil fios agad?** (Do you know?) ... and so on

**Có aig a tha fios?** (literally, “At whom is knowledge?” → Who knows?)

Gaelic has no verb “to have”. We handle “having” with the “verb ‘to be’” and **agam**, etc.

**A bheil a’ Ghàidhlig agad?** (literally, “Is the Gaelic at you?” → “Do you have the Gaelic?” → Do you speak Gaelic?)

Similarly, **Tha cuimhn’ agam (air)** (literally, “Memory is at me (on)” → I remember...)

**Tha dùil agam (ri)** (literally, “Expectation is at me (to)” → I expect...)

Tha agam ri (literally, “Is at me to” \(\Rightarrow\) “I have to” – as in, Tha agam ri ruith! \(\Rightarrow\) “I have to run!”)

b) Keeping on, putting on:

Tha mi a’ cumail orm (literally, “I’m keeping on me” \(\Rightarrow\) I’m keeping on (going))
Tha mi a’ cur orm (literally, “I’m putting on me (clothing)” \(\Rightarrow\) I’m getting dressed)
Dé (a) tha’ cur ort? (literally, “What’s putting on you?” \(\Rightarrow\) What’s bothering you?)

You will remember how you learned to introduce yourself; for example, ‘S mise Dòmhnall. With the Copula, you have a more emphatic way of saying who you are:

‘S + e \(\Rightarrow\) ‘S e, to be understood as “it’s”, and we can make the following sentence:
‘S e Dòmhnall an t-ainm a th’ orm (literally, “It’s Donald the name that is on me” \(\Rightarrow\) My name is Donald)

Answer the question: Dé ‘n t-ainm a th’ ort / oirbh? (What’s your name?)

c) Who we are:

Similarly, with annam, etc., we can make an emphatic statement as to who we are; for example, our ethnicity, or as to what work we do:

‘S e Gàidheal a th’ annam (literally, “It’s a Gael that’s in me” \(\Rightarrow\) I’m a Gael)
‘S e oileanach a th’ annam (I’m a student)

Note: dialectically, you will commonly hear unnam / unnad / ann / innte / unnainn/ unnaibh / unnta. See the section on the Copula below.

d) Phrases with ri:

Cho + adjective + ri = English “as……as…….” For example, cho sona ri Màiri (as content as Mary)

As above, Tha Màiri cho sona! (Mary is so content!)
Trobhad còmhla rium! (Come along with me!)

e) Thanking someone:

Tapadh leat/leibh (literally, “Success (go) with you” \(\Rightarrow\) Thank you!)

The response is:

‘S e do bheatha / ur beatha, which is actually Is E do bheatha / ur beatha (He – God – is your life! That is, don’t thank me – thank Him! \(\Rightarrow\) You’re welcome!). Words referring to God are traditionally capitalised.

f) Saying goodbye:

Beannachd leat / leibh (literally, “Blessing (go) with you”). The response is:

Mar sin leat / leibh (literally, “Like that to you” \(\Rightarrow\) The same to you!)

Again with the Copula:

‘S leams’ e! (It’s mine! Where leams’ is the abbreviated form of leamsa, and leamsa is the emphatic form of leam).
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PREPOSITIONS

From do, bho, fo, á we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dhomh</td>
<td>to/for me</td>
<td>bhuam</td>
<td>from me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhut</td>
<td>to/for you</td>
<td>bhuat</td>
<td>from you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dha</td>
<td>to/for him/it</td>
<td>bhuaite</td>
<td>from him/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhi</td>
<td>to/for her/it</td>
<td>bhuaipe</td>
<td>from her/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuinn</td>
<td>to/for us</td>
<td>bhuainn</td>
<td>from us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuibh</td>
<td>to/for you (pl.)</td>
<td>bhuaihb</td>
<td>from you (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhaibh</td>
<td>to/for them</td>
<td>bhuapa</td>
<td>from them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhut</td>
<td>to/for you</td>
<td>bhuat</td>
<td>from you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dha</td>
<td>to/for him/it</td>
<td>bhuaite</td>
<td>from him/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhi</td>
<td>to/for her/it</td>
<td>bhuaipe</td>
<td>from her/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuinn</td>
<td>to/for us</td>
<td>bhuainn</td>
<td>from us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuibh</td>
<td>to/for you (pl.)</td>
<td>bhuaihb</td>
<td>from you (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhaibh</td>
<td>to/for them</td>
<td>bhuapa</td>
<td>from them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhut</td>
<td>to/for you</td>
<td>bhuat</td>
<td>from you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dha</td>
<td>to/for him/it</td>
<td>bhuaite</td>
<td>from him/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhi</td>
<td>to/for her/it</td>
<td>bhuaipe</td>
<td>from her/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuinn</td>
<td>to/for us</td>
<td>bhuainn</td>
<td>from us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhuibh</td>
<td>to/for you (pl.)</td>
<td>bhuaihb</td>
<td>from you (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhaibh</td>
<td>to/for them</td>
<td>bhuapa</td>
<td>from them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Do: Tha mis’ ag innse dhut! (I’m telling (to) you!). Note that it’s more appropriate in Gaelic to greet someone with Madainn mhath dhut / dhuibh and Feasgar math dhut / dhuibh, rather than with the bare Good morning / afternoon, as in English.

b) Bho: Dé a tha bhuat? (literally, “What is from you?” ⇒ What do you need?)

c) Fo: Tha am bàta air dol fodha (literally, “The boat is after going under (it)” ⇒ The boat has sunk)

d) Á: Na bi ‘tarraing ásam (literally, “Don’t be pulling out of me” ⇒ Don’t tease me!)

Note the variant uam, uat, uaithe, uaipe, uainn, uaihb, and uapa.

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MORE PREPOSITIONS

For prepositions de, gu, mu, roimh, troimh we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dhiom</td>
<td>off me</td>
<td>thugam</td>
<td>to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhiot</td>
<td>off you</td>
<td>thugad</td>
<td>to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dheth</td>
<td>off him/it</td>
<td>thugie</td>
<td>to him/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhith</td>
<td>off her/it</td>
<td>thuice</td>
<td>to her/it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhinn</td>
<td>off us</td>
<td>thugainn</td>
<td>to us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhibh</td>
<td>off you (pl.)</td>
<td>thugaibh</td>
<td>to you (pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhiubh</td>
<td>off them</td>
<td>thuca</td>
<td>to them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note the variant uam, uat, uaithe, uaipe, uainn, uaihb, and uapa.
a) Dhìom : Bha mi a’ cur mo chòta dhìom (literally, “I was putting my coat off me” ⇔ I was taking off my coat). You can bring dhìom forward in the sentence for greater emphasis :

Bha mi a’ cur dhìom mo chòta.

b) Thugam! (To me!). The commander would shout to his troops so that they would rally around him. On the other hand, Thugad! is somewhat equivalent to “Have at you!”

Chuir e thugam litir (He sent me a letter).

c) Uime : In donning a kilt, it goes “about” or “around” you :

Chuir e uime féileadh (”He put about him a kilt” ⇔ He put on a kilt)

d) Romham : Before me :

Chuir mi romham (“I put before me” ⇔ I decided, I made up my mind to...).

Bidh fàilte romhad (“A welcome will be before you” ⇔ You will be (made) welcome).

e) Troimhe : through him/it :

Chuir e an claidheamh troimhe (He put the sword through him/it).

f) Eadar : We also have the preposition eadar : “between”, which governs the basic nominative (subject) and accusative (object) form of the noun; for example :

Eadar mi-fhin’s tu-fhéin (literally, “Between myself and yourself” ⇔ Between you and me).

It declines in the plural : eadarainn, eadarabh, eatorra.

Note the variants : ugam, ugad, uige, uice, ugainn, ugaibh, uca; and chugam, chugad, chuige, chuice, chugainn, chugaibh, chuca.

CLEACHDADH – CÔMHRADH

Tormod :  Bha mi a’ bruidhinn riuq, a Sheumais! Nach robh thu ag éisdeachd rium?

Seumas :  Och bha! Ach chan eil móràn uine agam – feumaidh mi ruith!


Seumas :  Bidh Mairead a’ dol ann leatha fhéin agus tha mise anmoch.

Tormod :  Cum ort, ma tha! ’S e duine dicheallach a th’ annad, a Sheumais – ach na bi fo chùram. Tha mi cinnteach gum bi a h-uiile duine aig a’ choinneimh air do thaobh.

Seumas :  Na bi a’ tarraing àsam, a Thormoid! Tha fios agad glé mhath gu bheil obair chruaidh romhad anns an taghadh...

Tormod :  Dé tha bhuat? Bheir mi dhut a h-uiile cuideachadh. Trobhad cùimhla riomsa – tha an càr agam direach an seo.
FACLAN

coinneamh (f.) : meeting
tagadh : election
ùine (f.) : time
anmoch : late
obair (f.) : work
dicheallach : diligent
cinnteach : sure
taobh : side
cruaidh : hard
feumaidh mi : I must
móran : much, a lot
uile : every/all
cuideachadh : help
direach : just/direct(ly)

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EMPHATIC PERFECT PAST

Gaelic has the neatest, simplest way of handling the so-called "perfect tenses" by putting to use the verb “to be” + air + verbal noun. In English these tenses would be:

Present in Past : the activity is complete but is spoken of in the present. For example, “I have spoken”.
Past in Past : the activity is complete at a more distant point in the past. For example, “I had spoken”.
Future in Past : the activity will be complete at a determined point in the future. For example, “I will have spoken”.

air from iar : the older preposition iar, meaning “after”, got transformed to air (whether by simple metathesis or by confusion with air : on). SO – in Gaelic:

Present in Past : Tha mi air bruidhinn (“I am after speaking” ⇒ I have spoken)
Past in Past : Bha mi air bruidhinn (“I was after speaking” ⇒ I had spoken)
Future in Past : Bidh mi air bruidhinn (“I will be after speaking” ⇒ I will have spoken)

In Gaeldom, where English is spoken, you will hear the effect of Gaelic structure on English as in “I’m after forgetting” (Tha mi air diochuirnneachadh), or “He’s after going” (Tha e air falbh), etc.

CLEACHDADH

a) Chan eil e air falbh fhathast.
b) A bheil i air dùsgadh?
c) Bha iad air coinneachadh.
d) Cha bhi iad air dol ann.
e) Bidh iad air coiseachd dhachaidh.
f) An robh thu air bruidhinn ris?
g) Nach robh sibh air tòiseachadh?
h) 'S math nach robh iad tòiseachadh!

i) Carson nach eil thu air ionnsachadh?

j) Dé tha thu air innse dha?

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VERBAL NOUN ROOTS AND PAST TENSE OF REGULAR VERBS

At the very beginning of these glimpses into the structure of Gàidhlig, we find the basic past tense form of the regular verb wake. Although we may conduct quite a lot of our conversation using the verb “to be” and verbal nouns, clearly we must often use other verbs in their various tenses as well. SO – we need to know the roots of these verbs in order to proceed. The root is the imperative form of the verb. Lenition of the root is the sign of the past tense in verbs. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Noun</th>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a’ bruidhinn</td>
<td>bruidhinn!</td>
<td>speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cadal</td>
<td>caidil!</td>
<td>sleep!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ coiseachd</td>
<td>coisich!</td>
<td>walk!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cumail</td>
<td>cum!</td>
<td>keep!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cur</td>
<td>cur!</td>
<td>put/send!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ deasachadh</td>
<td>deasaich!</td>
<td>prepare!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ dūsgadh</td>
<td>dūisg!</td>
<td>wake!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ag éirigh</td>
<td>éirich!</td>
<td>get up!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ag éisdeachd</td>
<td>eisd!</td>
<td>listen!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ fàgail</td>
<td>fàg!</td>
<td>leave!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ falbh</td>
<td>falbh!</td>
<td>go away!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ gabhail</td>
<td>gabh!</td>
<td>take!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ glanadh</td>
<td>glan!</td>
<td>clean!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ag ionnsachadh</td>
<td>ionnsaich!</td>
<td>learn!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ag ithe</td>
<td>ith!</td>
<td>eat!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ leantainn</td>
<td>lean!</td>
<td>follow!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ nighe</td>
<td>nigh!</td>
<td>wash!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ag òl</td>
<td>òl!</td>
<td>drink!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ ruith</td>
<td>ruith!</td>
<td>run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ smaoineachadh</td>
<td>smaoinich!</td>
<td>think!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ tiormachadh</td>
<td>tiormaich!</td>
<td>dry!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ tòiseachadh</td>
<td>töisich!</td>
<td>begin!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SO – we need to know the roots of these verbs in order to proceed. The root is the imperative form of the verb. Lenition of the root is the sign of the past tense in verbs. For example:
These are examples of **regular verbs**. For negatives and questions in the past tense, we also add the little particle **do**:

- **Cha do bhruidhinn mi** / **An do bhruidhinn thu?** / **Nach do bhruidhinn thu?** (I didn’t speak / Did you speak? / Didn’t you speak?)

And in the dependent forms too:

- **Tha e duilich gun do bhruidhinn e** / **Tha e duilich nach do bhruidhinn e** (He is sorry (that) he spoke/ He is sorry (that) he didn’t speak)

Since we have plural forms of “you” in Gaelic, we also have plural imperative forms ending in **-(a)ibh**:

- **Dùisgibh! Leanaibh!**

Note how **-d** and **-adh** endings of verbal nouns are dropped in verb roots and **ea** preceding these endings is transformed to **i**; if the preceding vowel is **a**, then **i** is added to achieve the same “slender” vowel sound. Also, vowel-initial roots are “artificially” lenited by the addition of **dh**; moreover, an initial **sm** – together with **I, n, r** – does not lenite.

**CLEACHDADH**

Dh’ éirich mi tràth’s a’ mhadainn an diugh. Ghabh mi fras agus chuir mi orm aodach – léine-t agus dinichean. An uair sin, dheasaich mi mo bhracaist – ugh agus tost – agus dh’ òl mi cupa tì le bainne ach gun siúcar. Aig an aon àm, dh’ éisd mi ri naidheachd an latha air a’ réidio : gu dearbh, cha robh gnothaichean a’ dol ro mhath anns an t-saoghal. Ás déidh sin, nigh mi na soithichean agus thiormaich mi iad. Cha do dh’ fhàg mi an taigh gu ochd uairean; bha an t-side cuimseach fuar agus chuir mi orm mo chòta blàth, mo bhonaid agus mo mhiotagan. Bha là trang romham agus choisich mi gu luath dhan oifis.

**FACLAN**

- **aodach** : clothing/clothes  
- **fras** : a shower  
- **léine-t** : t-shirt  
- **ugh** : egg  
- **gun** : without  
- **gnothaichean** : matters/ ‘things’  
- **aig an aon àm** : at the same time  
- **tràth** : early  
- **saoghal** : world  
- **naidheachd an latha** : the news of the day  
- **còta** : coat  
- **bainne** : milk  
- **bonaid** : bonnet, cap  
- **cuimseach** : somewhat/rather  
- **dinichean** : jeans  
- **miotag (f.)** : glove/mitten  
- **luath** : quick/fast  
- **soitheach** : a dish  
- **soithichean** : dishes
The human mind loves pattern; so when the student can discern and grasp the patterns, then half the battle is won; the instructor must carefully, in a proper order, and at the proper time for that structure, introduce the student to the patterns being taught; and the student has to spend enough time practicing the structures OUT LOUD, with different vocabulary, so as to gain facility and comfort in using them.

I could spend time on how this very Gaelic question – A bheil a’ Ghàidhlig agad? – is illustrative of some aspect of what I call the “possession principle” in Gaelic structure. However, I plan to discuss the principle now only in relation to the verbal noun; that is, a grammatical item that is both a noun and a verb (It is also known as a gerund). The verbal noun has a great deal of work to do in Gaelic so its function has to be well understood. At this stage, of course, students have already learned the basic verb “to be”, the personal pronouns, and the simple prepositions, and will shortly learn the possessive adjectives/pronouns; of those building blocks, the verb “to be”, the simple prepositions aig (at) [and ann (in)] and the possessive adjectives are crucial architectural elements of the structure we’re about to examine.

First, we need to understand the way in which the verbal noun works. Students are often surprised that Scottish Gaelic is actually quite logical.

Let’s consider two regular verbs in their verbal noun forms : a’ cur – which has a myriad of meanings depending on context, including “putting”, “sending”, “planting”, and ag ionnsachadh, “learning”. Now at this point, I would expect learners to ask : “What is that a’ doing there? And the ag? Where do they come from and what do they mean?”

They already know the simple preposition aig “at” in phrases with definite or indefinite nouns like aig an taigh and aig a’ bhòrd and have begun to cope with the idea of lenition (sèimheachadh), so it’s not a great leap to show that a’ / ag are forms of aig, meaning “at”, preceding these entities called gerunds which are both noun and verb, with the ag form used before verbal nouns beginning with vowels. SO we have :

A’cur : “AT putting” and ag ionnsachadh : “AT learning”...or to parse the actions : in the process of putting; in the process of learning. For these are on-going actions : on-going in the present (Tha mi a’cur...), in the past (Bha e ag ionnsachadh...), in the future (Bidh sinn a’ dol...), or with conditions (Bhiodh iad a’ cur...).

And so, we’re building the structure – logically. Question : What happens if the verbal noun must itself be followed by a nominal? For example, what if you want to say “sending a letter” or “learning a language”. Answer : translate to : “AT sending OF a letter”, “AT learning OF a language”. The “verb-ness” of the gerund which required the preposition “AT” before it (indicating action about to be performed) because of its simultaneous “noun-ness”, requires the preposition “OF” after it when followed by another noun. So we have to bring into play the Genitive Case form of the noun that follows – what in English is called the Possessive Case, in which what is named in one noun is seen in some way to be in a possessive relationship with what is named in the other noun.
But now – to take our example from English so the proposition makes sense! – supposing the nominal following the gerund is not a noun at all but a personal pronoun; for example, “sending me”, “learning it”. There is no way of saying in Gaelic “AT sending OF me” or “AT learning OF it”. Instead, using the possession principle, “OF me” becomes “my” and “OF it” becomes “its”; and since we’re still contending with forms of the preposition aig before the gerund, we must use forms – portmanteau morphs – that include the simple preposition aig together with the relevant possessive adjectives: mo, do, a, ar, ur, am – and, of course, follow the lenition rules of the possessive adjectives as they apply.

SO:

‘gam’ chur ⇒ “at my sending” ⇒ sending me
‘gad’ chur ⇒ “at your (singular) sending” ⇒ sending you, and so on

Note: in the new Orthographic Conventions for Gaelic in Scotland, the apostrophes would be omitted thereby creating what, to some minds, are “ghost words”.

27 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

As you see above, the verbal nouns are preceded by a particle, either a’ before a consonant or ag before a vowel, both deriving from the simple preposition aig : “at”. So literally, a’ dùsgadh (at waking (of)) cannot take a simple direct object. Here we see how logical Gaelic is – but admittedly in this case, not as straightforward as English! So how do we say, for example, “waking me / you / him / her / us / you(pl.) / them”?

