



Aberlang's in a Box

A Guide to the Resources for Teachers

www.abdn.ac.uk/llmvc/research/aberlang's/

Resources Overview



An Introduction to 'Aberlangs in a Box'

What is Aberlangs?

Aberlangs is an initiative from the University of Aberdeen promoting Aberdeen as a City of Languages, which celebrates multilingualism as a positive force within the city and its broader surroundings. Cities of languages build on the idea that languages learning and the value of home, heritage and community languages (of Scottish as well as wider origins) are an asset to both individuals and collectives. We aim to work with councils, schools and the broader public to raise awareness of the value of languages, and offer a platform to celebrate multilingualism in our communities, building on the unique cultural and international heritage of the North East of Scotland.

How to use this box of resources:

- ✦ Each box contains materials which will help you to deliver the four activities detailed in this booklet. This booklet guides you through each activity step-by-step with additional 'bonus tasks' should you wish to delve deeper. Teacher facilitation notes are also included to help you along the way.
- ✦ For some activities, further resources are hosted online at our website. The website also includes master copies of the printed elements of the box should you need to replace them at any point. These can all be accessed here:

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/llmvc/research/aberlangs/>



What will my pupils learn?

- ✦ Across the four activities, pupils will learn to: recognise the languages used within their own classroom community; compare how different languages sound and are written; find, say and remember words from different languages; create, share and compare their own personal language stories.
- ✦ The resources link to the Curriculum for Excellence in terms of Languages (Modern Languages, Literacy and English, and the 1+2 approach), Social Studies and the Expressive Arts. By encouraging pupils to value their own languages and those of their community, the activities also support them to be confident individuals and responsible citizens.

Let us know how you get on!

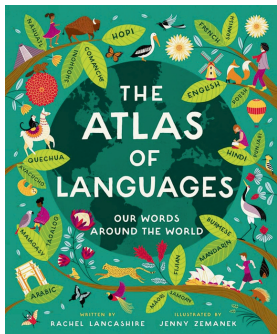
We'd love to hear about your experiences of using the resources and to see any examples of Aberlangs classroom exhibitions that your class creates. You can share these with us at aberlangs@abdn.ac.uk



For pupils who want to explore more!



Working with 'The Atlas of Languages'



Each 'Aberlangs in a Box' resource is accompanied by a free copy of 'The Atlas of Languages' for your school.

This page includes some follow-up prompts based on the book which may be useful for pupils who require further extension activities...



How languages travel across the world

Some languages are spoken all over the world, often far away from where they started. Many countries have a history of taking over and ruling others. This is known as colonisation. When the powerful languages of colonisers are introduced in a country, smaller languages can fade away. Find a language in the book that has spread this way, plus one that only has very few speakers left. What reasons can you think of for trying to keep a language alive?



Children are language learning superstars

Did you know that children are great when it comes to learning new languages and often learn faster than grown-ups? Find out what the book says about this. Why do you think it might be easier for you to pick up a language than it might be for an adult to learn one?



Finding the language family

Languages can be thought of as belonging to language families. These are drawn as a language tree in the book. Choose some languages from the Aberlangs videos or posters online, or ones spoken in your class. Then find which tree and which part of the world each one comes from.



Words that don't translate

The book shares lots of words from different languages, including some that are difficult to translate into English. Choose your favourite one. What does it tell you about the people who use it, or about the way they see the world? Can you think of any local Aberdeen (Doric/Scots) words that English does not really have? What's your favourite difference between English and Doric?

Activity 1



Global Greetings - Say 'Hello'



We are learning to:

- Listen to, recognise and use greetings in different languages
- Look for similarities and differences between languages
- Find out about the languages spoken by people in our class and beyond

Materials Needed:

- Pack of 'hello' cards - one card per pupil
- Teacher access to the internet for link provided for the extension task: www.note2map.com

Hook:

Often when learning a language, the first word you will learn is how to say 'hello'! This is because it's a very useful thing to know to make connections with people.

Activity structure:



Introduction: Starting with English, how many ways can the class think of to greet someone? (e.g. hello, hi, hiya, hey, alright?, morning, etc.)



- *Facilitation notes:* Would you say hello to these people in the same way: your best friend? the headteacher? someone you haven't met before? Do people in different parts of the UK have different ways of saying hello?



Spotlight on home/learned languages: how many hellos do we know?

Arrange the class into groups of 3/4 (or by table). In groups, they must create a list of all the different 'hellos' that they know from different languages.