In order to do this, we must bring the possessive pronouns (also called possessive adjectives) – “my, your, his, her, our, your (pl.), their” – into play. We’ll use màthair (mother) and athair (father) in our examples; also, to demonstrate an f + vowel noun, we’ll use facal (word):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mo mhàthair</th>
<th>my mother</th>
<th>m’ athair</th>
<th>my father</th>
<th>m’ fhacal</th>
<th>my word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do mhàthair</td>
<td>your mother</td>
<td>d’ athair</td>
<td>your father</td>
<td>d’ fhacal</td>
<td>your word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a mhàthair</td>
<td>his mother</td>
<td>’athair</td>
<td>his father</td>
<td>’fhacal</td>
<td>his word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a màthair</td>
<td>her mother</td>
<td>a h-athair</td>
<td>her father</td>
<td>a facal</td>
<td>her word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ar màthair</td>
<td>our mother</td>
<td>ar n-athair</td>
<td>our father</td>
<td>ar facal</td>
<td>our word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ur màthair</td>
<td>your (pl.) mother</td>
<td>ur n-athair</td>
<td>your father</td>
<td>ur facal</td>
<td>your word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am màthair</td>
<td>their mother</td>
<td>an athair</td>
<td>their father</td>
<td>am facal</td>
<td>their word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, put possessives with the names of other family members: bràthair (brother); piuthar (sister); seanair (grandfather); seanmhair (grandmother).
Note: the personal pronouns tend to be used with those things considered “inalienable” — in other words, what we are “stuck with”! This includes family members, body parts, things that matter to us. We should not, for example, say Mo chàr for “my car”; instead, say an càr agam (literally, “the car at me”).

NOW, take aig + mo + dùsgadh ⇒ ‘g + a + m’ + dùsgadh, but remember that mo lenites, so:

‘gam dhùsgadh (literally “at my waking” ⇒ waking me)

So:
‘gad dhùsgadh (waking you)
‘ga dhùsgadh (waking him)
‘ga dùsgadh (waking her – see how it obeys the appropriate rule!)
‘gar dùsgadh (waking us)
‘gur dùsgadh (waking you – pl.)
‘gan dùsgadh (waking them)

When a verbal noun begins with a vowel, we get: ‘gam iarraidh / ‘gad iarraidh / ‘ga iarraidh / ‘ga h iarraidh / ‘gar n iarraidh / ‘gar n iarraidh / ‘gan iarraidh (wanting me, wanting you, etc.).

NOW if you are asked the following question:

A bheil Gàidhlig agad? (literally, “Is Gaelic at you?” ⇒ Do you have (speak) Gaelic?). You might currently answer:

Tha beagan (A little – short for Tha beagan agam)

Tha mi ‘ga h-ionnsachadh (literally, “I’m at its learning”). This is equivalent to the English phrase “I’m in the process of learning it” ⇒ I’m learning it

With a verbal noun beginning with f + vowel, we have: ‘gam fhalach / ‘gad fhalach / ‘ga fhalach / ‘ga fhalach / ‘gar falach / ‘gar falach / ‘gar falach / ‘gan falach (hiding me, hiding you, etc.).

Remember, languages are treated as feminine nouns in the Indo-European languages, including Gaelic.

Note the following expressions:

‘S math do choinneachadh / ur coinneachadh (literally, “Is good your meeting”, or in English “It’s good to meet you”)

Tha mi toilichte d’ fhaicinn / ur faicinn (I’m glad to see you)

Alternatively, you might say:

‘S math / tha mi toilichte a bhith ‘gad choinneachadh / ‘gar coinneachadh (literally, “Is good / I’m glad to be at your (singular) / your (plural or polite) meeting” ⇒ It’s good to be meeting you, or in colloquial English, “It’s good to meet you”

28
THE POSSESSIVE PRONOUN WITH ANN

The only other preposition that may amalgamate with the possessive pronoun is ann. This gives us a neat way of indicating what position or state of body or mind we may be in:

a) Tha mi ‘nam dhùisg (I’m awake); also, Tha mi ‘nam chadal/ ‘nam shuidhe/ ‘nam sheasamh/ ‘nam laighe (I’m asleep, sitting (seated), standing, lying down). Here are all the forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dùisg</th>
<th>Cadal</th>
<th>Suidhe</th>
<th>Seasamh</th>
<th>Laighe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>’nam dhùisg</td>
<td>’nam chadal</td>
<td>’nam shuidhe</td>
<td>’nam sheasamh</td>
<td>’nam laighe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’nad dhùisg</td>
<td>’nad chadal</td>
<td>’nad shuidhe</td>
<td>’nad sheasamh</td>
<td>’nad laighe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’na dhùisg</td>
<td>’na chadal</td>
<td>’na shuidhe</td>
<td>’na sheasamh</td>
<td>’na laighe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’na dúisg</td>
<td>’na cadal</td>
<td>’na suidhe</td>
<td>’na seasamh</td>
<td>’na laighe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’nar dúisg</td>
<td>’nar cadal</td>
<td>’nar suidhe</td>
<td>’nar seasamh</td>
<td>’nar laighe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’nur dúisg</td>
<td>’nur cadal</td>
<td>’nur suidhe</td>
<td>’nur seasamh</td>
<td>’nur laighe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’nan dúisg</td>
<td>’nan cadal</td>
<td>’nan suidhe</td>
<td>’nan seasamh</td>
<td>’nan laighe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In the first column, notice that the phrases are based on the imperative form of the verb instead of on the verbal noun forms.

These forms can also serve to indicate who we are, in ethnicity or with regard to our work:

b) Tha mi ’nam Ghàidheal (I’m a Gael); A bheil e ‘na mhinistear? (Is he a minister?); Bha sinn ’nar n-oileanaich (We were students); Am bi thu ‘nad thidsear? (Will you be a teacher?)

In this construction, you will notice that we use the basic verb “to be” whereas in Seallagan 21, above, you began to learn to say – more emphatically – who you are by using a form of the Copula with annam / annad / ann / innte / annainn / annaibh / annta (in me / in you / in him / in her / in us / in you (pl.) / in them). For example, ‘S e Gàidheal a th’ annam (literally, “It’s a Gael that’s in me” ⇒ I’m a Gael). In the next section we will have a comprehensive look at the Copula.
CLEACHDADH – CÒMRADH:

Seo Brian agus a mhàthair ann a’ còmradh aig àm na bracaist.

Màthair (ag éibheachd): A bheil thu ’nad chadal fhathast, a bhalaich? Tha do bhracaist deiseil (Tha a mac ’na dhúisg ach chan eil e air aodach a chur air agus cha toil leis a bhith ’na chabhaig).

Brian: Tha mi a’ cur orm – bidh mi shìos ann a’ mionaid!

Màthair: An do ghabh thu fras?

Brian: Cha do ghabh.

Màthair: Nigh d’ aodann agus do lùmhan, ma tha – agus greas ort! (Mu dheireadh thall, tha Brian ’na shuidhe aig a’ bhòrd anns a’ chidsin ag ithe a bhracaist. Tha ’athair a’ deasachadh airson falbh).

Aithair: Feuch gum bi thu ag éisdeachd ri do mhàthair, a Bhriain – agus ’ga cuideachadh. Ceart?

Brian: Ceart!


FACLAN

ag éibheachd : shouting  balach : boy  deiseil : ready/right  cabhag (f.) : hurry
shìos : down  aodann : face  làmh(-an) (f.) : hand(s)  greas ort : hurry up (“on you”)
mu dheireadh : at last  mu dheireadh thall : at long last  a’ suidhe : sitting  bord : table
cidsin : kitchen  feuch : see/try  earbsa (f.) : confidence, trust  soitheach-sgudail : trash can
29 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

THE COPULA: THE “ASSERTIVE” VERB “TO BE”

THE PRESENT TENSE:

The Copula in the Present Tense:

Is: am, is, are

Is mise Seumas (I’m James). So mise = Seumas.

Cha: am not, is not, are not

Cha mhise lain (I’m not John)

An? Am?: am? is? are?

An tus a an duine? (Are you the man?)

Nach?: am not? is not? are not?

Nach ise an tè? (Isn’t she the one?)

...gur: that am, that is, that are

Tha e a’ cantainn gur tus a an duine (He says (that) you’re the man)

...nach: that am not, that is not, that are not

Tha e a’ cantainn nach ise an tè (He says (that) she’s not the one)

Idioms with the Copula and Prepositional Pronouns:

Note that “periphrasis” – a “roundabout” way of saying it – is put to use:

‘S toigh (toil) leam (literally, “is pleasing with me” ⇒ I like);

‘S toil leam Seumas (I like James)

Cuideachd, ‘s caomh leam; ‘s math leam – “I like” in some dialects

‘S fheàrr leam (literally, “is better with me” ⇒ I prefer)

‘S lugh’ orm (literally, “is least on me” ⇒ I detest)

‘S cóir dhomh (literally, “is right for me” ⇒ I should)

‘S urrainn dhomh (literally, “is possible for me” ⇒ I can)

‘S àsbaist dhomh (literally, “is custom for me” ⇒ I usually…)

Examples of Expressions:

‘S math sin! (“Good is that” ⇒ That’s good!)

‘S bocht sin! (“Poor is that” ⇒ That’s a pity!)

‘S math a rinn thu! (literally, “Is good that you did” ⇒ You did well!)

‘S math gu bheil sibh ann! (It’s good (that) you’re here (in it)!

‘S brèagh an là! (literally, “Beautiful is the day” ⇒ It’s a beautiful day!)
Is maraiche mi (I’m a sailor)

Now to consider the copula in an emphatic construction where the inflected preposition ann is put to use, together with a relative clause (introduced by relative pronoun a: who, that).

For example:

’S e maraiche a th’unnam (literally, “It’s a sailor that is in me” ⇔ I’m a sailor)

The Copula in the Present Tense with “it”:

’S e : It is
Chan e : It is not
An e? : Is it?
Nach e? : Isn’t it?
...gur e : ...that it is
...nach e : ...that it isn’t

“Yes” = ’S e; “No” = Chan e

Note: we may use seadh (’s eadh) as a positive response in agreement to what is being said.

Some typical examples of this construction:

’S e là brèagh a th’ ann! (literally, “It’s a beautiful day that is in it” ⇔ It’s a beautiful day!)
’S e spòrs a th’ ann! (It’s fun!)
’S e Dòmhnall an t-aimm a th’ orm (literally, “It’s Donald the name that’s on me” ⇔ My name is Donald).
Dé ’n t-aimm a th’ ort? (literally, “What is the name that’s on you?” ⇔ What’s your name?)

Note: immediately after ’S e, Chan e, etc., we must have a noun phrase – for example, là brèagh, spòrs, Dòmhnall an t-aimm – which requires the clause that completes the sentence.

But when a statement is contradicted, when an adjective, prepositional phrase or clause is stressed, note that it is ’s ann / b’ ann that are used instead of ’s e / b’ e. For example:

’S ann fuar a tha an là! (“It’s cold that the day is” ⇔ It’s a cold day!)
’S ann aig an taigh a tha e (“It’s at the house he is” ⇔ He’s at home!)
’S ann gu bheil mi sgith – chan ann nach eil mi airson a dhol ann! (“It’s that I’m tired, not that I’m not for going!” ⇔ It’s because I’m tired – not that I don’t want to go!).
THE PAST/CONDITIONAL TENSE OF THE COPULA

Here is the copula in the past tense:

Bu : was/would be
   Bu toil leam
   Bu chòir dhomh
Cha bu : was not/would not be
   Cha bu toil leam
   Cha bu chòir dhomh
Am bu? : was? would be?
   Am bu toil leat?
   Am bu chòir dhut?
Nach bu? : wasn’t? wouldn’t be?
   Nach bu toil leat?
   Nach bu chòir dhut?

Note that lenition occurs after bu except with consonants d, t, l, n, r; also, usually bu toil leam means “I would like” instead of “I liked”.

If this past tense copula form is combined, as shown above, with “it”, we have:

B’e : It was;
Cha b’e : It wasn’t;
Am b’e? : Was it?;
Nach b’e? : Wasn’t it?
...gura b’e : ...that it was
...nach b’e : ...that it wasn’t
“Yes” = B’e; “No” = Cha b’e

B’e Màiri a bh’ ann (It was Mary (that was in it)).

CLEACHDADH

’S e feasgar car ceòthach a bh’ ann nuair a dh’fhosgail mi dorus an taigh-òsda. Bha mo chàirdean ann mu thràth agus glainne aig gach duine.

Cailean : Sin thu, a Mhurchaidh! Mar a tha thu a’ faicinn, cha do dh’fhuirich sinn ort!
Dé bu toil leat?
Murchadh: Cha bu chòir dhomh òl idir an dràsda – ‘s e an co-là-breith aig mo mhàthair a th’ ann an diugh ‘s bidh mi a’ tadhail oirre an nochd.

Uilleam: An e prèasant dhi a th’ agad an sin ‘nàdmh?

Murchadh: ’S e. Smaoinich mi gura bu toil leatha an leabhar ùr le Peadar May.

Uilleam: Glè mhath! ’S toil leam’s e cuideachd.

Cailean: Och, a dhuine! Nach b’ fheàrr leatha flùraichean no stuth cùbhraidh?

Murchadh: Cha b’ fheàrr. Chan ann nach toil leatha na rudan sin ach tha fhios ’am gum bi i toilichte leis a’ leabhar seo. Co dhìübh, feumaidh mi falbh – bidh mi ‘gur facinn!

FACLAN

car : somewhat  ceòthach : foggy/misty  a’ fosgladh : opening  taigh-òsda : inn, tavern
rud (-an) : thing (s)  co dhùbh : anyway  mu thràth : already  glainne (f.) : a glass
mar : as/like  gach : each  a’ tadhail air : visiting (on)  an dràsda : (right) now
co-là-breith : birthday  flùr (-aichean) : flower (s) stuth cùbhraidh : “fragrant stuff”, perfume
idir : at all (negative intensive)  caraid : friend  càrdean : friends (in plural, “relatives”)

31 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

REGULAR VERBS : FUTURE TENSE

As always, we begin from the root of the verb:

a) Caidil! : Sleep!

Caidlidh mi : I will sleep
Cha chaidil mi : I won’t sleep
An caidil thu? : Will you sleep?
Nach caidil thu? : Won’t you sleep?
Tha e a’ cantainn gun caidil e : He says (that) he will sleep.
Tha e a’ cantainn nach caidil e : He says (that) he won’t sleep.
Có a chaideas? : Who will sleep?
Cuin’ a chaideas tu? : When will you sleep?
Càit’ an caidil mi? : Where will I sleep?
b) Dùisg! Wake!

*Dùisgidh mi*: I will wake

*Cha dùisg mi*: I won’t wake

*An dùisg thu?*: Will you wake?

*Nach dùisg thu?*: Won’t you wake?

*Tha e a’ cantainn gun dùisg e tràth am màireach*: He says he’ll wake early tomorrow

*Tha e a’ cantainn nach dùisg e tràth idir*: He says he won’t wake early at all

*Có a dhùisgeas?*: Who will wake?

*Cuin’ a dhùisgeas tu?*: When will you wake?

*Càit’ an dùisg thu?*: Where will you wake?

c) Éirich! : Rise! Get up!

*Éirichidh mi*: I will get up

*Chan éirich mi fhathast*: I won’t get up yet.

*An éirich thu, ’lain?*: Will you get up, Iain?

*Nach éirich thu, a Mhàiri?*: Won’t you get up, Mary?

*Tha e a’ cantainn gun éirich e ann a’ mionaid*: He says (that) he’ll get up in a minute.

*Tha e a’ cantainn nach éirich e an dràsda*: He says (that) he won’t get up just now.

*Có a dh’ éiricheas?*: Who will rise?

*Cuin’ a dh’ éiricheas tu?*: When will you get up?

*Càit’ an éirich thu am màireach?*: Where will you rise tomorrow?

*Carson nach éirich thu?*: Why won’t you get up?

d) Cuir! Put!

*Cuiridh mi orm m’ aodach*: I’ll put on (me) my clothes ➔ I’ll get dressed.

*Cha chuir mi orm m’ aodach fhathast*: I won’t get dressed yet.

*An cuir thu ort d’ aodach?*: Will you put on (you) your clothes? Will you get dressed?

*Nach cuir thu ort d’ aodach?*: Won’t you get dressed?

*Tha e ag ràdh gun cuir e air ’aodach*: He says he’ll get dressed.

*Tha i ag ràdh nach cuir i oirre a h-aodach an dràsda*: She says she won’t get dressed just now.

*Có a chuireas seo air?*: Who will put this on him? ➔ Who will wear this?

*Cuin’ a chuireas tu an dinnear air a’ bhòrd?*: When will you put (the) dinner on the table?

*Càit’ an cuir mi seo?*: Where will I put this?
e) Fàg! Leave!

Fàgaidh mi an taigh aig ochd uairean anns a’ mhadainn: I’ll leave the house at eight in the morning.

Chan fhàg mi Ceap Breatainn ri m’ bheò: I won’t leave Cape Breton as long as I live.

Am fàg thu sin? : Will you leave that?

Nach fhàg thu an taigh? : Won’t you leave the house?

Tha e a’ cantainn gum fàg e an dùthaich: He says (that) he will leave the country.

Tha e a’ cantainn nach fhàg e thu a chaoidh: He says (that) he will never leave you that he will not leave you ever

Có a dh’fhàgas...? : Who will leave...?

Cuin’ a dh’fhàgas tu? : When will you leave?

Càit’ am fàg mi seo? : Where will I leave this?

CLEACHDADH

“Caidlidh mi gu sunndach an nochd, a Mhàiri!” dh’ éibh Fionnlagh agus e a’ tighinn a-steach dhan taigh aca. “Ged a chuireas iad dheth feadhainn dhen luchd-obraich an ath sheachdain, cha bhi mise ’nam measg!”


Chum Fionnlagh air a’ bruidhinn.

“Gearraidh iad an dreuchd aig mo charaid, Iain. Fàgaidh e an dùthaich, bha e ag innse dhomh.”

“Cha chòrd sin ri Eilidh”. B’ e Eilidh bean lain.

“Och, chan eil fhios ’am – ma dh’fh’halbhas iad, ’s dòcha gum bi cothroman nas fheàrr aca”.

“Co dhìubh, a ghràidh, caidlidh sinne gu sunndach an nochd agus éirichidh sinn le ceum aotrom am màireach”.

FACLAN

gu sunndach : joyfully (English “soundly”) a’ tighinn : coming a-steach : inside
luchd-obraich : “work people”, staff gràdh : love a’ glaodhadh : crying out
dreuchd (f.): job, work position coire (f.): kettle a’ creidsinn : believing
feum : need, use srùbag (f.): “a cuppa” uair sam bith : (at) any time ceum : step
a’ gearradh : cutting bean (f.): woman, wife a’ còrdadh ri : agreeing with
’s dòcha : “is possible”, perhaps abair : say! (imperative of irregular verb ag ràdh)
cothrom (-an) : opportunity(-ies) aotrom : light (adj.)
32 SEALLAGAN — GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

THE CONDITIONAL TENSE: A) BASIC VERB “TO BE”; AND B) REGULAR VERBS

The conditional tense is unique in having a single word for the 1st Person:

a) Bhithinn : I would be
   Bhitheadh / bhiodh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : You, he, she, it, we, you (pl.), they would be.
   Bhitheamaid / bhiomaid : We would be
   Cha bhithinn : I wouldn’t be
   Cha bhitheadh/bhiodh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : You, he, she, it, we, you (pl.), they wouldn’t be
   Am bithinn? : Would I be?
   Am bitheadh/biodh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad? : Would you, he, she, it, we, you (pl.), they be?
   Nach bithinn? : Wouldn’t I be?
   Nach bitheadh/biodh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad? : Wouldn’t you, he, she, it, we, you (pl.), they be?
   ...gum bithinn : ...that I would be
   ...gum bitheadh/biodh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : ...that you, he, she, it, we, you (pl.), they would be
   ...nach bithinn : ...that I wouldn’t be
   ...nach bitheadh/biodh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : ...that you, he, she, it, we, you (pl.), they wouldn’t be
   Bhitheadh : Yes; Cha bhitheadh : No

b) We begin from the past tense form and add the endings:
   a’ tòiseachadh : beginning; tòisich! : begin! Thòisich mi : I began
   Thòisichinn : I would begin; thòisicheadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad (thòisicheamaid : we would begin)
   Cha tòisichinn : I wouldn’t begin; cha thòisicheadh tu, etc.
   An tòisichinn? : Would I begin?; an thòisicheadh tu, etc.?
   Nach tòisichinn? : Wouldn’t I begin?; nach thòisicheadh tu, etc.?
   ...gun tòisichinn : ...that I would begin; ...gun thòisicheadh tu, etc.
   ...nach tòisichinn : ...that I wouldn’t begin; ...nach thòisicheadh tu, etc.