- *Facilitation notes:* stress to pupils that spelling does not matter here. If they know a word, they can just write it down as it sounds. Collect their examples on the board and note which language it comes from. If you want to check how to spell certain words, Google Translate or lists like these might be helpful, bearing in mind that, just as in English with 'hello', 'hi', 'hey', etc., different languages may have multiple ways of saying hello: <https://www.berlitz.com/blog/hello-different-languages>

Bonus task - mapping languages:

When a language is mentioned in the task above, add it to a world map using an online map tool such as www.note2map.com. This will raise many interesting discussion points about where languages are spoken (many in more than one country) and why some languages have spread across the world more than others. You can also add to this map with each activity encountered as you go through the box.





For the **next activity**, use the pack of 'hello' cards.



Each pupil receives one card which includes: a word in another language which means 'hello', a rough pronunciation guide of how to say it aloud, and the language the word comes from.



Guess the language: All pupils circulate throughout the classroom, trying to speak to as many classmates as possible. When they meet a classmate, they must each read their 'hello' to each other and then swap cards.

Repeat this until at least fifteen swap opportunities have taken place.



For the second round, they must read their cards to each other and try to remember/guess which language the other person's 'hello' comes from. If at least one of the languages is correctly guessed, they must swap cards. If neither pupil guesses correctly, they must each hold on to their original card. The pupils then move on to find another classmate to pair with and the game repeats.

Bonus task - Guess the hello: Once the game above has been played for a while, you can then reverse the order of the questioning so that pupils read out the name of their language (e.g. German, Japanese, etc.) and their classmates must try to remember the word for 'hello' in that language based on their exposure to them in the previous round.



Difficulty Line-Up: Each pupil retains one 'hello' card. Instruct the pupils to arrange themselves in a line across the classroom with the easiest-to-pronounce at one end and the most difficult-to-pronounce at the other end. This will require the pupils to speak to each other to share their 'hellos' and negotiate some sort of 'order' amongst themselves.



Facilitation notes: probe with the pupils why they have placed the words as they have...



- Does similarity with English help? Are the languages at the 'easy' end related to English in terms of language family trees?
- Does it help if we've seen or heard the word before somewhere? (i.e. in modern languages lessons, in music/films/TV, etc.)
- Are certain sounds more difficult for English speakers? (e.g. the consonant clusters in something like 'Cześć' might feel unfamiliar for some)
- Does the length of a word/number of syllables make it more difficult?
- Does it depend on how many languages you know and which languages you know?

Exit task:

To reflect on what has been learned during the 'hello'-related activities, each pupil should work with a partner to write the best ending to the sentence:

"Today, we noticed that languages..."

Then invite pupils to share their sentences with the class.



Activity 2



Tell your own language story...

We are learning to:

- Examine the languages, words and traditions that make us who we are
- Create a museum exhibit that tells our own language story
- Compare languages and experiences from across our classroom community

Materials Needed:

- Exemplar cartonera (in box and online)
- Exemplar videos and poster interviews (online)
- Craft materials for cartonera making (see next page)
- Printouts of poster templates from the Aberlangs resources website
- Classroom tablets/cameras for potential interviews

Hook:

Everyone has a language story to tell, whether you speak one or ten languages! As a class, we will build an exhibition of our stories.

Activity structure:



Introduction - meet some real language stories

- Read through Andra's Cartonera as a class (there are two paper copies in the box and a PowerPoint version you can share on the classroom screen).
- Browse the interview video clips and the participant posters hosted on the Aberlangs website.
- Ask pupils: *what kind of things are Andra and the participants choosing to share about themselves?* (they may pick up on points such as: where they are from, languages they use, languages they are learning, favourite words and sayings, traditions they keep, etc.)



Spotlight on home/learned languages - 'Gather your own stories'

- Pupils should work in their tables/groups to verbally share responses to the following prompts. There is no need to write anything down yet.
 - **Round 1 – You and your languages**
 - Which languages do you speak or hear around you? This could be at home, at school or with friends.
 - Do you know any Scots/Doric? Do you know any sign language?
 - Do you talk differently to your friends compared to with a teacher?
 - **Round 2 – Words and sayings you love**
 - What is your favourite word in any language, and what does it mean?
 - Does your family have a favourite saying they use frequently?
 - Did anyone in your group say a word you had never heard before?