Note: we saw how thu → tu before -s in the relative future; for example, Có a bhios tu a’ coinneachadh? This also occurs after -dh and -a (see Irregular Verbs).
Note: traditionally, the 1st person plural had a single form; today this is rarely used.

IF-CLauses

With the Conditional Tense:

Bhithinn sona ann a’ Toronto nan robh thusa cômhla rium (I would be happy in Toronto if you were along with me).

Cha bhithinn sona ann a’ Toronto, mur robh thusa cômhla rium (I wouldn’t be happy in Toronto if you were not along with me – or unless you were with me).

Nan tôisicheadh tu, cha bhiodh tu fada ris! (If you would begin, you wouldn’t be long at it!)

Mur itheadh tu, bhiodh an t-acras ort (If you wouldn’t eat, you’d be hungry).

With Other Tenses:

Our basic positive “if” with all tenses but the conditional is ma, sometimes called the consequential “if”; on the other hand, the negative “if” for ALL tenses is mur (this is often mura, usually when followed by a consonant):

Ma tha thu sgith, déan suidhe (If you are tired, “do sitting” → have a seat).

Ma bha e ann, chan fhaca mis’ e (If he was there, I didn’t see him).

Ma bhios side mhath ann, gabhaidh sinn cuairt (If there will be good weather, we’ll take a walk).

Mur eil thu a’ tighinn, théid mi ann leam fhin (If you’re not coming, I’ll go by myself).

Mur robh thu a’ dol ann, carson nach do dh’innis thu dhomh? (If you weren’t going, why didn’t you tell me?)

Mura bi là math ann, chan fhalbh sinn (If it won’t be a good day, we won’t go).

CLEACHDADH

Ròsg-ranntaichean – Sentences:

a) Bhithinn a’ tadhal air mo sheanair’s mo sheanmhair a h-uile samhradh nuair a bha mi òg (I would be visiting / used to visit my granny and grandfather every summer when I was young)

b) Tha mis’ ag innse dhut gum bithinn sona ann a’ Toronto (I’m telling you that I would be happy in Toronto)

c) Có a bhiodh sona a’ fuireachd a’ sin? (Who would be happy living there?).

d) Ach am bitheamaid sona? (But would we be happy?)

e) Dh’ innis i dhomh gum biodh e a’ tighinn dhachaidh am màireach (She told me (that) he would be coming home tomorrow)

f) Càit’ am biodh iad a’ fuireachd? (Where would they be living?)

g) Ciamar a bhiodh fios aigesan? (How would he know?)
h) **Am bitheadh clas ann do luchd-ionnsachaidh? Bhitheadh** (Would there be a class for learners? Yes)

**Còmhradh – Conversation:**

Ghabhainn cupa tí an dràsda nan robh ùine agam!
An gabhadh tu-fhéin srùbag? Ghabhadh, gu dearbh!
Ghabhadh e òran dhut nan iarradh tu air!

Càit’ an togadh tu an taigh? *(a’ togail : lifting / building / raising)*
Thogainn e a’ seo nan robh airgead gu leòr agam!
Nach togadh tu an leanabh ann a’ Ceap Breatainn? Thogadh! *(leanabh : child)*

Dé a dh’ ionnsaicheadh tu nan robh an cothrom agad?
Dh’ ionnsaichinn cainnt mo mhàthar *(cainnt (f.) : speech / language)*
Nach ionnsaicheadh tu Fraingis? Chan ionnsaicheadh!

Chan ithinn sin! Tha e ro mhilis.
Ach dh’ ithinn pios aran coirce, ma tha sin agad *(aran coirce : oatcake; literally, “bread-of oat”)*
Tha e a’ cantainn gun itheadh e gréim bidhe *(gréim bidhe : “a bit of food”, a snack)*

Choisicheadh e a h-uile là anns an t-samhradh
An coisicheadh tu cómhla rium? Choisicheadh
Choisichinn cómhla riut mur robh mi trang

Dh’fhàgadh e an taigh a h-uile madainn aig ochd uairean
Chan fhàgainn an t-àite seo – am fàgadh tu-fhèin e?
Tha e a’ cantainn nach fhàgadh esan an t-àite co dhiubh

Chan fhalbhainn às d’ aonais *(ás d’ aonais : “without you”)*
Tha e a’ cantainn gum falbhadh e air saor-làithean mur robh cus aige ri dhèanamh *(cus : “too much”)*
33 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

RETURNING TO THE DEFINITE ARTICLE AND TO THE NOUNS

As noted earlier, Gaelic nouns are divided into Masculine (m.) and Feminine (f.) – see preface to Module One of Gàidhlig troimh Chòmhradh for nouns most likely to be masculine or feminine. As you learn new vocabulary, you MUST learn which is which since they behave according to their own conventions. We will begin with the men’s names we had earlier. These are, as you might expect, masculine nouns. And we now are moving to examine sentence structure – Na bithibh fo chùram! (Don’t be dismayed!). ’S e spòrs a th’ ann! (It’s fun!) The traditional terms (based on Latin usage) are on the right in parenthesis. The corresponding, more modern grammatical term is to the left:

A’ CHIAD CHLÀR FIREANNTA : The First Declension Masculine

Ainmearan Fireannta : Ainmean Fhireannach – Masculine Nouns: Men’s Names:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Dhùisg Seumas</th>
<th>Jim woke</th>
<th>(Nominative Case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>Dhùisg Iain Seumas</td>
<td>Iain woke Jim</td>
<td>(Accusative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>Dùisg, a Sheumais!</td>
<td>Wake (up), Jim!</td>
<td>(Vocative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>Bha an cadal air Seumas fhathast</td>
<td>Jim was still sleepy</td>
<td>(Dative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Literally, “the sleep was on Jim yet/still”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>Dhùisg bràthair Sheumais e</td>
<td>Jim’s brother woke him</td>
<td>(Genitive Case)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice how Gaelic uses the Slenderization (Palatalization) Principle – shown in spelling by the addition of “i” after the last broad vowel – to differentiate structural differences in the noun, together with the use of lenition.

Now replace “Seumas” with the appropriate forms of Brian, Calum, Fionnlagh, Murchadh, Pàdraig (Pàdruig), Tormod.

Remember what you learned in Seallagan 9? i) Coinneach : ea ➔ i before -ch; ii) Cailean, Ailean, Uilleam : ea ➔ ei before -n or -m where in the names above, i is inserted after the last broad vowel in the Address form (Vocative) and Possessive (Genitive), unless it is there already, as in Pàdraig, Iain, etc.
CONTINUING WITH THE 1st DECLENSION MASCULINE + THE ARTICLE

Common Masculine (m.) Nouns, one or two syllables, broad vowels: simple addition of i after last broad vowel as seen in pattern below:

aran, aodach, aodann, bàrd, blàths, balach, bodach, bradan, cadal, caolas, cat, cladach, cosnadh, dòchas, dorus, eagal, earrach, eòlas, facal, feadan, feasgar, foghar, fraoch, Gàidheal, geamhradh, giomach, gràdh, laogh, laochan, leasan, mac, maol, mullach, òran, rionnach, samhradh, saoghail, seanchas, siùcar, solus, torman

Note: no nouns ending in a vowel belong in this group! Some three-syllable, broad-vowel nouns belong here; for example, boireannach, oileanach, adhartas.

We will sample these together with the Article (see nouns WITHOUT the article, plus adjectives, in Seallagan 35; indefinite nouns occur less often in Gaelic). Although most of the vocatives (address forms) will seldom be used, except possibly by a bard, they are included for completeness.

a) Vowel-initial Nouns:

Notice how, and where, t- and h- are put to use; the insertion of i takes place where expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
<th>(Nominative Case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>&quot;Ghabh sinn an t-òran&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Ghabh sinn na h-òrain&quot;</td>
<td>(Accusative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address Form</td>
<td>&quot;Òrain!&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Òrana(ibh)!&quot;</td>
<td>(Vocative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>&quot;Dh'éisd iad ris an òran&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Dh'éisd iad ris na h-òrain&quot;</td>
<td>(Dative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>&quot;'S toil leam faclan an òran&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;'S toil leam faclan nan òran&quot;</td>
<td>(Genitive Case)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) **Nouns beginning with b, c, g, m, p:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td>Dhùisg am balach lain</td>
<td>Dhùisg na balaich lain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECT OBJECT</strong></td>
<td>Dhùisg lain am balach</td>
<td>Dhùisg lain na balaich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDRESS FORM</strong></td>
<td>Dùisg, a bhalach!</td>
<td>Dùisgibh, a bhalacha(ibh)!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</strong></td>
<td>Bha an cadal air a’ bhalach</td>
<td>Bha an cadal air na balaich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSSESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>Dhùisg màthair a’ bhalach e</td>
<td>Dhùisg màthair nam balach iad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) **Nouns beginning with d, t:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td>Dhùin an dorus</td>
<td>Dhùin na dorus (dorsan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECT OBJECT</strong></td>
<td>Dhùin lain an dorus</td>
<td>Dhùin lain na dorus (dorsan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDRESS FORM</strong></td>
<td>Dùin, a dhorus!</td>
<td>Dùinibh, a dhorusa(ibh)! (a dhorsan!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</strong></td>
<td>Bha lain aig an *dorus</td>
<td>Bha lain aig na dorus (dorsan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSSESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>Càit’ a bheil iuchair an dorus?</td>
<td>Càit’ a bheil iuchraichean nan dorsan?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There is no lenition of d and t in the singular prepositional phrase and genitive forms.*
### d) Nouns beginning with f + vowel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Bha am feadan air a’ bhòrd</th>
<th>Bha na feadain air a’ bhòrd</th>
<th>(Nominative Case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Thog am balach am feadan</td>
<td>Thog na balaich na feadain</td>
<td>(Accusative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address Form</td>
<td>‘Fheadain!</td>
<td>Fheadana(ibh)!</td>
<td>(Vocative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>Chluich am balach port air an fheadan</td>
<td>Chluich na balaich port air na feadain</td>
<td>(Dative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>‘S toil leam faim an fheadain!</td>
<td>‘S toil leam faim nam feadain</td>
<td>(Genitive Case)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### e) Nouns beginning with s + vowel, sl, sn, sr:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Tha an solus air</th>
<th>Bha na soluis air</th>
<th>(Nominative Case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Chunnaic mi an solus</td>
<td>Chunnaic mi na soluis</td>
<td>(Accusative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address Form</td>
<td>A sholuis!</td>
<td>A sholusa(ibh)!</td>
<td>(Vocative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>Anns an t-solus,...</td>
<td>Leis na soluis,...</td>
<td>(Dative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>blàths an t-soluis</td>
<td>blàths nan solus</td>
<td>(Genitive Case)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### f) Nouns beginning with l, n, r:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Tha an laogh mireagach</th>
<th>Tha na laoigh mireagach</th>
<th>(Nominative Case)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Chuir lain an laogh a-mach</td>
<td>Chuir lain na laoigh a-mach</td>
<td>(Accusative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address Form</td>
<td>A laoigh!</td>
<td>A laoigha(ibh)!</td>
<td>(Vocative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>Thug lain biadh dh an laogh</td>
<td>Thug lain biadh dha na laoigh</td>
<td>(Dative Case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>Thug màthair an laoigh deoch dha</td>
<td>Thug màthair nan laoigh deoch dhaibh</td>
<td>(Genitive Case)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Masculine Nouns with two or more syllables belonging to this declension when having *ea* in the last syllable:

*aoidheas, càirdeas, fídhealr, inneal, gàirdean, ministear*. As you might expect, *ea* ➞ *ei* in the **possessive** (genitive); and except for *aoidheas*, and *càirdeas*, these other nouns have plural endings in -*an*: *fídhealan, gàirdeanan, innealan, ministearan*. Note the **exception** : *airgead*, where *ea* ➞ *i* (compare these to the men’s names above).

**Note**: with the noun *mac*, *a* ➞ *i*. Since this is a word that is often used, it might be instructive to see its declension in brief:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>am mac</td>
<td>na mic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ADDRESS FORM     | a mhic!           | a mhaic(ih)!
| PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object) | aig a’ mhic | aig na mic |
| POSSESSIVE       | taigh a’ mhic    | taigh nam mac |

**35 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**THE FIRST DECLENSION MASCULINE WITH DEFINITE ARTICLE, CONTINUED**

With a 1st declension, masculine noun with a definite article, vowel changes may occur also:

a) ă to û:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>am bòrd : the table</td>
<td>na bùird : the tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>A bhùird! : O table!</td>
<td>A bhòrda(ih)! : O tables!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig a’ bòrd : at the table</td>
<td>aig na bùird : at the tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>ceann a’ bhùird : the head of the table</td>
<td>meud nam bòrd : the size of the tables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar words include: **òrd** (hammer); **cnoc** (hill); **fonn** (tune); **tonn** (wave); **sonn** (hero).
### b) ea to i:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td>an ceann</td>
<td>na cinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECT OBJECT</strong></td>
<td>an ceann</td>
<td>na cinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDRESS FORM</strong></td>
<td>A chinn!</td>
<td>O head!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</strong></td>
<td>aig a’ cheann</td>
<td>at the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSSESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>meud a’ chinn</td>
<td>the size of the head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar words include: gleann (glen); fear (man).

### c) eò to iù:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td>an seòl</td>
<td>na siùil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECT OBJECT</strong></td>
<td>an seòl</td>
<td>na siùil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDRESS FORM</strong></td>
<td>A shiùil!</td>
<td>O sail!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</strong></td>
<td>aig an t-seòl</td>
<td>at the sail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSSESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>meud an t-siùil</td>
<td>the size of the sail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### d) eu to eò:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td>an sgeul</td>
<td>na sgeòil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECT OBJECT</strong></td>
<td>an sgeul</td>
<td>na sgeòil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDRESS FORM</strong></td>
<td>A sgeòil!</td>
<td>O story!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</strong></td>
<td>aig an sgeul</td>
<td>at the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSSESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>feadh an sgeòil</td>
<td>the length of the story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: sg does not lenite.
Similar words include beul : mouth; neul : cloud

e) ia to éi :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>am fiadh</td>
<td>the deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na féidh</td>
<td>the deer (pl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT OBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>am fiadh</td>
<td>the deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na féidh</td>
<td>the deer (pl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS FORM</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘fhéidh!</td>
<td>O deer!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘hiadha(íbh)!</td>
<td>O deer! (pl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig an fhíadh</td>
<td>at the deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aig na féidh</td>
<td>at the deer (pl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSSESSIVE</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meud an fhéidh</td>
<td>the size of the deer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meud nam fiadh</td>
<td>the size of the deer (pl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE FIRST DECLENSION MASCLLINE WITH ADJECTIVES**

a) Without the Definite Article :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bàrd mór</td>
<td>a great poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bàrd mhóra</td>
<td>great poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT OBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bàrd mór</td>
<td>a great poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bàrd mhóra</td>
<td>great poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS FORM</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig bàrd mór</td>
<td>at a great poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aig bàrd mhóra</td>
<td>at great poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSSESSIVE</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bàrd mhóir</td>
<td>a great poet’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bhàrd móra</td>
<td>great poets’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) With the Definite Article :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>am bàrd mór</td>
<td>the great poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bàrd mhóra</td>
<td>the great poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT OBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>am bàrd mór</td>
<td>the great poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bàrd mhóra</td>
<td>the great poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS FORM</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Bhàird Mhóir!</td>
<td>O great poet!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Bhàrd(íbh) M(h)óra!</td>
<td>O great poets!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig a’ bhàrd mhór</td>
<td>at the great poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aig na bàrd mhóra</td>
<td>at the great poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSSESSIVE</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mac a’ bhàrd mhór</td>
<td>the son of the great poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mic nam bàrd móra</td>
<td>the sons of the great poets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Think again of the meaning of the verbal nouns; for example, a’ togail (at lifting (of)). If you put a noun after it, it must go into the possessive (genitive) case, as in a’ togail a’ chinn.

Here are a few more: a’ cluinntinn a’ bhàird, ag innse an sgeòil, a’ marbhadh an fhéidh, and so on.

It should be noted that traditionally, when an indefinite noun followed a verbal noun, that noun would be put in the genitive case; today, especially in Scotland, that is no longer done except perhaps in formal writing.

Also note: most often, the adjective follows the noun. BUT with droch (bad); deagh (good); sean (old); this can also occur in words like mór-chuid (great portion, majority). You may have noticed that in the example of seann daoine, when a word ends in -n and the following word begins with d- or t-, these last two consonants will not lenite. Think of the song “Horo, mo nighean donn bhòidheadch”.

This last example brings to mind another grammatical condition in Gaelic. When two or more nouns follow each other in a series, usually only the last one may be in the genitive case; for example, meud mac Sheumais (the size of James’s son); bòidhchead Gleann Bharraigh (the beauty of Barra Glen). However, depending on the meaning, both the second and third nouns may be in the possessive (genitive) case; for example, bàrdachd cogaidh Dhòmhnaill (Donald’s war poetry, or literally, “the poetry of war of Donald”).

CLEACHDADH

Bha mac Sheumais a’ teagasg aig Sgoil a’ Chnuic a bha suidhichte air barr a’ rataidh pios a-mach às a’ bhaile. ‘S e Coinneach an t-aínm a bh’ air; bha e ‘na dhuine àrd, tapaidh agus chòrd e rìs a bhith ‘na thidsear, gu h-àraidh gura b’ iad luchd-ionnsachaidh òg a bh’ aige, a bha èasgaidh agus measail air ionnsachadh. Dh’fhosgail e dorus an t-seòmair agus chuir e leábhar nan sgeul a bh’ aige air an deasg : an duigh, bhiodh e a’ cur an aithne nan sgoilearan eachdraidh nan Gàidheal, páirt dhèn eachdraidh aca fhéin; agus bhiodh iad a’ leughadh Sgeul Aonghais, a ruith air falbh gu muir às an Eilean Sgitheanach nuair a bha e ‘na ghille òg agus a bha, mu dheireadh, ‘na bhàrd do Chomann Gàidhlig Sealan Nuaidhe. “Bhid na cuairtean siubhal aig Aonghas inntinneach dha na sgoilearan agam”, smaoinich Coinneach ris fhéin.