- **Round 3 – Celebrations and special things**

- What holiday, celebration or family tradition do you love most?
- What is a food that is special in your family?
- Do you have clothes you wear on special days, or an object at home that tells a story?

- **Round 4 - Looking ahead**

- Is there a language you would love to learn, or a place you would love to go one day?



Building a Classroom Exhibition

- Now that pupils have had time to share ideas on the general topics touched upon in the existing Aberlans exhibition materials, it's time for them to build their own classroom exhibition!
- To differentiate the task and to allow pupils ownership over the creation of their exhibits, offer three options to pupils (some may manage more than one):



Create your own cartonera:

The cartonera format is a hand-crafted book style emerging from grassroots publishing movements in Latin America. Using two cardboard covers with paper pages bound by string or treasury tags, pupils can fill their cartoneras with drawings, cut-outs, maps, favourite words and anything else related to their language story. For practicalities, there are several 'How to make a cartonera' videos available on YouTube.



Make your own Aberlans posters:

Drawing inspiration from the participant posters in the online Aberlans exhibition, pupils can create their own posters using one (or more) of our blank poster templates. These blank templates can be downloaded from the website and vary in complexity and focus (with options for both monolingual and multilingual pupils). In the 'photo frame' corner, pupils can either affix a photograph of themselves or draw a self-portrait.



Do your own interviews:

Drawing inspiration from the participant video clips in the online Aberlans exhibition, pupils can interview each other and record these to produce either podcast clips or short videos. The prompts in the previous discussion warm-up task are a good place to start for interview questions. Hold a launch 'watch party' once all of the interviews have been completed!

All of the exhibition options above can be created by both multilingual and monolingual pupils. For monolinguals, the focus can be more on language awareness, codeswitching, dialect variation, favourite words, language learning and future aspirations.

Activity 3



Spin the Wheel

We are learning to:

- Find the words for specific objects in another language
- Use an online or paper dictionary to search for translations
- Memorise new words and practise saying them out loud

Materials Needed:

- Spin the Wheel link: <https://wheelofnames.com/spt-w9s>
- Online dictionary link: <https://glosbe.com/>
- Worksheet 1: objects with blank spaces to write
- Worksheet 2: suitcase image with blank spaces to write
- Laminated object cards

Hook:

Going on holiday is a great chance to hear and try out other languages. But first we need to pack our case...

Activity structure:



Choose a language: This game can be played with any language. First, decide which language the class will focus on. All groups must play in the same language.



- *Facilitation notes:* Languages currently taught in school may be a good place to start to help pupils learn how the game works and to help build their vocabularies in those languages. You may wish to extend the game to bring in other languages spoken at home by pupils in the class.



Finding words: organise pupils into five groups. Pupils must find translations in the target language for the images on the worksheet and check out the pronunciation. They should then write the word under each object.

For example (with French)...



les palmes



la brosse à dents



la gourde



la pelle



le ballon de plage



le chapeau de soleil



- *Facilitation notes:* the website <https://glosbe.com/> is a good resource for this. If you have classroom iPads/laptops, pupils can work on this in groups. If not, the translations could be gathered as a class using the board. Or, it may be a language taught in your school which means you may have paper copies of language dictionaries pupils can use.

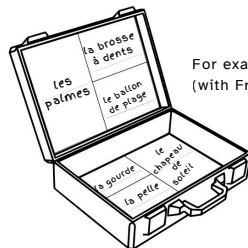


Memorising: Pupils should next be instructed to study the words on their worksheet. This is because they will need to have them memorised for the task. If they wish, they can share the memorising load (i.e. memorising one item per person).



Filling the suitcase: Without looking at the words, pupils should now 'fill' their holiday suitcase (on the second worksheet) by writing in the words they have memorised. One word per compartment.

- (or for a lower challenge, copy onto the suitcase worksheet before hiding the words)



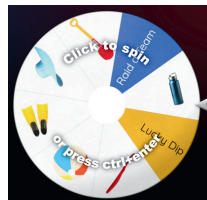
For example
(with French)...



Spin the Wheel Game: Pupils will remain in their groups to play this game. As teacher, you will have an envelope containing all of the laminated object cards. On the front-of-class board/screen, load the wheel:
<https://wheelofnames.com/spt-w9s>

Each group will take turns to spin the wheel and collect items from you for their suitcase. For example, if their spin lands on the image of the 'toothbrush', they may then collect a laminated toothbrush card and place it in the matching compartment of their suitcase. Encourage them to also say the word aloud in the language of the game.