FACLAN

a’ teagasg : teaching  cnoc : hill (possessive. cnuic)  rathad : road  comann : society, club
muir : sea  An t-Eilean Sgitheanach : the Isle of Skye  a’ leughadh : reading
eachdraidh (f.) : history, tradition, story  àrd : high, tall  eàsagaidh : willing, nimble, active
tapaidh : smart/manly  seòmar : room  measail air : fond of, keen on  barr: top, summit
cuairt (f.) : circuit, excursion  luchd-ionnsachaidh : learners  a’ siubhal : travelling
gu h-àraidh : especially  Sealan Nuadh (f.) : New Zealand  inntinneach : interesting
cuairt siubhail : adventure  aithne (f.) : knowledge/ acquaintance
suidhichte: situated (past participle of a’ suidheadach)  pios : “a piece”, a short distance
### The First Declension Feminine

a) Here is an example of a 1st declension, feminine (f.) noun without the definite article:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>beinn</td>
<td>beanntan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>beinn</td>
<td>beanntan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig beinn</td>
<td>aig beanntan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>meud beinne</td>
<td>meud bheanntan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Singilte/Singular: a mountain
Iolra/Plural: mountains

b) Here is an example of a 1st declension, feminine noun with the definite article:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>a’ bheinn</td>
<td>na beanntan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>a’ bheinn</td>
<td>na beanntan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>A bheinn!</td>
<td>A bheanntan!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig a’ bheinn</td>
<td>aig na beanntan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>meud na beinne</td>
<td>meud nam beann(tan)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Singilte/Singular: the mountain
Iolra/Plural: the mountains
**THE FIRST DECLENSION FEMININE WITH ADJECTIVES**

a) Here is an example of a 1\textsuperscript{st} declension, indefinite feminine noun with an adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beinn mhór</td>
<td>beanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a big/great mountain</td>
<td>big mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECT OBJECT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beinn mhór</td>
<td>beanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a big mountain</td>
<td>big mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDRESS FORM</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</strong> (Indirect Object)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aig beinn mhór</td>
<td>aig beanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at a big mountain</td>
<td>at big mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSSESSIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meud beinne móire</td>
<td>meud bheanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the size of a mountain</td>
<td>the size of mountains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Here is an example of a 1\textsuperscript{st} declension, definite feminine noun with an adjective:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBJECT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ bheinn mhór</td>
<td>na beanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the big mountain</td>
<td>the big mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIRECT OBJECT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ bheinn mhór</td>
<td>na beanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the big mountain</td>
<td>the big mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDRESS FORM</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bheinn mhór!</td>
<td>A bheanntan móra!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O big mountain!</td>
<td>O big mountains!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE</strong> (Indirect Object)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aig a’ bheinn mhór</td>
<td>aig na beanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the big mountain</td>
<td>at the big mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POSSESSIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meud na beinne móire</td>
<td>meud nam beanntan móra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the size of the mountain</td>
<td>the size of the big mountains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice how the article changes not just between singular and plural, but within each one; so it is na that we use in the genitive singular, but that’s what we also use in the nominative plural. In the plural, the article changes from na to nam in the genitive plural. Also, the article in the plural cases coincides with its use in the masculine plural cases.

**Notice too that the adjective agrees with the noun in the feminine dative case singular.**

Other feminine nouns in this declension:

- làmh – pl. làmhan (hand);
- gluin – pl. glùinteann (knee);
- rann – pl. rannan or ranntaichean (verse);
- bròg – pl. brògan (shoe).

Words with vowel sound change:

- cas/cois/coise/casan;
- fras/frois/froise/frasan;
- clann/cloinn/cloinne;
- grian/gréin/gréine;
- crioch/crich/crique/crìochan;
- creag/creig/creige/creagan;
- caileag/caileig/caileig(e)/caileagan
Note: see how i figures in the dative case in this declension:

’nam làimh (in my hand); air a’ ghluin (on the knee); anns a’ bhróig (in the shoe); air chois (on foot); fo’n ghréin (under the sun); aig a’ chaileig (at the girl)

The feminine dative case has all but disappeared in Scottish Gaelic usage – except for fixed phrases (’nam làimh, air chois); however, it is still found in Nova Scotia where the more traditional forms are often preferred.

Also note: the word abhainn (river) loses a syllable in the genitive case before adding the ending: aibhne, (pl.) aibhnichean.

CLEACHDADH

Seònaid: Dé fo’n ghréin a th’ agad a’ sin, a Chaluim?
Calum: Chan eil ann ach seann fhidheall a lorg mi air a’ lobhtaidh (Shuidh Calum sios, chuir e an fhidheall air a ghlùin, agus shuath e a mheuran air teudan na fídhe).  
Seònaid: Có anns an teaghlach a bhiodh a’ seinn na fídhe, a Chaluim?
Calum: Mo sheanair – am fear a chaill a bheatha aig àm a’ Chogaidh Mhóir.
Seònaid: Bhiodh mo sheanair-sa a’ seinn na pioba anns a’ réisimeid aige – Na Siophortaich.
Calum: Am bitheadh? Bha mis’ airson a bhith ‘nam phìobair ach cha robh an cothrom agam.
Seònaid: Carson nach ionnsaich thu fidhlearachd air an fhidhill a lorg thu? (Las a shùilean).
Calum: A bheil thu a’ smaoineachadh…?
Seònaid: Tha gu dearbh, a Chaluim! Siuthad thusa – tha earbs’ agam ásad.

FACLANN

fidheall (f.) : fiddle air an fhidhill : on the fiddle ceòl na fìdhle : the music of the fiddle
a’ call : losing teud (-an) : string (s) a’ lorg : finding/ discovering àm : time
beatha (f.) : life a’ suathadh : touching/ rubbing siuthad! : go on! cogadh : war
Na Siophortaich : The Seaforth Highlanders lobht(aidh) : loft cothrom : opportunity
a’ lasadh : lighting (up)/ kindling
37 **Seallagan – Grammar at a Glance**

**The “Small” Declensions**

The definite article continues to follow the rules that belong to the two main declensions.

a) Family names lose i in the genitive singular; here’s an example without a definite article:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT/DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>màthair</td>
<td>màthraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig màthair</td>
<td>aig màthraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>mac màthar</td>
<td>mic màthraichean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) With the definite article:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT/DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>a’ màthair</td>
<td>na màthraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>a màthair!</td>
<td>a màthraichean!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig a’ màthair</td>
<td>aig na màthraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>mac na màthar</td>
<td>mic nam màthraichean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) With the definite article:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT/DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>piuthar</td>
<td>peathraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig piuthair</td>
<td>aig peathraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>mac peathar</td>
<td>mic peathraichean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the definite article:

The words athair, bràthair, seanair, seanmhair behave similarly, but piuthar is irregular.

With no definite article, we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT/DIRECT OBJECT</td>
<td>piuthar</td>
<td>peathraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig piuthair</td>
<td>aig peathraichean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>mac peathar</td>
<td>mic peathraichean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the definite article:
d) Nouns, masculine or feminine, with genitive singular ending in -a behave a bit strangely; some of those nouns lose a syllable before the ending is added and others change the vowel:

loch (m.) : meud an locha (the size of the loch)

dùthaich (f.) : a’ moladh na dùthcha (praising the country)

feòil (f.) : blas na feòla (the taste of the meat)

ful (f.) : dath na fala (the colour of the blood)

sùil (f.) : solus na sùla (the light of the eye)

druim (m.) : neart an droma (the strength of the back)

Samhainn (f.) : Oidhche na Samhna (Halloween night)

mil (f.) : blas na meala (the taste of honey)

e) Possessive (genitive) singular ending in -(e)ach:

Nouns ending in -r : litir (f.) : naidheachd na litreach (the news of the letter); obair (f.) : dith obrach (lack of work); suipear (f.), dinnear (f.) : àm na suipearach / na dinnearach (the time of the supper / dinner ⇒ supper time / dinner time); caora (f.) : cloimh na caorach (the sheep’s wool – see Dwelly’s Dictionary for the full declension).

Nouns ending in -l : anail (f.) becomes analach

Note : today you will also hear àm na dinneir / suipeir.
f) Irregular nouns:

piuthar (f.) (sister – see above)

bean (f.) (woman, wife):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/Direct Object</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a' bhean</td>
<td>the woman</td>
<td>na mnathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>a bhean!</td>
<td>O woman/wife!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>aig a' mhnaoí</td>
<td>aig na mnathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Indirect Object)</td>
<td>at the woman</td>
<td>at the women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>mac na mnà</td>
<td>mic nam mnathan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

muir (m./f.) (sea):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/Direct Object</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>am muir (a' mhuir)</td>
<td>the sea</td>
<td>na marannan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>a mhuir!</td>
<td>A mharannan!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>aig a' mhuir</td>
<td>aig na marannan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Indirect Object)</td>
<td>at the sea</td>
<td>at the seas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>sealladh na mara</td>
<td>cunnart nam marannan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

bó (f.) (cow):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject/Direct Object</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a' bhó</td>
<td>the cow</td>
<td>na bà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>a bhó!</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>aig a' bhó(bhoin)</td>
<td>aig na bà</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Indirect Object)</td>
<td>at the cow</td>
<td>at the cows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>ainm na bà</td>
<td>àireamh nam bó</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the number of the cows
cù (m.) (dog) :

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT/DIRECT OBJECT</th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an cù</td>
<td>the dog</td>
<td>na coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS FORM</td>
<td>a choin!</td>
<td>O dog!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (Indirect Object)</td>
<td>aig a’ chù</td>
<td>at the dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSSESSIVE</td>
<td>aïnm a’ choin</td>
<td>the dog’s name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alba (f.) : Scotland :

In Scotland itself ➞ ann an Alba, Gàidhlig na h-Alba
In Nova Scotia – and traditionally ➞ ann an Albainn, Gàidhlig na h-Albann.
Compare with Éire (f.) : Ireland; ➞ ann an Éirinn, Gàidhlig na h-Éireann. Scotland tends to use Éirinn for the subject form.
ADDENDUM TO THE POSSESSIVE (GENITIVE) CASE

Complex prepositions like the following examples take the possessive (genitive) case in Gaelic:

Ás déidh, ás deoghaidh (after):
  ás déidh Sheumais; ás déidh an t-samhraidh; ás déidh na màthar
Ás aonais (without):
  ás aonais Dhòmhnaill; ás aonais nan companach; ás aonais a’ bhalaise
Air feedh (throughout):
  air feedh an t-saoghail; air feedh na beinne; air feedh na dùthchaidh
Air beulaibh (in front (of)):
  air beulaibh an taighe; air beulaibh m’ athar
Air cúlaibh (behind):
  air cúlaibh an t-sabhail; air cúlaibh na creige
Air son (for the sake (of)):
  airson a’ ghille; airson na caileige; airson mo pheathar
Am measg (among, in the midst (of)):
  am measg dhaoine; am measg an t-sluaigh
A dh’ionnsaidh (towards):
  a dh’ ionnsaidh na mara; a dh’ ionnsaidh a’ rathaid mhóir
A-réir (according to):
  a-réir Chaluim; a-réir choltais; a-réir mo sheanar
A thaobh (concerning):
  a thaobh a’ chûrsa; a thaobh na Gàidhlig; a thaobh do bhràthar
Ri taobh (beside):
  ri taobh a’ ghàraidh; ri taobh a’ chladaich; ri taobh na h-aibhne
Mu dhéidhinn, mu dheoghaonn (about, on the subject (of)):
  mu dhéidhinn a’ bhalaise
Mu choinneimh (opposite):
  mu choinneimh a’ bhùird; mu choinneimh an doruis
O chionn, bho chionn (since):
  bho chionn bhliadhnaichean; bho chionn greiseig
Thar (across):
  thar a’ chuain
Note: in English, we would say “after me”, “after you”, etc. In Gaelic, we must resort to a possessive adjective phrase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST PERSON</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ás mo dhéidh</td>
<td>after me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ás ar dhéidh</td>
<td>after us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECOND PERSON</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ás do dhéidh</td>
<td>after you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ás ur dhéidh</td>
<td>after you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIRD PERSON (M.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ás a dhéidh</td>
<td>after him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ás an dhéidh</td>
<td>after them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIRD PERSON (F.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ás a dhéidh</td>
<td>after her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice how the rules of the possessive adjective are obeyed.

Here’s another example that only works in the plural:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST PERSON</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>‘nar measg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>in our midst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECOND PERSON</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>‘nur measg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>in your (pl.) midst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIRD PERSON (M.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>‘nam measg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>in their midst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THIRD PERSON (F.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>‘nam measg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLEACHDADH

a) Ruith lain gu luath ás déidh a bhràthar.
b) Cha robh a bhcean airson dol air a’ bhàta idir (bàta : boat).
c) Bha Eilidh bheag ’na suidhe air glùin a h-athar ag éisdeachd ri Sgeul a’ Choin Ghlice.
d) Chan eil mi airson dol ann ás d’ aonais!
e) Bhiodh m’ athair a’ bleoghann na bà gach madainn (a’ bleoghann : milking).
f) An e Gàidhlig na h-Albann a tha thu ag ionnsachadh?
g) Bhruaidhinn mi ris an tidsear a thaobh adhartas mo mhic (adhartas : progress).
h) Tha an taigh-shamhraidh agam ri taobh na mara.
i) Có bha aig coinneimh nam mnathan an raor? (coinneamh (f.) : meeting)
j) ’S e Loch Nis ainm an locha sin.
IRREGULAR VERBS: THE PAST TENSE

Apart from the basic verb “to be” and the copula (assertive verb “to be”), we have only TEN irregular verbs in Gaelic: a’ dol (going); a’ tighinn (coming); a’ ruigsinn (reaching, arriving at); a’ cluinntinn (hearing); ag ràdh (saying); a’ dèanamh (doing, making); a’ faicinn (seeing); a’ faighinn (finding, receiving, getting); a’ breith (bearing – a child), and using air – a’ breith air (catching); a’ toirt (giving, taking, bringing). This last verb is a transactional verb; you will recognize the meaning from the preposition – do, bho, le – that accompanies it. As one would expect, these are all frequently-used verbs.

a) Verbal Noun: a’ dol   Root: rach! (in Lewis dialects: theirig)

Chaidh mi dhachaidh: I went home
Cha deach mi ann: I didn’t go (in it – there)
An deach thu dhan choinneimh?: Did you go to the meeting?
Nach deach thu começla rithe?: Didn’t you go with her?
Chaidh: Yes; Cha deach: No
Tha e a’ cantainn gun deach e ann: He says (that) he went.
Tha e a’ cantainn nach deach e ann: He says (that) he didn’t go.

b) Verbal Noun: a’ tighinn   Root: thig!

Thàinig mi dhachaidh: I came home
Cha d’ thàinig iad dhan choinneimh: They didn’t come to the meeting
An d’ thàinig i dhachaidh an raoir?: Did she come home last night?
Nach d’ thàinig am bus?: Didn’t the bus come?
Thàinig: Yes; Cha d’ thàinig: No
Tha e ag ràdh gun d’ thàinig am bus: He says (that) the bus came.
Tha e ag ràdh nach d’ thàinig am bus: He says (that) the bus didn’t come.

c) Verbal Noun: a’ ruigsinn   Root: ruig!

Ràinig mi an taigh: I reached / arrived at the house.
Cha d’ ràinig mi gu deich uairean: I didn’t arrive until 10 o’clock.
An d’ ràinig e fhathast?: Did he arrive yet?
Nach d’ ràinig iad an taigh?: Didn’t they reach the house?
Ràinig: Yes; Cha d’ ràinig: No
Bha Iain ag ràdh gun d’ ràinig Màiri an taigh anmoch an raoir: Iain was saying that Màiri reached the house (arrived home) late last night.
Nach robh lain ag ràdh nach d’ ràinig Màiri an taigh fhathast?: Wasn’t lain saying that Màiri didn’t reach the house (arrive home) yet?

d) Verbal Noun: a’ cluinntinn  Root: cluinn!

Chuala mi an naidheachd: I heard the news (story).
Cha chuala mi guth: I didn’t hear a word (literally, “a voice”)
An cuala tu có bh’ ann?: Did you hear who was there? (in it)

Nach cuala sibh gu robh Màiri a’ tighinn dhachaidh?: Didn’t you hear that Màiri was coming home?

Chuala: Yes; Cha chuala: No

Bha lain ag ràdh gun c’al e an naidheachd mu thràth: lain was saying (that) he heard the news already / earlier.

Có bha ag ràdh nach c’al lain an naidheachd?: Who was saying (that) lain didn’t hear the news?

Note: after the final -a, tu.

e) Verbal Noun: ag ràdh  Root: abair!

Thuirt mi nach do chaidil mi glé mhath: I said (that) I didn’t sleep very well.
Cha d’ thuirt mi facal: I didn’t say a word.
An d’ thuirt e sin?: Did he say that?

Nach d’ thuirt am ministear sin?: Didn’t the minister say that?

Thuirt: Yes; Cha d’ thuirt: No

Dh’ innis Màiri dhomh gun d’ thuirt lain sin: Màiri told me that lain said that.

Tha mis’ ag innse dhut nach d’ thuirt lain sion: I’m telling you that lain didn’t say anything.

f) Verbal Noun: a’ dèanamh  Root: dèan!

Rinn mi m’ obair: I did my work.
Cha d’ rinn mi sion: I didn’t do anything.
An d’ rinn thu sin?: Did you do that?

Nach d’ rinn thu d’ obair?: Didn’t you do your work?

Rinn: Yes; Cha d’ rinn: No

Tha e a’ cantainn gun d’ rinn e ‘obair: He says (that) he did his work.

Tha i a’ cantainn nach d’ rinn i sion: She says (that) she didn’t do anything.

g) Verbal Noun: a’ faicinn  Root: faic!

Chunnaic mi e an dé: I saw him yesterday.

Chan fhaca mi e idir: I didn’t see him at all.
Am faca tu e fhathast? : Did you see him yet?
Nach fhaca tu an dotair? : Didn’t you see the doctor?
Chunnai : Yes / Chan fhaca : No
Tha e ag ràdh gum fac’ e Màiri an raoir : He says (that) he saw Màiri last night.
Tha lain ag ràdh nach fhac’ e Màiri idir : Iain says (that) he didn’t see Màiri at all.

h) Verbal Noun : a’ faighinn Root : faigh!
Fhuair mi an naidheachd : I received / got the news
Cha d’ fhuair mi an litir : I didn’t get the letter.
An d’ fhuair thu litir bho do mhàthair? : Did you get a letter from your mother?
Nach d’ fhuair thu an litir? : Didn’t you get the letter?
Fhuair : Yes; Cha d’ fhuair : No
Tha m’ athair a’ cantainn gun d’ fhuair e an naidheachd : My father says he got the news.
Tha mo mhàthair a’ cantainn nach d’ fhuair i fios : My mother says she didn’t get knowledge / word.
Remember fhathast and fhéin – where fh is pronounced h? Fhuair is the third word where this occurs.

i) Verbal Noun : a’ breith Root : beir!
Rug i leanabh : She bore a child.
Cha d’ rug i an leanabh fhathast : She didn’t bear the child yet → She didn’t have the baby yet.
An d’ rug thu air a’ bhàla? : Did you catch the ball?
Nach d’ rug thu air a’ bhàla? Didn’t you catch the ball?
Rug : Yes; Cha d’ rug : No
Tha e a’ cantainn gun d’ rug e oirre : He says he caught (up with) her.
Tha e a’ cantainn nach d’ rug e orra : He says he didn’t catch (up with ) them.

j) Verbal Noun : a’ toirt Root : thoir!
Thug mi dhut e : I gave it to you; Thug mi bhuat e : I took it from you;
Thug mi leam e : I took/ brought it/him with me.
Cha d’ thug mi dhut e : I didn’t give it to you.
An d’ thug mi dhut e? : Did I give it to you?
Nach d’ thug mi dhut e? : Didn’t I give it to you?
Thug : Yes; Cha d’ thug : No
Tha mi ag innse dhut gun d’ thug mi dhut e : I’m telling you (that) I gave it to you.
Tha e a’ cantainn nach d’ thug e dhuite : He says (that) he didn’t give it to you.

CLEACHDADH – CÒMHRADH :

Thàinig Mòrag a-staigh air an dorus agus chunnaic i Anna a’ nigheadaireachd.
“Tha thu trang an diugh!” thuirt i. “Tha là breagh ann – bidh an t-aodach tioram ann an ùine ghoirid!”
Chuir Anna a’ choire air agus thug i briosgaidean a-mach às a’ phreas. Fhuair i bainne agus siùcar agus chuir i air a’ bhòrd iad. Thòisich a’ choire a’ feadalaich agus dhòirt Anna an t-usge anns a’ phoit.
“Chan ith mi sion leis an tì,” thuirt Mòrag. “Tha mi ag ithe cus rudan milis.”
Cha robh e fada gus an robh an dithis ‘nan suidhe ag òl tì.
“Dè a’s ür? An cuala tu naidheachd sam bith?” dh’fhaighnich Anna.
“Chuala mi gun do chaill Murchadh an obair aige – bidh esan a’ dol a-mach ‘west’ mar a chaidh iomadh duin’ eile”.
“ ’S bochd sin!” fhreagair Anna. “Nach math gu bheil an duine agad fhéin ag obair a h-uile là!”
“ ’S math!”

CEISDEAN

Có thàinig a-staigh?
Có bha anns an taigh?
Dè bha i a’ déanamh?
An robh i trang?
Dè’n seòrsa là a bh’ann?
Dè thuirt Anna?
Dè rinn Anna?
Dè thuirt Mòrag nuair a thug Anna a-mach na briosgaidean?
Dè’n naidheachd a chuala Mòrag? Ciamar a fhreagair Anna?

FACLAN

a’ nigheadaireachd : washing (clothes), doing a wash  preas : cupboard
a’ feadalaich : whistling  rudan milis : "sweet things"  an dithis : the pair, the two (people)
Dé a’s ür? : What’s new? (literally, “what is it that is new?”)  a’ faighneachd : asking
a’ call : losing  caill : lose  iomadh : many a.....
IRREGULAR VERBS: THE FUTURE TENSE

As with the past tense of irregular verbs, the root will not necessarily help you to figure out the future verb forms! However, a’ ruigsinn, a’ cluinntinn, ag ràdh, and a’ breith do behave regularly in the future, all deriving from the root.

a)  Rach! Go!  Theirig! Go!
Théid mi dhan chéilidh : I will go to the ceilidh.
Cha téid mi ann : I won’t go (there/in it/to it).
An téid thu còmhla rium? : Will you go (along) with me?
Nach téid thu ann? : Won’t you go?
Théid : Yes; Cha téid : No
Tha e a’ cantainn gun téid e ann : He says (that) he’ll go.
Tha i a’ cantainn nach téid ise ann : She says she won’t (will not) go.
Có (a) théid ann? : Who will go?
Cait’ an téid thu? : Where will you go?

b)  Thig! Come!
Thig Màiri dhachaidh an nochd : Mary will come home tonight.
Cha tig i dhachaidh gus am màireach : She won’t come home until tomorrow.
An tig thu còmhla rium? : Will you come with me?
Nach tig thu? : Won’t you come?
Thig : Yes; Cha tig : No
Tha e ag ràdh gun tig e : He says he’ll come.
Chan eil e ag ràdh nach tig e : He doesn’t say he won’t come.
Cuin’ a thig thu? : When will you come?
Carson nach tig thu? : Why won’t you come?

c)  Ruig! Reach! Arrive!
Ruigidh mi am màireach : I’ll arrive tomorrow.
Cha ruig e gus an ath sheachdain : He won’t arrive until (the) next week.
An ruig thu an taigh an nochd? : Will you reach/arrive at the house tonight?
Nach ruig e an diugh? : Won’t he arrive today?
Ruigidh : Yes; Cha ruig : No
Tha e ag ràdh gun ruig e anmoch: He says he’ll arrive late.
Tha e ag ràdh nach ruig e gu meadhon oidhche: He says he won’t arrive until midnight.
Cuin’ a ruigeas tu?: When will you arrive?
Carson nach ruig e an diugh?: Why won’t he arrive today?

d) Cluinn! Hear!
Cluinnidh mi an ceòl: I will hear the music.
Cha chluinn mi facal: I won’t hear a word.
An cluinn thu mi?: Will you hear me?
Nach cluinn thu an fhuaim?: Won’t you hear the noise?
Cluinnidh: Yes; Cha chluinn: No
Tha e ag ràdh gun cluinn e mi: He says he’ll hear me.
Tha e ag ràdh nach cluinn e mi: He says he won’t hear me.
Có a chluinneas sinn?: Who will hear us?
Càit’ an cluinn sinn an ceòl?: Where will we hear the music?

e) Abair! Say!
Abraidh mi sin rithe: I will say that to her.
Chan abair mi sion: I won’t say anything.
An abair thu sin ris?: Will you say that to him?
Nach abair thu am facal?: Won’t you say the word?
Abraidh: Yes; Chan abair: No
Tha e a’ cantainn gun abair e sin rithe: He says he’ll say that to her.
Tha e a’ cantainn nach abair e sion: He says he won’t say anything.
Dé a dh’abras tu?: What will you say?
Ciamar a dh’abras tu “word” anns a’ Ghàidhlig?: How will you (do you) say “word” in Gaelic?
Càit’ an abair thu e?: Where will you say it?

NOTE: the future form of a’ cantainn is used in many dialects instead of the future form of ag ràdh. However, a’ cantainn has no past tense forms; so thuirte, etc. are always used instead.

f) Dèan! Do! Make!
Ni mi mo dhicheall: I will do my utmost/best.
Cha dèan mi sion: I won’t do anything.
An dèan thu sin dhomh?: Will you do that for me?
Nach dèan thu sin dhomh?: Won’t you do that for me?
Ni : Yes; Cha dèan : No

Tha e ag ràdh gun dèan e sin dhomh : He says he’ll do that for me.
Tha e ag ràdh nach dèan e sion dhomh : He says he won’t do anything for me.
Dé (a) ni mi? : What will I do?
Càit’ an dèan mi e? : Where will I do it?

Faic! See!

Chì mi thu am màireach : I’ll see you tomorrow.
Chan fhaic mi thu gus am màireach : I won’t see you until tomorrow.
Am faic mi thu an nochd? : Will I see you tonight?
Nach fhaic mi thu aig a’ chéilidh? : Won’t I see you at the ceilidh?
Chì : Yes; Chan fhaic : No

Tha e ag ràdh gum faic e sinn anns a’ chlas : He says he will see us in (the) class.
Tha e ag ràdh nach fhaic e sinn gus an nochd : He says he won’t see us until tonight.
Cuin’ a chi mi thu? : When will I see you?
Càit’ am faic mi thu? : Where will I see you?

Faigh! Get! Receive! Find!

Gheibh / Gheobh mi an leabhar dhut : I’ll get the book for you.
Chan fhaich mi fois : I won’t get/find rest.
Am faigh mi litir bhuat? : Will I get/receive a letter from you?
Nach faigh thu sin dhomh? : Won’t you get that for me?
Gheibh (Gheobh) : Yes; Chan fhaigh : No

Tha e a’ cantainn gum faigh e fios : He says he’ll get word (knowledge/info).
Tha e a’ cantainn nach fhaigh e fois : He says he’ll not find rest.
Cuin’ a gheibh (gheobh) mi litir buat? : When will I get a letter from you?
Càit’ am faigh mi Seumas? : Where will I find James?

Beir! Bear (a child)! Catch!

Beiridh i leanabh : She will bear a child.
Cha bheir e ort : He won’t catch (up with) you.
Am beir thu air sin dhomh? : Will you catch that for me?
Nach beir sinn orra? : Won’t we catch (up with) them?
Beiridh : Yes; Cha bheir : No

Tha e ag ràdh gum beir e oirnn : He says he’ll catch (up with) us.
Tha e ag ràdh nach beir sinn air : He says we won’t catch him.
Có a bheireas air a’ bhàla? : Who will catch the ball?

Càit’ am beir i an leanabh? : Where will she bear (have) the child?

j) Thoir! Give! Take! Bring!

Bheir mi dhut e : I’ll give it to you.

Cha toir mi bhuat e : I won’t take it from you.

An toir mi leam e? : Will I bring him/it with me?

Nach toir thu leat mi? : Won’t you take me with you?

Bheir : Yes; Cha toir : No

Tha e a’ cantainn gun toir e leis sinn : He says he’ll take us with him.

Tha e a’ cantainn nach toir e buham e : He says he won’t take it from me.

Dé a bheir thu dhuinn? : What will you give us?

Càit’ an toir thu sinn? : Where will you take us?

CLEACHDADH – CÒMHRADH :

Bha là brèagh ann agus bha Eilidh agus Cailean a’ smaoineachadh air dol air turas anns a’ chàr.

Eilidh : Càit’ an téid sinn, a Chailein?

Cailean : An toir sinn sgrìob dhan a’ Chladach a Tuath a thadhal air ar càirdean?


Cailean : Ni mi sin – agus an toir sinn leinn an trosg sàillte?

Eilidh : Bheir. Córdaidh sin riutha. An toir mi leam mo chòta?

Cailean : Chan eil mi a’ creidsinn gum bi feum air còta. Tha i ro bhlàth.

Eilidh : Tha thu ceart. Siuthad, ma tha – greas ort!

CEISDEAN

a) Dé’n seòrsa là a bh’ ann? Dé bha Eilidh agus Cailean a’ smaoineachadh?

b) Dé thuirt Eilidh? Dé thuirt Cailean?

c) Dé ni Eilidh? Dé bheir iad leotha?

d) Dé a cheisd a bh’ aig Cailean? An còrd an trosg ri teaghlach Màiri?

e) Carson nach bi feum air còta? Dé thuirt Eilidh ri Cailean?

f) An toil leat fhéin a bhith a’ dol air turas anns a’ chàr?

FACLAN

turas : trip  sgrìob (f.) : jaunt, excursion  càl : cabbage  curran(an) : carrot(s)  trosg : cod  
glasraich (f.) : greens, vegetables  sàillte : salted  is eile : and other (things), etc.
IRREGULAR VERBS: THE CONDITIONAL TENSE
For SEVEN of the irregular verbs, this tense is built on the root of the verb; for a’ faicinn, a’ faighinn, and a’ toirt, the positive form is based on the future tense positive form while the ancillary forms revert to being built on the root (see below). As with the basic verb ‘to be’, 1st person forms include the pronoun.

a) a’ dol : going; rach! : go!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singilte/Singular</th>
<th>Iolra/Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRST PERSON</td>
<td>Rachainn</td>
<td>I would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Rachamaid)</td>
<td>We would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rachadh sinn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND PERSON</td>
<td>Rachadh tu</td>
<td>You (thou) would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rachadh sibh</td>
<td>You (all) would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD PERSON (M.)</td>
<td>Rachadh e</td>
<td>He/it would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rachadh iad</td>
<td>They would go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD PERSON (F.)</td>
<td>Rachadh i</td>
<td>She/it would go</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And so:

Cha rachainn / cha rachadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : I, you, etc. wouldn’t go.
An rachainn? / an rachadh tu, e, i sinn, sibh, iad ? : Would I, you, etc. go?
Nach rachainn? / nach rachadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad ? : Wouldn’t I, you, etc. go?
Rachadh : Yes; Cha rachadh : No

...gun rachainn : that I would go; ...gun rachadh tu, etc.
...nach rachainn : that I wouldn’t go; ...nach rachadh tu, etc.
Also : rachamaid / cha rachamaid / an rachamaid / nach rachamaid /...gun rachamaid /...nach rachamaid.

Note : in the Lewis dialect, theirig is used instead of rach; so, theiriginn, cha teiriginn, an teiriginn?, nach teiriginn? ...gun teiriginn, ...nach teiriginn; theirigeadh tu, etc.
b) a’ tighinn : coming; thig! : come!

Thiginn : I would come; thigeadh tu, etc. : you, etc., would come

Cha tiginn : I wouldn’t come; cha tigeadh tu, etc. : you, etc., wouldn’t come

An tiginn? : Would I come?; an tigeadh tu, etc.? : would you, etc., come?

Nach tiginn? : Wouldn’t I come?; nach tigeadh tu, etc.? : wouldn’t you, etc., come?

Thigeadh : Yes; Cha tigeadh : No

...gun tiginn : ...that I would come; ...gun tigeadh tu, etc.

...nach tiginn : ...that I wouldn’t come; ...nach tigeadh tu, etc.

c) a’ ruigsinn : reaching/ arriving at; ruig! : reach!

Ruiginn : I would reach; ruigeadh tu, etc. : you, etc., would reach

Cha ruiginn : I wouldn’t reach; cha ruigeadh tu, etc. : you, etc., wouldn’t reach

An ruiginn? : Would I reach?; an ruigeadh tu, etc.? : would you, etc., reach?

Nach ruiginn? : Wouldn’t I reach?; nach ruigeadh tu, etc.? : wouldn’t you, etc., reach?

Ruigeadh : Yes / Cha ruigeadh : No

...gun ruiginn : ...that I would reach; ...gun ruigeadh tu, etc.

...nach ruiginn : ...that I wouldn’t reach; ...nach ruigeadh tu, etc.

Cleachdadh

i. Ruiginn an Abhainn Mheadhonach tràth’s an fheasgar.

ii. Cha ruigeadh e an taigh gu anmoch.


iv. Nach ruigeadh sibh an Abhainn a Tuath feasgar?

v. Tha e a’ cantainn gun ruigeamaid mas tigeadh an oidhche.

vi. Bha e a’ cantainn gun ruigeadh iad dhachaidh an nochd nan robh side mhath ann.

vii. Ruigeadh iad dhachaidh an nochd mur robh droch shid’ ann.

d) a’ cluinntinn : hearing; cluinn! : hear!

Chluinninn : I would hear; chluinneadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

Cha chluinninn : I wouldn’t hear; cha chluinneadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

An cluinninn? : Would I hear?; an cluinneadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?

Nach cluinninn? : Wouldn’t I hear?; nach cluinneadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?

Chluinneadh : Yes; Cha chluinneadh : No

...gun cluinninn : ...that I would hear; ...gun cluinneadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

...nach cluinninn : ...that I wouldn’t hear; ...nach cluinneadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad
e) **ag ràdh** : saying;  **abair!** : say!

\[
\text{Dh’ abrainn} : \text{I would say; dh’ abradh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Chan abrainn} : \text{I wouldn’t say; chan abradh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{An abrainn? : Would I say?; an abradh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?}
\]

\[
\text{Nach abrainn? : Wouldn’t I say?; nach abradh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?}
\]

\[
\text{Dh’ abradh : Yes; Chan abradh : No}
\]

\[
\text{...gun abrainn : ...that I would say; ...gun abradh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{...nach abrainn : ...that I wouldn’t say; ......nach abradh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

f) **a’ dèanamh** : doing / making;  **dèan!** : do / make!

\[
\text{Dhèaninn : I would do; dhèanadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Cha dèanainn : I wouldn’t do; cha dèanadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{An dèanainn? : Would I do?; an dèanadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?}
\]

\[
\text{Nach dèanainn? : Wouldn’t I do?; nach dèanadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?}
\]

\[
\text{Dhèanadh : Yes; Cha dèanadh : No}
\]

\[
\text{...gun dèanainn : ...that I would do; ...gun dèanadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{...nach dèanadh : ...that I wouldn’t do; ...nach dèanadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

g) **a’ faicinn** : seeing;  **faic!** : see!

\[
\text{Chithinn : I would see; chitheadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Chan faicinn : I wouldn’t see; chan faiceadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Am faicinn? : Would I see?; am faiceadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?}
\]

\[
\text{Nach faicinn? : Wouldn’t I see?; nach faiceadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Chitheadh : Yes; Chan faiceadh : No}
\]

\[
\text{...gum faicinn : ...that I would see; ...gum faiceadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{...nach faicinn : ...that I wouldn’t see; ...nach faiceadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

h) **a’ faighinn** : getting / receiving / finding;  **faigh!** : get! / receive! / find!

\[
\text{Gheibhinn/gheobhainn : I would get; gheibheadh/gheobhadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Chan faighinn : I wouldn’t get; chan faighheadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Am faighinn? : Would I get?; am faighheadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?}
\]

\[
\text{Nach faighinn? : Wouldn’t I get?; nach faighheadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{Gheibheadh/Gheobhadh : Yes; Chan faighheadh : No}
\]

\[
\text{...gum faighinn : ...that I would get; ...gum faighheadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]

\[
\text{...nach faighinn : ...that I wouldn’t get; ...nach faighheadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad}
\]
i) **a’ breith** : bearing; **beir!** : bear (a child)! (with **air** it means catching / catch!)

_Bheirinn_ : I would bear; _bheireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

_Cha bheirinn_ : I wouldn’t bear; _cha bheireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

_Am beirinn?_ : Would I bear?; _am beireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?

_Nach beirinn?_ : Wouldn’t I bear?; _nach beireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?

_Bheireadh_ : Yes; _Cha bheireadh_ : No

..._gum beirinn_ : ...that I would bear; ..._gum bheireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

..._nach beirinn_ : ...that I wouldn’t bear; ..._nach bheireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

j) **a’ toirt** : giving / taking / bringing; **thoir!** : give! / take! / bring!

_Bheirinn_ : I would give / take / bring; _bheireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

_Cha toirinn_ : I wouldn’t give, etc.; _cha toireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

_An toirinn?_ : Would I give? etc.; _an toireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?

_Nach toirinn?_ : Wouldn’t I give, etc.; _nach toireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad?

_Bheireadh_ : Yes; _Cha toireadh_ : No

..._gun toirinn_ : ...that I would give, etc.; ..._gun toireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

..._nach toirinn_ : ...that I wouldn’t give, etc.; ..._nach toireadh tu_ , e, i, sinn, sibh, iad

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**TWO INCOMPLETE VERBS : MAY, MUST**

These verbs are sometimes called “defective”; however, it’s better to think of them as “incomplete” since they are only available in imperative (root) and future and conditional forms.

**Future :**

a) **faod!** : may!

_Faodaidh mi, tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad_ : I, you, he/it, she/it, we, you (pl.), they may

_Chan faod mi, thu, etc._ : I, you, etc., may not

_Am faod mi, thu, etc._ ? : May I, you, etc.?

_Nach faod mi, thu, etc._ ? : May I, you, etc., not?

_Faodaidh_ : Yes; _Chan faoad_ : No

..._gum faod mi, thu, etc._ : ...that I, you, etc., may

..._nach faod mi, thu, etc._ : ...that I, you, etc., may not

_Am faod mi suidhe an seo? Faodaidh_. May I sit here? Yes.
b) **feum!**: must!

Feumaidh mi, tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : I, you, he/it she/it, we, you (pl.), they must/need to

Chan feum mi, thu, etc. : I, you, etc., mustn’t

Am feum mi, thu, etc.? : Must I, you, etc.?

Nach feum mi, thu, etc.? : Mustn’t I, you, etc.?

Feumaidh : Yes; Chan feum : No

...gum feum mi, thu, etc. : ...that I, you, etc., must

...nach feum mi, thu, etc. : ...that I, you, etc., mustn’t

Feumaidh mi falbh : I must go

**Conditional:**

a) **faod!**: may!

Dh’fhaodainn : I might; dh’fhaodadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : you, etc., might

Chan fhaodainn : I might not (use for English “I would not be permitted”); chan fhaodadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : you, etc., might not

Am faodainn? : Might I?; am faodadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad? : might you, etc.?

Nach fhaodainn? : Might I not?; nach fhaodadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad? : might you, etc., not?

Dh’fhaodadh : Yes; Chan fhaodadh : No

...gum faodainn : ...that I might; ...gum faodadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : that you, etc., might

...nach fhaodainn : ...that I might not; ...nach fhaodadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : that you, etc., might not

b) **feum!**: must!

Dh’fheumainn : I would need to; dh’fheumadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : you, etc., would need to

Chan fheumainn : I wouldn’t need to; chan fheumadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : you, etc., wouldn’t need to

Am feumainn? : Would I need to?; am feumadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad? : would you, etc., need to?

Nach fheumainn? : Wouldn’t I need to?; nach fheumadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad? : Wouldn’t you, etc., need to?

Dh’fheumadh : Yes; Chan fheumadh : No

...gum feumainn : ...that I would need to; ...gum feumadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : ...that you, etc., would need to
...nach fheumainn : ...that I wouldn’t need to; ...nach fheumadh tu, e, i, sinn, sibh, iad : ...that you, etc., wouldn’t need to

CLEACHDADH – CÒMHRADH :

Anna : Dé a dhèanadh tu, a Sheumais, nan robh airgead gu leòr agad?
Seumas : Bheirinn dhut-fhéin e!
Anna : Och – an fhirinn a-nis. Dé a dhèanadh tu?
Seumas : Uell, rachainn air turas dhan t-seann duthaich – tìr mo shinnsearan.
Anna : An toireadh tu mise còmhla riut?
Seumas : Bheireadh gu cinnteach!
Anna : Agus dé – no có – a chitheadh sinn a’ sin, a Sheumais?
Seumas : Nan rachadh sinn dhan Eilean Sgitheanach, tha mi cinnteach gum faicheadh sinn càirdean ann – agus An Cuilthionn, beanntan brèagha, àrd’ an eilein.
Anna : Smaoinch! Agus bhiodh sinn a’ bruidhinn na Gaidhlig ri a chéile, nach bitheadh?
Seumas : Bhitheadh, gu dearbh! Gheobhadh sinn càir air an eilean agus rachamaid air an aiseig dha Na Hearadh – agus an uair sin, a Leódas....Ann a’ Steòrnabhagh, chitheadh sinn an caisteal.
Anna : Cui’n a dh’fhaodadh sinn falbh?
Seumas : Nuair a bhios airgead gu leòr againn, a ghràidh!

FACLAN

firinn, f. : truth  tir : land  sinnsear : ancestor  An t-Eilean Sgitheanach : the Isle of Skye
cinnteach : sure, certain  An Cuilthionn : The Cuillins  smaoinch! : think! imagine!
a chéile : each other  aiseag, f. : ferry  Na Hearadh : Harris  Leódas : (Isle of) Lewis
Steòrnabhagh : Stornoway

42 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

THE PASSIVE VOICE : REGULAR VERBS
Basic – but more formal / lesser used, passive forms of regular verbs :
PAST PASSIVE : add -(e)adh to positive past form. For example:
Thòisicheadh an obair (The work was begun); cha do thòisicheadh an obair gu anmoch (the work wasn’t begun until late); an do thòisicheadh an obair fhathast? (was the work begun yet?); nach do thòisicheadh an obair fhathast? : (wasn’t the work started yet?);
chuala mi gun do thòisicheadh an obair (I heard the work was started); chuala mi nach do thòisicheadh an obair fhathast (I heard the work wasn’t started yet)

Thòisicheadh : Yes; Cha do thòisicheadh : No

**FUTURE PASSIVE** : add -(e)ar to the root of the verb. For example :

Tòisichear an obair am màireach (the work will be started tomorrow); cha tòisichear an obair gus am màireach (the work won’t be started until tomorrow); an tòisichear an obair an diugh? (will the work be started today?); nach tòisichear an obair an diugh? (won’t the work be started today?); tha e a’ cantainn gun tòisichear an obair an ceartuair (he says that the work will be started shortly); cha e a’ cantainn nach tòisichear an obair gus an ath sheachdain (he says that the work won’t be started until next week)

Tòisichear : Yes; Cha tòisichear : No

**CONDITIONAL PASSIVE** : add -t(e)adh to positive past form; actually, the -adh gets dropped. For example :

Chuirte an litir (the letter would be sent); cha chuirte an litir (the letter wouldn’t be sent); an cuirte an litir? (would the letter be sent?); nach cuirte an litir? (wouldn’t the letter be sent?); thuirt e gun cuirte an litir (he said the letter would be sent); thuirt e nach cuirte an litir (he said the letter wouldn’t be sent)

Chuirte : Yes; Cha chuirte : No

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**43 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**THE PASSIVE VOICE : IRREGULAR VERBS**

Basic passive forms of irregular verbs;

Note a’dol and a’tighinn do not have these forms :

**PAST PASSIVE** :

a’ ruigsinn :

Ràinigeadh / Cha d’rànigeadh, etc. : was reached / wasn’t reached, etc.

Rànigeadh an taigh aig meadhon oidhche (The house was reached at midnight)

a’ cluinntinn :

Chualas / Cha (do)chualas, etc. : was heard / wasn’t heard

Chualas an fhuaím air feadh an taighe (The sound/noise was heard throughout the house)
a’ faicinn :

Chunnacas / Chan fhacas / Am facas?/ Nach fhacas? : was seen / wasn’t seen / was seen? etc.

Am facas an taibhs’ anns a’ chladh? (Was the ghost seen in the graveyard?)

a’ dèanamh :

Rinneadh / Cha d’ rinneadh, etc. : was done / wasn’t done, etc.
Rinneadh a’ chùis / an gnothach air! (literally “the matter was done on him” – He was defeated)

a’ faighinn :

Fhuaras, Fhuaradh / Cha d’ fhuaradh : was received, found / wasn’t received, etc.
Fhuaras an naidheachd bho Mhàiri (The news was received from Mary)

ag ràdh :

Thuirteadh / Cha d’ thuirteadh : was said / wasn’t said, etc.
Thuirteadh rudan nach bu chòir (Things were said that weren’t right / just)

a’ breith :

Rugadh / cha d’rugadh : was born/ wasn’t born, etc.
Rugadh e anns a’ Phon Mhór (He was born in Big Pond)

a’ toirt :

Thugadh / Cha d’ thugadh : was taken, given, brought / wasn’t taken, etc.
Thugadh comhairle dhomh (Advice was given to me – I was given advice)

FUTURE PASSIVE :

a’ ruigsinn :

Ruigear / Cha ruigear : will be reached/ won’t be reached, etc.
Cha ruigear am baile gus an nochd (The town won’t be reached until tonight)

a’ cluinntinn :

Cluinnear/ Cha cluinnear : will be heard/ won’t be heard, etc.
Cluinnear an ùpraid (The uproar will be heard)

a’ faicinn :

Chithear / Chan fhaicear : will be seen/ won’t be seen, etc.
Chithear cho furasda’s a tha e ((It) will be seen how easy it is)

a’ dèanamh :

Nithear / Cha dèanar : will be done/ won’t be done, etc.
Cha dèanar sin a chaoidh (That won’t ever be done / that will never be done)

a’ faighinn :

Gheibhear, Gheobhar / Chan fhaighear : will be received, found / won’t be found, etc.
Gheobhar fàilt’ aig an taigh sin (A welcome will be received at that house)

ag ràdh :
- Theirear / Chan abairear : will be said/ won’t be said, etc.
- Theirear m’ a dhéidhinn gur e duine glic a th’ann (It will be (it’s) said about him that he’s a wise man)

a’ breith :
- Beirear / Cha bheirear : will be born, caught / won’t be born, caught, etc.
- Beirear air a’ bhàla le lain (The ball will be caught by lain)

a’ toirt :
- Bheirear / Cha toirear : will be taken, given, brought / won’t be taken, etc.
- An toirear sin bhuam? (Will that be taken from me?)

CONDITIONAL PASSIVE :

a’ ruigsinn :
- Ruigte / Cha ruigte : would be reached / wouldn’t be reached
- Cha ruigte na h-amasan ac a gun oidhirp mhór (Their aims wouldn’t be reached without great effort)

a’ cluinntinn :
- Chluinnte / Cha chluinnte : would be heard / wouldn’t be heard
- Chluinnte a’ chlann air feadh an àite (The children would / could be heard all over the place)

a’ faicinn :
- Chíte / Chan fhaicte : would be seen / wouldn’t be seen
- Chan fhaicte sion anns an docharadas (Nothing would / could be seen in the darkness – anything wouldn’t be seen...)

a’ dèanamh :
- Dhèanta / Cha dèanta : would be done / wouldn’t be done
- Cha dèanta dad dhen t-seòrsa sin leothasain! (Nothing of that kind would be done by them! –anything of that kind wouldn’t be done...)

a’ faighinn :
- Gheibhte / Chan faighte : would be found / received / wouldn’t be found / received
- Gheibhte tiodhlan (prèasantan) aig àm na Nollaig (Gifts would be received at Christmas time)

ag ràdh :
- Theirte / Chan abairte : would be said / wouldn’t be said
- Chan abairte sin le duine modhail! (That wouldn’t be said by a polite person!)
a’ breith :

Bheirte / Cha bheirte : would be born/ wouldn’t be born
Bheirte ìosa ann a’ stàball am measg nam beathaichean (Jesus would be born in a stable amongst the animals)

a’ toirt :

Bheirte / Cha toirte : would be given, taken, brought / wouldn’t be given, taken, brought
Cha toirte bhuaithe a chliù (His fame (good name) wouldn’t be taken from him)

CLEACHDADH

a) Rugadh Ailean ann an Albainn ach thogadh e ann an Albainn Nuaidh.
b) An cuirear an litir thuige cho luath’s as urrainn?
c) Dheasaicheadh an dinnear le màthair Choinnich.
d) Chluininte fuaim na pioba air feadh a’ bhaile.
e) Cha d’ fhuaras an naidheachd gu anmoch.
f) Chuala mì gun toirte duais do Dhòmhnall (duais (f.) : prize/award).
g) Gheobhar fios bho Chalum nuair a thilleas e (fios : knowledge / information; a’ tilleadh : returning).
h) Nach d’ rugadh cuideachd do mhàthair ann an Éirinn? (cuideachd (f.) : company, people)
i) Cha dèanar sin leisesan.
j) Ràinigeadh mullach na beinne mu dheireadh thall (mullach : top/ summit).

44 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

ALTERNATIVE “PASSIVE” FORMS WITH A’ DOL

These structures with a’ dol are commonly used and essentially render the passive as active :

a) Chaiddh a dhèanamh (literally, “Its doing went” – its doing happened – it was done)
Cha deach a bhreith gus an ath là (His birthing didn’t happen until the next day – He wasn’t born until the next day)
An deach innse dha? (literally, “Did telling to him happen?” – Was he told?)
Nach deach a thoirt bhuaithe? (Wasn’t it taken from him?)
Théid innse dhi (literally, “Telling to her will happen” – She will be told)
Cha téid a ràdh (It will not be said)
Rachadh (theirigeadh) a dheasachadh gu luath (It would be prepared quickly)
An rachadh a dhùnadh? (Would it / could it be closed?)

b) Now throw a noun phrase into the mix:

We maintain the fixed phrases a dhèanamh, a bhreith (“its doing”, “its birthing”), etc. It makes no difference if the preceding noun is masculine or feminine in this construction.

Chaidh an obair a dhèanamh; cha deach an leanabh a bhreith gus an ath là; an deach an naidheachd innse dha?; nach deach an t-airgead a thoirt bhuaithe?; théid an sgeul innse dhi; cha téid guth a ràdh; rachadh am biadh a dheasachadh gu luath; an rachadh an uinneag a dhùnadh?

c) Now supposing the noun is omitted – and that noun referred to in the context is feminine – as are these nouns used in examples above: obair, naidheachd, uinneag; when you refer to a noun using a personal pronoun, it must agree in case and gender. So if the noun is feminine, you must refer to it as “she”. In Gaelic (and most other Indo-European languages), languages, nations, land, and words about nature (weather, sea, wind, etc.) are feminine. This is still quite common in Nova Scotia where English is spoken with Gaelic grammatical traits. For example, “She’s warm” meaning that the weather is warm; the gender of “weather” in Gaelic is feminine, so there’s an inclination to say “she” and not “it”. With this in mind, here are some examples:

Chaidh a dèanamh (literally, “Her doing occurred”; “her” refers to obair, but it means “it was done”).

An deach a h-innse dhi? (literally, “Was she (naidheachd, the news) told to her?” – meaning was it (the news) told to her? Was she told the news?)

An rachadh a dùnadh? (Would / Could she/it (uinneag, the window) be closed?)

CLEACHDADH

NOW – by using the appropriate forms of the verb a’ dol, transform the sentences in the practice section at the end of Seallagan 43!

45 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

MODALS

Modal verb phrases in Gaelic are auxiliary (helping) structures which also obey the above rules of behaviour. Modals express ability (can, can’t), obligation (should, ought), customary action (I usually; I used to...) possibility, and permission (may, might), or obligation (must, have to, need to).
Here are some examples:

a) Present tense – can, can’t: ‘S urrainn dhomh / Chan urrainn dhomh / An urrainn dhut? etc.

‘S urrainn dhomh a dhèanamh (its doing is possible for me – I can do it). Notice that “its doing” = “doing it” and is the subject of the Gaelic sentence. So you have to get used to thinking in a different word order from that used in English; the word order is actually, “is possible for me its doing”.

Now add the nominal which indicates what the person can do; please note that a dhèanamh is not an infinitive form but means “its doing” as in the previous example.

‘S urrainn dhomh an obair a dhèanamh (I can do the work – literally, “is possible for me the work its doing”)

b) Past/conditional tense – could, couldn’t: b’ urrainn dhomh / cha b’ urrainn dhomh / am b’ urrainn dhut? etc.

Am b’ urrainn dhut sin a dhèanamh dhomh? (Could you do that for me?)

c) Present tense – is right, should: ‘S còir dhomh / Cha còir dhomh / An còir dhut, etc.

‘S còir dha an taigh a thogail anns a’ bhaile (Is right for him the house its building in the town – He should build the house in town)

d) Past/conditional tense – was/would be right, ought: Bu(chòir dhomh / cha bu(chòir dhomh / Am bu(chòir dhut?, etc.

Bu(chòir dhì an t-òran a ghabhail (She ought to sing the song)

e) Present tense – (I) usually...: ‘S àbhaist dhomh / Chan àbhaist dhomh / An àbhaist dhut? etc.

‘S àbhaist dhomh dìnnear a ghabhail tràth (literally, “is custom for me dinner its taking early” ”⇒ I usually have dinner early)

f) Past/conditional tense – (I) used to...: B’ àbhaist dhomh / Cha b’ àbhaist dhomh / Am b’ àbhaist dhut? etc.

B’ àbhaist dhomh fìon ‘òl (literally, “was custom for me wine its drinking” ”⇒ I used to drink wine).

g) Future tense – may (with present tense implication): Faoidadh mi / chan fhaod mi / am faod mi? etc.

Am faod mi an côt’ agam ’fhàgail an seo? (May I leave my coat here?)

h) Conditional tense – might: dh’fhaodainn / chan fhaodainn / am faodainn? etc. Notice how the 2nd person thu → tu : dh’fhaodadh tu/ chan fhaodadh tu/ am faodadh tu? etc.

Dh’ fhaodainn sin a dhèanamh dhut (I might (usually translated “could”) do that for you)

Am fàodadh e an uinneag ‘fhosgladh? (Might he open the window?)

i) Future tense – must, have to, need to: feumaidh mi / chan feum mi / am feum mi?, etc.
Am feum mi seo ’ionnsachadh? (Must I learn this?)

j) **Conditional tense** – must, have to, need to: dh’fheumainn / chan fheumainn / am feumainn? etc. Also: dh’fheumadh tu / chan fheumadh tu / am feumadh tu? etc.

Am feumainn **litir** a sgriobhadh? (Would I need to write a letter?)

Nach fheumadh iad **biadh** a dheasachadh? (Wouldn’t they need to prepare food?)

An alternative way of handling necessity is with **tha** / **bha** / **bidh** / **bhiodh** – agam / agad, etc. + **ri**:

Bidh aige **ris a chùrsa sin a leantainn** (He will have to follow that course)

**Note**: add the structure **air** / **ás déidh** – **dhomh** / **dhus** / **dha** / **dhi** / **dhuinn** / **dhaibh** + the verbal noun phrase (**air** derives from **iar** ➔ after):

**Air dhomh a dhèanamh / ás déidh dhomh a dhèanamh** (“After for me its doing” ➔ after (my) doing it – after I did it, I...

**Air / ás déidh dha an obair a chrìochnachadh** (“After for him the work its finishing” ➔ after (his) finishing the work – after he finished the work, he...

Notice how the following principal clause has the same subject as in the preceding phrase.

**CLEACHDADH**

a) Chan fheum dhut an obair sin a dhèanamh an dràsda.
b) B’ àbhaist dhuinn a dhol gu taigh mo sheanar a h-uile samhradh.
c) Am bu chòir dhut an naidheachd ’innse dhi?
d) Nach fheumadh tu sgriobhadh thuca?
e) Dh’ fhaodainn litir a chur air do shon.
f) ’S còir dhomh bruidhinn ris.
g) An urrainn dhut seo ’fhosgladh dhomh?
h) Às déidh dhuinn suidhe, chaidh biadh a thoirt dhan a h-uile duine.
i) Carson a bh’ agad ri falbh?
j) Chan fhaod thu sin a dhèanamh idir!

**46 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**THE CARDINAL NUMBERS : TRADITIONAL**

Gaelic numbers work in tens and twenties. This is traditional all over Europe as twenty is about the size of a herd of cattle or sheep. This was done in English-speaking lands as well where shepherds would count large flocks by twenty and then score a stick (tally) to keep track.
Hence the word “score” in English means “twenty”. Technically, it’s called a vigesimalism system. You’ll see this in a moment when the expression for “forty” is “two twenties”.

a) **Counting**:

- a h-aon, a dhà, a tri, a ceithir, a cóig, a sia, a seachd, a h-ochn, a naoi, a deich, a h-aon deug, a dhà dheug, a tri deug, a ceithir deug, a cóig deug, a sia deug, a seachd deug, a h-ochn deug, a naoi deug, a fichead.

  Note: neoin = zero.

b) **Used adjectivally**: aon ⇔ one, dà ⇔ two, tri ⇔ three, etc.

i. **One**:

   - aon bhliadhna, aon chat, aon fhacal, aon ghàradh, aon mhìos, aon phutan

   But:

   - aon dorus, aon taigh, aon seòmar – and, of course, aon lide, aon righ, aon nead

ii. **Two**:

   Đà lenites as well, but does not pluralize. It’s a remnant of the old dual that existed in Old Irish, Old English, and other Indo-European languages and actually takes the dative case. However, this is only obvious in the feminine dative; for example, đà làimh, đà chois. So we have:

   - đà bhliadhna, đà chat, đà fhacal, đà dorus, đà thaigh, đà sheòmar, etc.

iii. **Three to ten**:

   - trí, ceithir, cóig, sia, seachd, ochd, naoi (naodh), deich : with plurals we have such things as trí sgridain, ceithir leabhraichean, etc.

iv. **Eleven to twenty**:

   - aon-deug, dà-dheug, tri-deug, ceithir-deug, cóig-deug, sia-deug, seachd-deug, ochd-deug, naoi-deug, fichead

  Used adjectivally:

   - aon bhliadhna deug, đà bhliadhna dheug, trí bliadhna deug, etc.

  **fichead**: along with large numbers ceud (hundred) and mile (thousand), fichead takes a singular noun. For example, fichead bliadhna. **Dusan** (dozen) also takes a singular noun.

v. **Twenty-one to thirty**:

  Traditionally:

  - aon air fhichead, a dhà air fhichead, tri air fhichead, ...deich air fhichead

  Used adjectivally:

  - aon bhliadhna fichead, đà bhliadhna fichead, trí bliadhna fichead, ...deich bliadhna fichead
Common today:

fìchead ’s a h-aon, fìchead ’s a dhà, fìchead ’s a trí, ...fìchead ’s a deich

Used adjectivally:

fìchead bliadhna ’s a h-aon, fìchead bliadhna ’s a dhà, ...fìchead bliadhna ’s a deich

vi. Thirty-one to forty:

aon-deug air fhìchead, dà-dheug air fhìchead, tri-deug air fhìchead, ...dà fhìchead

Used adjectivally:

aon bhliadhna deug air fhìchead, dà bhliadhna dheug air fhìchead, ...dà fhìchead bliadhna

vii. Forty-one to fifty:

dà fhìchead ’s a h-aon, dà fhìchead ’s a dhà, dà fhìchead ’s a tri, ...dà fhìchead ’s a deich no leth-cheud

Used adjectivally:

dà fhìchead bliadhna ’s a h-aon, ...dà fhìchead bliadhna ’s a deich/leth-cheud bliadhna

viii. Fifty-one to sixty:

dà fhìchead ’s a h-aon-deug / leth-cheud ’s a h-aon, ...tri fhìchead

Used adjectivally:

dà fhìchead bliadhna ’s a h-aon-deug / leth-cheud bliadhna ’s a h-aon, ...tri fhìchead bliadhna

ix. Sixty-one to seventy:

tri fhìchead ’s a h-aon, tri fhìchead ’s a dhà, ...tri fhìchead ’s a deich

Used adjectivally:

tri fhìchead bliadhna ’s a h-aon, ...tri fhìchead bliadhna ’s a deich

x. Seventy-one to eighty:

tri fhìchead ’s a h-aon deug, tri fhìchead ’s a dhà dheug, ...ceithir fhìchead

Used adjectivally:

tri fhìchead bliadhna ’s a h-aon-deug, ...ceithir fhìchead bliadhna

xi. Eighty-one to ninety:

ceithir fhìchead ’s a h-aon, ceithir fhìchead ’s a dhà, ...ceithir fhìchead ’s a deich

Used adjectivally:

ceithir fhìchead bliadhna ’s a h-aon, ...ceithir fhìchead bliadhna ’s a deich

xii. Ninety-one to a hundred:

ceithir fhìchead ’s a h-aon-deug, ceithir fhìchead ’s a dhà-dheug, ...ceud (ciad)
Used adjectivally:

ceithir fichead bliadhna’s a h-aon-deug, ...ceud bliadhna

Note: example of using large numbers:

ceud bliadhna tri fichead’s a cóig: 165 years
mite: thousand; milleann: million; billeann: billion

c) In Scotland:

According to Dwelly’s Illustrated Gaelic to English Dictionary: trithead / triochad (thirty);
ceathrad (forty); caogad (fifty); seagad (sixty); seachdad (seventy); ochdad (eighty);
naochad (ninety).

47 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

THE ORDINAL NUMBERS: TRADITIONAL

Ordinal numbers give the position of things in a series.

First:

an ciad fhear (the first man), a’ chiad bhean (the first woman – see Dwelly’s Dictionary).

Usually today, one writes a’ chiad whether the following noun is masculine or feminine.

Like aon, ciad lenites the following consonant unless it’s d, t, s; for example, a’ chiad taigh.

Second to Tenth, with Following Masculine Nouns:

When a number is followed by a masculine noun, there is no following lenition.

an dàrna / dara: the second; an treas: the third; an ceathramh: the fourth; an cóigeamh: the fifth; an siathamh: the sixth; an seachdamh: the seventh; an t-ochdamh: the eighth; an naoidheamh: the ninth; an deicheamh: the tenth

Also, an dara* fear (the second man); an t-ochdamh mios (the eighth month)

Second to Tenth, with Following Feminine Nouns:

ceathramh / cóigeamh / siathamh / seachdamh / ochdamh are affected when preceding a feminine noun:

a’ ceathramh bliadhna, a’ chóigeamh seachdain, an t-siathamh nìchean, an t-seachdamh beinn, an ochdamh caora (in this case, the t- is omitted)

Higher ordinals:

Higher ordinals follow the pattern you would expect:

a’ chiad fhear deug; am ficheadhamh duine; an treas là fichead; an ceathramh là deug air fhichead...

* For more on dara, see Dwelly’s Dictionary under cuid.
THE WATCH, TIMEPIECE: THE CLOCK

Here we use the information above to tell the time. Let’s start with some common words and expressions to tell the time:

THE HOURS:

TELLING THE TIME:
**CLEACHDADH**

a) Feumaidh mi a bhith ann aig leth-uair às déidh ochd.

b) Tòisichd a’ choinneamh ann a’ cóig mionaidean.

c) Thig mi ’gad iarraidh aig meadhon latha.

d) Thuirt e rium gum biodh a’ chéilidh seachad ann a’ cairteal na h-uarach.

e) Dé’n uair a bha e nuair a dh’fhalbh iad?

**FACLAN**

Dé’n uair a tha e? : What time (hour) is it? Na mionaidean : the minutes

Na h-uairean : The hours uair, -ean (f.) : (an) hour mionaid, -ean (f.) : minute(s)

meadhon latha : noon, mid-day cairteal : quarter uair-a-thide (f.) : hour (of time)

meadhon oidhch’ : midnight leth-uair (f.) : a half hour às déidh, an déidh : after, past

uair gu leth : an hour and a half cairteal na h-uarach : quarter of an hour

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### 49 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE

**SUBORDINATE CLAUSES**

**RELATIVE CLAUSES :**

Relative clauses have three main groups :

**Type A**

a. The relative pronoun a (who, whom, that, which) + **Positive Statement** (Independent) form of verb :

   Sin an duine a rinn e (That’s the man who did it)

b. In the dative, a gives way to the preposition followed by the Positive Question (Dependent) form of the verb :

   Sin an duine leis an robh mi ’falbh (“That’s the man with whom I was going (out)” ➔ That’s the man I was going out with)

   Sin duine aig a bheil an guth! (“That’s a man at whom is the voice” ➔ That’s a man who has (a good) voice)

**Type B**

a. Nach + Negative Question form of the verb :

   Sin an duine nach deach ann (That’s the man who didn’t go)
b. Here is an example in the Dative case:

\[
\text{Sin an duine ris nach eil mi `bruidhinn} \quad (\text{That's the man to whom I'm not speaking}) \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{That's the man I'm not speaking to})
\]

**Type C**

a. **Na** (what, all that, that which) + Positive Statement form of the verb:

\[
\text{Thug e dhomh na bha aige} \quad (\text{He gave me that which (all) that he had})
\]

\[
\text{Bi toilichte leis na th’ agad!} \quad (\text{Be pleased with what you have!})
\]

**Note**: remember the use of the **relative future** form of the verb: \text{Bheiri dhomh na bhios aige}. In other tenses, the relative clause form of the verb coincides with the Positive Statement / Independent form.

**Noun Clauses**

After verbs of saying, thinking, believing, and understanding, use **gu / gun** (before d) / **gum** (+ labial consonants) for a positive statement, \text{nach} for a negative statement, + **dependent** form of the verb. For example:

\[
\text{Tha e ag ràdh gu bheil e ’dol ann} \quad (\text{He says (that) he’s going})
\]

\[
\text{Tha e a’ creidsinn gun do dh’ falbh} \quad (\text{He believes (that) she went away})
\]

\[
\text{Smaoinich e gum falbhadh e} \quad (\text{He thought (that) he would go away})
\]

\[
\text{Thuirt e nach robh e ‘tighinn} \quad (\text{He said (that) he wasn’t coming})
\]

**Consequential and Conditional Clauses**

Use of “\text{if}”:

a. **Ma**: positive form + positive statement form of verb in present, past, or the relative future form.

\[
\text{Ma tha thu sgith, leig d’ anail} \quad (\text{literally, “If you’re tired, let your breath” \rightarrow take a rest})
\]

\[
\text{Ma bhios tu sgith as déidh sin, dèan suidhe} \quad (\text{If you’re – literally “will be” – tired after that, sit down})
\]

\[
\text{Ma chuala tu e, innis dhomh} \quad (\text{If you heard it, tell me})
\]

b. **Nan, nam** (+ labial consonants): positive form with conditional and “pluperfect” tenses, dependent form. “Pluperfect” means the past in past – for example, “I had left before he arrived”, where **had** represents a more distant past than **arrived**.

\[
\text{Nan tigeadh tu, bhithinn toilichte} \quad (\text{If you came – literally, “would come” – I would be glad})
\]

\[
\text{Nam faighinn dhachaidh, chan iarrainn aise} \quad (\text{literally, “If I would / could get home, I wouldn’t want out of it” \rightarrow I wouldn’t want to leave it})
\]

\[
\text{Nan robh thu air éisdeachd, cha bhiodh tu air tuiteam} \quad (\text{literally, “If you were after listening, you wouldn’t be after falling” \rightarrow If you had listened, you wouldn’t have fallen})
\]

c. **Mur(a)**: Negative “if not, unless” + dependent form of verb, all tenses
Mura dèan thu sin, bidh mi riut! (literally, “If you don’t (will not do) that, I’ll be at you (or to you)” — I’ll scold you).

Mur do rinn thu d’ obair, chan fhaigh thu pàidheadh (If you didn’t do your work, you won’t get payment)

d. Mar gu / gun / gum : “as if” + dependent :

Ruith e mar gu robh duine as a dhéidh (He ran as if someone were after him)

CONCESSIVE CLAUSES

a. ged a “although” + Relative form of verb

Ged a dh’ iarras tu, chan fhaigh thu (Although you (will) ask, you won’t get)

b. ged nach “although – – not” + Dependent form of verb.

Ged nach do dh’ iarr thu, fhuair thu (Although you didn’t ask, you received)

ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

a. Of time :

i. an uair a*, ’nuair a, “when” + Relative

’nuair nach, “when – not” + Dependent

Nuair a dh’ fhalhas e, bidh mi brônach (When he goes – literally “will go” – I’ll be sad)

Nuair nach till e, thig leamsa (When he doesn’t return – literally, “won’t return” – come with me)

ii. mus, mas, mun, ‘before’ + Dependent

Chuir mi thuige litir mas do dh’fhalbh mi (I sent him a letter before I went away)

iii. gus, “until” + Dependent

Bidh mi ann gus an till thu (I’ll be here until you (will) return)

iv. gun, “until” + Dependent

Bidh mi ann gun till thu (I’ll be here until you (will) return)

b. Of Place :

i. far an, am (before labials), “where” + Dependent

The song (Strathspey) “Far am bi mi-fhin ’s ann ann a bhios mo dhòchas” (Where I myself will be, there will my love – literally “hope”, be)

* There is also the dialectical form: dar a.
ii. far nach, “where – not” + Dependent

   Tha mi ’dol far nach robh mi riamh (I’m going where I never was before)

c. Of Reason : Compound conjunctions with gu / gun / gum / nach + Dependent, or Relative Pronoun + Independent

i. “Because” : A chionn’s gu(n) / nach, Air tàilleabh gu(n) / nach, airson gu(n) / nach

   Chaidh mi a thadhal air airson gu robh e tinn (I visited him – literally, “went visiting on him”, because he was sick)

ii. “Since” : Seach gu(n)/nach+ Dependent

   Seach gun d’tàinig e, b’ urrainn dhuinn tòiseachadh (Since he came, we were able to begin)

iii. Compare : on a/bhon a + Relative Pronoun + Independent

   (Bh)on a thàinig e dhachaidh, chan eil Màiri fo chùram tuilleadh (Since he came home, Mary is no longer worried – literally, “under anxiety”)

and

iv. Compare : o nach/bho nach + Dependent

   (Bh)o nach d’tàinig e dhachaidh, tha Màiri fo chùram (Since he didn’t come home, Mary is worried)

d. Of Purpose : “So that”, a chum’s gu(n) / nach + Dependent

   Tha mi ’sgriobhadh thugad a chum’s gun tìg thu dhachaidh (I’m writing you so that you’ll come home)

e. Of Manner : “As”, mar a + Relative

   Rinn mi e mar a dh’iarr thu (I did (made) it as you asked)

INDIRECT QUESTIONS

These come after verbs of asking or wondering.

a. Use particles an, am, nach + Dependent

   Dh’ fhaighnich e am faighinn dhan a’ chèilidh (literally, “He asked would I get to the ceilidh”). This is expressed in English as, “He asked if I would get (be able to go) to the ceilidh”

b. However, with question words, use their usual constructions

   Dh’ fhaighnich e ciamar a gheibhinn dhan a’ chèilidh (He asked how – literally “by what means”, I would get to the ceilidh)

   Dh’ fhaighnich e càit’ an do dh’ fhàg mi an sgian (He asked where I left the knife)
c. Note the idiom: **feuch an** + dependent

Chaidh e ann feuch an dèanadh e sìth (He went to see (try) if he would (could) make peace)

d. Look for special idiomatic uses of **agus**:

Chunnaic mi i ’s mi ‘coiseachd ri taobh na h-aibhne (I saw her while I was walking – literally, “and I walking”, by the river)

“Seo dhut,” ars ise ’s i ‘toirt dhomh cupa (“Here you are”, she said, giving me – literally, “and she giving me”, a cup)

e. Look for special idiomatic uses of **as déidh**:

As déidh dhut tilleadh, théid sinn dhan a’ chéilidh (After you return – literally, “after for you returning”, we’ll go to the ceilidh)

As déidh dhà bruidhinn, dh’ fhàg e an taigh (After speaking – literally, “after for him speaking”, he left the house)

---

**50 SEALLAGAN – GRAMMAR AT A GLANCE**

**COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES**

The basic rule: for comparative and superlative forms of regular adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Add -i</th>
<th>after the last broad vowel</th>
<th>same as for the genitive singular feminine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add -e</td>
<td>at the end of the word</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prefix the comparative with **nas** (present tense), or with **na bu** (past tense)

Prefix the superlative with **as** (present tense), or with **a bu** (past tense)
Here is a generalisation of how to make comparatives and superlatives of adjectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Comparative</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present tense (-er, more)</td>
<td>Present tense (-est, most)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Tense (-er, more)</td>
<td>Past Tense (-est, most)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Rule : “Slender” (front) vowel</th>
<th>glic : wise</th>
<th>nas glice</th>
<th>as glice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu ghlice</td>
<td>a bu ghlice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Rule : “Broad” (back or central) vowel</td>
<td>ãrd : high</td>
<td>nas ãirde</td>
<td>as ãirde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na b’ãirde</td>
<td>a b’ãirde</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naomh : holy</td>
<td>nas naoimhe</td>
<td>as naoimhe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu naoimhe</td>
<td>a bu naoimhe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polysyllables in -ach</td>
<td>cudthromach : important</td>
<td>nas cudthromaiche</td>
<td>as cudthromaiche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu chudthromaiche</td>
<td>a bu chudthromaiche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel change : a/o ⇔ ui</td>
<td>bog : soft, damp</td>
<td>nas buige</td>
<td>as buige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu buige</td>
<td>a bu buige</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ea/lo ⇔ i</td>
<td>sean : old</td>
<td>nas sine</td>
<td>as sine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu shine</td>
<td>a bu shine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ea/eu/ia ⇔ ei</td>
<td>geur (giar) : sharp</td>
<td>nas géire</td>
<td>as géire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu ghéire</td>
<td>a bu ghéire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a ⇔ oi</td>
<td>mall : slow</td>
<td>nas moille</td>
<td>as moille</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu mhoille</td>
<td>a bu mhoille</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disyllabics with contraction</td>
<td>bòidheach : handsome</td>
<td>nas bóidhche</td>
<td>as bóidhche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu bhóidhche</td>
<td>a bu bhóidhche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iosal/iseal : low</td>
<td>nas isle</td>
<td>as isle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na b’ isle</td>
<td>a b’ isle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>milis : sweet</td>
<td>nas milse</td>
<td>as milse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu mhilse</td>
<td>a bu mhilse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uasal : noble</td>
<td>nas uaisle</td>
<td>as uaisle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na b’uaisle</td>
<td>a b’ uaisle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cumhang : narrow</td>
<td>nas cuinge</td>
<td>as cuinge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu chuinge</td>
<td>a bu chuinge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>àlainn : lovely</td>
<td>nas àille</td>
<td>as àille</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na b’àille</td>
<td>a b’àille</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blasda : tasty</td>
<td>nas blasda</td>
<td>as blasda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some indeclinable disyllabics see note a)</td>
<td>na bu bhlasda</td>
<td>a bu bhlasda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gasda : excellent</td>
<td>nas gasda</td>
<td>as gasda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu ghasda</td>
<td>a bu ghasda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sona : contented</td>
<td>nas sona</td>
<td>as sona</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu shona</td>
<td>a bu shona</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disyllabics in -each</td>
<td>na bu chinntiche</td>
<td>a bu chinntiche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cinnteach : certain</td>
<td>nas chinntiche</td>
<td>as chinntiche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu chinntiche</td>
<td>a bu chinntiche</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beag : small</td>
<td>nas lugha*</td>
<td>as lugha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu lugha</td>
<td>a bu lugha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mór : big</td>
<td>nas motha</td>
<td>as motha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu mhotha</td>
<td>a bu mhotha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>math : good</td>
<td>nas fheàrr</td>
<td>as fheàrr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na b’fheàrr</td>
<td>a b’fheàrr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olc : evil / dona : bad</td>
<td>nas miosa</td>
<td>as miosa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu mhiosa</td>
<td>a bu mhiosa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>làidir : strong</td>
<td>nas treasa*</td>
<td>as treasa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu treasa</td>
<td>a bu treasa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goirid, geàrr : short</td>
<td>nas giorra</td>
<td>as giorra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu ghirra</td>
<td>a bu ghirra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leathann : broad</td>
<td>nas leatha</td>
<td>as leatha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu leatha</td>
<td>a bu leatha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furasda, fearasda : easy</td>
<td>nas fhasa</td>
<td>as fhasa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na b’fhasa</td>
<td>a b’ fhasa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duilich : difficult</td>
<td>nas duilge</td>
<td>as duilge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu duilge</td>
<td>a bu duilge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teth : hot</td>
<td>nas teotha</td>
<td>as teotha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na bu teotha</td>
<td>a bu teotha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With copula only</td>
<td>‘s docha</td>
<td>‘s docha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toigh : agreeable, pleasant, loved</td>
<td>bu docha</td>
<td>bu docha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘s annsa</td>
<td>‘s annsa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ionmhainn : beloved</td>
<td>b’annsa</td>
<td>b’annsa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Also nas / as bige, na bu / a bu bhige
Also nas làidire, etc.
Note:

a) Use na : than, in comparison:
   Tha seo nas lugha na sin (This is smaller than that)

b) Bu follows its regular rules of lenition, except that it does lenite s.

c) Note common modern usage:
   ‘S fheàrrde mi sin! (”I am/will be the better of that”  →  I feel better after that)
   B’fheàrrde mi sin! (”I was the better of that “  →  I felt better after that)
BRIATHRAN A’ GHRÀMAIR : GRAMMATICAL TERMS

Note: only the feminine nouns are marked in the following (as boir. which is the abbreviation of boireannta), but all unmarked nouns are to be understood as masculine.

facal (faclan/facail) word(s)
fuaimreag, -an (boir.) vowel(s)
stràc, -an (boir.) accent(s) (on vowels)
stràc gheur acute accent
stràc mhall grave accent (also stràc throm)
consan (consain) consonant(s)
fuaimneachadh, -aidhean pronunciation(s)
litreachadh, -aidhean spelling(s)
sèimheachadh, -aidhean lenition(s)
ainmear, -an noun(s)
gnè, -thean (boir.) gender(s)
fireannta masculine
boireannta feminine
clèir, -an (ainmeir) declension(s)
a’ chiad chlàr fireannta the first declension masculine
a’ chiad chlàr boireannta the first declension feminine
tuiseal(tuislean) grammatical case(s)
an tuiseal aínmeach the nominative (subject) case
an tuiseal gairmeach the vocative case (the address form)
an tuiseal tabhartach the dative case (the object of the preposition)
an tuiseal ginideach the genitive case (the possessive form)
singile singular (number)
iolra, -n plural(s)
buadhair, -ean adjective(s)
coimeas bhuadhairean comparison of adjectives
coimeasach comparative
feabhasach superlative
gniomhair, -ean verb(s)
gniomhair riaghailteach regular verb
gniomhair mi-riaghailteach irregular verb
freumh, -an root(s) (of a verb)
am bith-ghniomhair the substantive (basic) verb “to be”
an copail the copula (the assertive verb “to be”)
tràth, -an tense(s)
an tràth làthaireach the present tense
an tràth coileanta the past tense
an tràth teachdail the future tense
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaelic Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an tràth claon</td>
<td>the conditional tense (also an tràth cumhach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an guth spreigeach</td>
<td>the active voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an guth fulangach</td>
<td>the passive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-ghniomhair, -ean</td>
<td>adverb(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aìnmeair(an) gniomhairreach</td>
<td>verbal noun(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ròsg-rann, -taichean</td>
<td>sentences(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abairt, -ean (boir.)</td>
<td>phrase(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clàs, -an</td>
<td>clause(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roinn, -tean (boir.)</td>
<td>clause(s), section(s), paragraph(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roinn iochdarach</td>
<td>subordinate clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roinn dhàimheach</td>
<td>relative clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roinn ainmearach</td>
<td>noun clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roinn air chumha</td>
<td>conditional clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roinn ghéilleachail</td>
<td>concessive clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roinn cho-ghniomhaireach</td>
<td>adverbial clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ceisd, -ean (boir.)</td>
<td>question(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ceisd(-ean) neo-dhireach</td>
<td>indirect question(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>earrann, -earrainn (boir.)</td>
<td>extract(s), paragraph(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alt, -an</td>
<td>(definite) article(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riochdair, -ean</td>
<td>pronoun(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riochdair(-ean) pearsanta</td>
<td>personal pronoun(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riochdair(-ean) dàimheach</td>
<td>relative pronoun(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riochdair(-ean) sealbhach</td>
<td>possessive pronoun(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roimhear, -an</td>
<td>preposition(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ro-riochdair(ean)</td>
<td>prepositional pronoun(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abairt(-ean) (boir.) módach</td>
<td>modal expression(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>àireamh(-an) àrdail</td>
<td>cardinal number(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>àireamh(-an) òrdail</td>
<td>ordinal number(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dual-chainnt, -ean (boir.)</td>
<td>dialect(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gnàthas(-an)-cainnte</td>
<td>idiom(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FACLAN: VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Irish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘s docha: “is possible”, perhaps</td>
<td>a' gabhail: taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘s math sin: that’s good! (taken into English as “smashing”)</td>
<td>a’ gearan: complaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: out of, from</td>
<td>a’ gearadh: cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a bheil?: is?</td>
<td>a’ ghrian: the sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a h-uide duine: everyone</td>
<td>a’ glanadh: cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-mach: out</td>
<td>a’ glaoadhadh: crying out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-nis: now</td>
<td>a’ lasadh: lighting (up), kindling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-steach: inside (with verb of motion)</td>
<td>a’ leantainn: following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ breith: bearing</td>
<td>a’ leughadh: reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ bruidhinn: speaking, talking</td>
<td>a’ lorg: finding, discovering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cadal: sleeping</td>
<td>a’ nighe: washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ call: losing (caill! : lose)</td>
<td>a’ nigheadairchaichd: washing (clothes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cantainn/a’ cantail/ag rádh(ainn): saying</td>
<td>a’ ruigsinn: reaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ chaidh chlár boireannta: the first declension feminine</td>
<td>a’ ruith: running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ chaidh chlár fireannta: the first declension masculine</td>
<td>a’ seinn: singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cluich: playing</td>
<td>a’ siubhal: travelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cluinnintinn: hearing</td>
<td>a’ smaoinneachadh: thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ coimhead: watching, looking at</td>
<td>a’ suathadh: touching, rubbing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ coinneachadh: meeting</td>
<td>a’ suidhe: sitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ coiseachd: walking</td>
<td>a’ tadhail air: visiting (on)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ córdadh ri: agreeing with</td>
<td>a’ teagasg: teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ creidsinn: believing</td>
<td>a’ tighinn: coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cumail: keeping</td>
<td>a’ tiormachadh: drying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ cur: putting, sending</td>
<td>a’ toirt: giving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ deanamh: doing</td>
<td>a’ tôiseachadh: beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ deàrrsadh: shining</td>
<td>a’ trod: scolding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ deasachadh: preparing</td>
<td>abair: say! (imperative of irregular verb ag ràdh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ dol: going</td>
<td>abairt, -ean (boir.): phrase(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ dùsgadh: waking</td>
<td>abairt, -ean (boir.) módach: modal expression(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ fàgail: leaving</td>
<td>aca: at them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ faicinn: seeing</td>
<td>ag éibheachd/ag éigheachd: shouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ faighinn: receiving</td>
<td>ag éirigh: rising, getting up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ faighneachd: saying</td>
<td>ag éisdeachd: listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ faighneadh: asking</td>
<td>ag iarraidh: wanting, requesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ falbh: going away</td>
<td>ag innse: telling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ feadalaich: whistling</td>
<td>ag ionnsachadh: learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ feitheamh: waiting</td>
<td>ag ithe: eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a’ fosgladh: opening</td>
<td>ag obair: working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ag òl : drinking
agad : at you
agaibh : at you (pl.)
againn : at us
agam : at me
agus : and (short forms are ’s and is)
aice : at her/it
aig : at (aig an aon àm – at the same time)
aige : at him/it
ainm : name
ainmear, -an : noun(s)
ainmear, -an gniomhair : verbal noun(s)
air : on (air an fhidhill – on the fiddle)
air : on him/it
àireamh, -an àrdail : cardinal number(s)
àireamh, -an órdail : ordinal number(s)
airgead : money (literally “silver”)
aisde : out of her/it
aiseag (boir.) : ferry
aithne (boir.) : knowledge, acquaintance
Alba (boir.) : Scotland
alt : stream, brook (possessive : uillt)
alt : joint, condition
alt, -an : (definite) article(s)
àm : time
am bi? : will...be?
am bith-ghnìomhair : the substantitive (basic) verb “to be”
an : the definite article “the”
an copail : the copula (the assertive verb “to be”)
an diugh : today
an dràsda : now (right now)
an guth fulangach : the passive voice
an guth spreigeach : the active voice
an robh? : was?
An Cuilthionn : The Cuillins
An t-Eilean Sgitheanach : the Isle of Skye
an tràth claoi : the conditional tense (also
 an tràth cumhach)
an tràth coileanta : the past tense
an tràth láthaireach : the present tense
an tràth teachdail : the future tense
an tuiseal ainmeach : the nominative (subject) case
an tuiseal gairmeach : the vocative case (the address form)
an tuiseal ginideach : the genitive case (the possessive form)
an tuiseal tabhartach : the dative case (the object of the preposition)
anail (boir.) : air, breath
amnoch : late
ann : in him/it
ann an : in
annad : in you
annaibh : in you (pl.)
annainn : in us
annam : in me
anns a’ chlas : in the class
annta : in them
aodach : clothing, clothes
aodann : face
aon : one
aotrom : light (adj.)
aran : bread
àrd : high, tall
ás : out of him/it
ás déidh, an déidh, ás deogaidh : after, past
ásad : out of you
ásaibh : out of you (pl.)
ásainn : out of us
ásam : out of me
ásda : out of them
ath : next
athair : father
baile : town (originally meant farmer’s enclosed homestead)
bainne : milk
balach : boy
barail (boir.) : opinion
bàrd : poet (lowest rank of the filidh)
barr : top, summit
bàta : boat
beag : little
bean (boir.) : woman, wife
beannachd (boir.) : blessing
beatha (boir.) : life
beinn (boir.) : mountain
bha : was
bho/o : from
bhuaibh : from you (pl.)
bhuainn : from us
bhuaippe : from her/it
bhuaite : from him/it
bhuan : from me
bhupa : from them
bhuit : from you
bithidh, bidh : will be
blàth : warm, kind, tender
bó (boir.) : cow
bodach : old man
boireanta : feminine
bonaid (boir.) : bonnet, cap
bòrd : table
bradan : salmon
brèagh : beautiful
bròg, -an (boir.) : shoe(s)
brònach : sad
buadhair, -ean : adjective(s)
cabhag (boir.) : hurry
cabhaig : hurry, dative feminine form
cadal : sleep
caillag (boir.) : girl
càirdean : friends (in plural also “relatives”)
cairteal : quarter
càite : where? (cia àite : what place?)
càl : cabbage
cala : harbour
calas : a strait (of water)
caora (boir.) : sheep
car : somewhat
caraid : friend
carson : why? (cia airson : what for?)
cas (boir.) : foot
cat : cat (possessive : cait)
ceann : head
cèarr : wrong (dialectally : left)
ceart : right (adj.)
céilidh (boir.) : meeting
ceisd, -ean (boir.) : question(s)
ceisd, -ean neo-dhireach : indirect question(s)
ceithir : four
ceòl na fidhle : the music of the fiddle
cèòlmhor : grand music
ceòthach : foggy, misty
ceum : step
cha bhi : will not be
cha robh : was not
chan eil : is not
cho sona : so happy, content
 ciad (also ceud) : hundred
ciallach : sensible
clamar : how? (literally “what like”?).
  **Ciamar a tha thu?** (How are you?)
cidsin : kitchen
cinnteach : sure, certain
cladach : shore
clann (boir.) : children
clàr, -an (ainmeir) : declension(s)
clas : class
clas, -an : clause(s)
cleachdadh : practice
cnoc : hill (possessive : cnuic)
có : who?
co às : where from? (from cia às: out of what?)
co dhìùbh : anyway
co-ghniomhair, -ean : adverb(s)
co-là-breith : birthday
cogadh : war
cóig : five
coineas bhuadhairean : comparison of adjectives
coineasach : comparative
coin : dogs
coinneamh (boir.) : meeting
cóir : kind (adj.)
coire (boir.) : kettle
comann : society, club
còmhradh : conversation
consan (consain): consonant(s)
cosnadh: winning, earning
côta: coat
cothrom, -an: opportunity(-ies)
creag (boir.): rock, crag
crioch (boir.): end, boundary
cruaidh: hard
cù: dog (possessive: coin)
cuaírt (boir.): circuit, excursion
cuaírt siubhail: adventure
cuideachadh: help
cuideachd: too, also, as well
cuímhne, cuimhn’: memory
cuímseach: somewhat, rather
cuímseach math: moderately well
(equivalent to “okay”)
cuine: when? (cia úine: what time?)
cúram: care, anxiety
curran, -an: carrot(s)
dà: two
de: of, off
dé: what? (from ciod e?)
deich: ten
deiseil: ready, right (direction)
deoch (boir.): drink
dha: to, for him/it
dhaibh: to, for them
dhan chlas: to (the) class
dheth: off him/it
dhi: to, for her/it
dhibh: off you (pl.)
dhinn: off us
dhiom: off me
dhiot: off you
dhith: off her/it
dhiubh: off them
dhomh: to, for me
dhuibh: to, for you (pl.)
dhùinn: to, for us
dhùigse: woke (verb), past tense of dhùig
dhut: to, for you
dicheallach: diligent
dinichean: jeans
dinnear (boir.): dinner
direach: just, directly
(an) dìth: the pair, the two (people)
do: to, for
dòchas: hope, confidence
dona: bad
dorus: door
dreuchd (boir.): job, work position
druim: back
duais (boir.): prize/award
dual-chainnt, -ean (boir.): dialect(s)
dùil (boir.): expectation
duilich: difficult, sorry
duine: man, person, husband
Dùn Éideann: Dunedin, Edinburgh
dùthaich (boir.): country
e: he, him, it
e-fhéin: himself
eachdraidh (boir.): history, tradition, story
eagal: fear
earbsa (boir.): confidence, trust
earrach: springtime
earrann, -earrainn (boir.): extract(s), paragraph(s)
èasgaidh: willing, nimble, active
eile: other, another
Éilidh: Ellen, Helen
Éirinn (boir.): Ireland
eòlas: knowledge, acquaintanceship
esan: he, it (emphatic)
facal (faclan/facail): word(s)
fàilte (boir.): salute, salutation, welcome, hail!
feabhasach: superlative (coimeasach: comparative)
feadan: chanter (of a bagpipe)
feadhainn: some, several
feasgar: evening (feasgar math: good evening)
fèith (boir.): sinew
feòil (boir.): meat
feuch: see, try
feuchaibh fhéin: you, yourselves try
feum: need, use
leotha : by, with them
leth-uair (boir.) : a half hour
litir (boir.) : letter
litreachadh, -aidhean : spelling(s)
lobht, -aidh : loft
loch : lake
luath : quick, fast
luchd-ionnsachaidh : learners
luchd-obrach : "work people", staff
ma tha : then; literally, "if (it) is (so)"
mac : son
Mac/Nic 'Illebhràth : MacGillivray
Mac/NicChoinnich : MacKenzie
madainn (boir.) : morning *madainn mhath* : good morning)
mall : slow
maol : bald
mar : as, like
mara : of the sea (possessive of muir)
math : good
màthair : mother
meadhon latha : noon, mid-day
meadhon oidhch' : midnight
meadhonach : middling
measil air : fond of, keen on
measg : midst
meud : size
mi : I, me
mi-fhéin (mi-fhin) : my self
mil (boir.) : honey *rudan milis* : “sweet things”)
mile (boir.) : thousand
min : smooth
mionaid, -ean (boir.) : minute(s)
miotag (boir.) : glove, mitten
mireagach : playful, sporting
mise : I, me (emphatic)
mór (also mòr) : big
móran : much, a lot
mu : about
mu dhéidhinn/dheòghainn : concerning, about
mu dheireadh : at last
mu dheireadh thall : at long last
mu thràth : already, earlier
muir : sea
mullach : top, summit
Na Hearadh : Harris
Na Siophortaich : The Seaforth Highlanders
Na Stàitean Aonaichte : The United States (of America)
naidheachd (boir.) : news
naidheachd an latha : the news of the day
naoi (naodh) : nine
nead : nest
nic : used in surnames with reference to female – from *nighean mhic*
nòs : style, tradition, usage
nuair a : when
obair (boir.) : work
obh! : oh! : a groan
ochd : eight
oidhche : night *(oidhche mhath* : good night)
oilthigh : university
oirbh : on you (pl.)
oirnn : on us
oirre : on her/it
òr : gold
òran : song
òran luadhaidh : waulking, milling song
orm : on me
orr : on them
ort : on you
pàirc (boir.) : park, field
pios : "a piece", a short distance
piuthar (boir.) : sister
preas : cupboard
priseil : precious
pròiseil : proud
rann (pl. rannan or ranntaichean) (boir.) : verse(s)
Raonaid : Rachel
rathad : road
ri : to
riochdair, -ean : pronoun(s)
riochdair, -ean dàimheach : relative pronoun(s)
riochdair, -ean pearsanta : personal pronoun(s)
riochdair, -ean sealbhach : possessive pronoun(s)
rionnach : mackerel
ris : to him/it
rithe : to her/it
rium : to me
riut : to you
riutha : to them
ro : too (used with adjective)
ro-riochdair, -ean : prepositional pronoun(s)
roimh : before
roimhe : before him/it
roimhear, -an : preposition(s)
roimhpe : before her/it
roinn ainmearach : noun clause
roinn air chumha : conditional clause
roinn cho-ghniomhaireach : adverbial clause
roinn dhàimheach : relative clause
roinn ghéilleachail : concessive clause
roinn iochdarach : subordinate clause
roinn, -tean (boir.) : clause(s), section(s), paragraph(s)
romhad : before you
romhaibh : before you (pl.)
romhainn : before us
romham : before me
romhpa : before them
ròsg-rann, -taichean (boir.) : sentences(s)
rud, -an : thing(s)
ruibh : to you (pl.)
ruinn : to us
sàillte : salted
Samhainn (boir.) : Hallow-tide; November
samhradh : summertime
saoghal : world
seachad : past, over
seachd : seven
Sealan Nuadh (boir.) : New Zealand
seanchas : tale, story, conversation, discourse, history
sèimheachadh, -aidhean : lenition(s)
seo : this (demonstrative adjective)
seòl : a sail
seòmar : room
sguel : story
sgriob (boir.) : jaunt, excursion
shios : down
sia : six
sibh : you (plural, also formal)
sibh-fhéin : yourselves (in some dialects : sibh(p)-fhéin)
sibhse : you (plural emphatic)
side (boir.) : weather
singilte : singular (number)
sinn : we, us
sinn-fhin : ourselves
sinne : we, us (emphatic)
sinnsear : ancestor
sion : anything
sith (boir.) : peace, quietness, tranquility
sitheil : peaceful
siúcar : sugar
siúthad ! : go on!
slàn : healthy, whole
smòinich ! : think! imagine!
snòdha-gàire : smile
soitheach : dish
soitheach-sgudail : trash can
soithichean : dishes
sòlas : solace, comfort, consolation, contentment
solus : light, knowledge
sona : content
sonas : happiness, contentment
speur : sky
sùbair (boir.) : "a cuppa" (tea)
Steòrnabhagh : Stornoway
stràc gheur : acute accent
stràc mhall : grave accent (also stràc throm)
stràc, -an (boir.) : accent(s) (on vowels)
strainnsear, -an : stranger(s)
stuth cùbhraidh : "fragrant stuff" : perfume
suidhichte : situated (past participle of a’ suidheachadh)
Suidnidh : Sydney
súil (boir.) : eye
suipear (boir.) : supper
taghadh : election
taigh-òsda : inn, tavern
taobh : side
tapadh leat/leibh : thank you (singular/pl.,
                polite)
tapaidh : smart, manly
tarraing : pulling
teth : hot
tead, -an : string(s)
tha : am, is, are
thu : you (thou)
thu-fhéin : yourself
thuca : to them
thugad : to you
thugaibh : to you (pl.)
thugainn : to us
thugam : to me
thuice : to her/it
thuige : to him/it
thusa : you (singular, emphatic)
tighinn : coming
tir : land
toililchte : glad, happy, pleased
torman : rumbling sound
tràth : early

tràth, -an : tense(s)
tri : three
troimh : through
troimhe : through him/it
troimhe : through her/it
tromhad : through you
tromhaibh : through you (pl.)
tromhainn : through us
tromham : through me
tromhpa : through them
trosg : cod
tuiseal (tuislean) : grammatical case(s)
turas : trip, journey, voyage; time (period)
tùs : beginning, front, commencement,
     origin
uair sam bith : (at) any time
uair, -ean (boir.) : (an) hour(s)
ugh : egg
uile : every, all
uime : about him/it
uimpe : about her/it
ùine (boir.) : time
uinneag (boir.) : window
umad : about you
umaibh : about you (pl.)
umainn : about us
umainn : about us
umam : about me
umpa : about them
A native Gaelic speaker born in the Isle of Lewis and a graduate of Edinburgh University, Scotland, Catrìona NicÌomhair Parsons has been involved in the teaching of Gaelic language and song in North America for decades. For thirty summers, she taught Scottish Gaelic at the Gaelic College, St. Ann’s, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where she was commissioned to prepare Gàidhlig troimh Chòmhradh, a Gaelic course in three volumes with recorded text. For many years, she taught in the Celtic Studies Department of St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia; after retiring, she spent six years working for the newly constituted Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs. She has written well over a hundred Gaelic-English articles for local newspapers. Her poetry has been published in Scottish Gaelic periodicals GAIRM and GATH, and she has produced her solo CD of Gaelic songs entitled “Eileanan mo Ghaoil” in tribute both to Cape Breton and Lewis. From Seattle, Washington, to Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina; from Toronto to Nova Scotia, Canada; from Sydney, Australia, to Dunedin, New Zealand, Catrìona has been privileged to share her beloved language and culture with motivated students, many of whom are now instructors themselves.

This, her most recent work, is a synthesis of all of the grammatical insights garnered from decades of experience teaching Scottish Gaelic to learners around the world. It clearly demonstrates in easy-to-read chapters, tables, and examples how the Gaelic language is structured. Rules, forms, pronunciation, and a host of other issues are all logically and systematically explained. Furthermore, this book can act as a handy reference for either the beginner or native speaker.