If they land on 'Lucky Dip', they can choose any item still missing from their case. If they land on 'Raid a Team', they can steal an item missing from their case that another team has already placed. **The winning team are the team that manage to fill their suitcase first!**



Research more travel-related items and build these into a memory game. In French, for example, *Je pars en voyage et je mets dans ma valise...* ("I'm going on a trip and I'm packing in my suitcase..."). Each pupil adds a new item to the list which must be repeated in full each time. If you forget one, you're out.

The game can also be played with multiple languages (one language per group), or a single language such as French, as shown above.

Make Your Own: To follow-up on this game, pupils can make their own 'Spin the Wheel' games using different themes and objects. e.g. Christmas, sports, family, pets, foods... To do this, all they need to do is: choose a topic; decide on six items (and make a card for each); design somewhere to put the card (e.g. a drawing of a Christmas tree to hang Christmas items on, or a drawing of a fridge to place different foods, etc.); and then create a new wheel using the website.



Activity 4



Different Languages, Different Scripts

We are learning to:

- Explore the many different writing scripts used around the world
- Understand that writing systems work in different ways
- Talk about the similarities and differences between different scripts, including the languages spoken by pupils in our own class

Materials Needed:

- Group handouts with script examples presented in grid format (included in box and available on website)
- Classroom paper and pens for the copying bonus task
- Your school's phonics map/chart (for extension task)

Hook:

This task contains one secret hidden within eighteen kinds of writing. Can the class crack the code?

Activity structure:



Phrase Detectives: Each group will be given a sheet (included in the box) which contains eighteen phrases from different languages. Instruct the pupils that they must work together to hunt for clues and try to work out what the English translation would be for all these phrases (they all mean roughly the same thing). Once each group has shared their guess, reveal the answer: "Languages are amazing/incredible".



- *Facilitation notes:* The Spanish (C) and French (H) examples are likely to be the most helpful to pupils since 'increíbles' and 'incroyables' are closely related to English 'incredible' and French 'langues' is close to English 'language'. Or, home languages spoken may provide a 'way in' for some.



Spotlight on home languages: many of the languages in the table are spoken in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Ask if any pupils recognise a language that they know. If they speak the language, invite them to read the phrase out loud and teach the rest of the class how to say it too.



Looking closer: now the pupils will investigate how each language is written. First, ask the pupils to make two columns in their jotter or on paper:

Column 1 = writing that uses letters/symbols they already know and use in their own language(s)

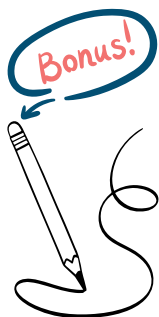
Column 2 = writing that is made up of letters/symbols they do not know

They should then sort the examples into these columns (using the letter assigned to each script example - i.e. A, B, C, etc.). Once completed, bring the class back together to compare lists and discuss the things they have noticed.

• *Facilitation notes:*



- **Answer key:** A- Yoruba, B- Hebrew, C- Spanish, D- Chinese, E- Russian, F- Greek, G- Arabic, H- French, I- Urdu, J- Korean, K- Hindi, L- Swahili, M- Thai, N- Polish, O- Amharic, P- Armenian, Q- Japanese, R- Tagalog
- **Ask pupils: which look similar to English?** Six examples use the Latin alphabet (A, C, H, L, N and R) - the same alphabet as English uses. However, pupils may notice that some use accents or diacritics in ways that English doesn't. Ask if they know what these are for? Answer: to give information on how a word should be pronounced and/or to distinguish similar words.
- **Ask pupils: are they all written in the same direction?** Not all writing runs left to right like English does. Hebrew (B), Arabic (G) and Urdu (I) all are written from right-to-left and should be read in this way. Ask if any pupils read a language that goes from right-to-left and ask them to share with the class how it works.
- **Ask pupils: are any languages using joined-up writing?** Some of the scripts keep their letters/symbols separate with gaps in between each one. Others flow as joined-up writing - e.g. Arabic (G) and Urdu (I) while Hindi (K) uses the Devanagari script which has a top line (a 'shirorekha' or headline) which the letters hang down from.
 - Thai (M) is an interesting example because it writes its consonants in a row and then stacks any vowel and tone marks above and below them.
- **Ask pupils: do we think all these languages work the same way as English, where a letter equals a sound?** Some of the scripts carry meanings in different ways. Most of the examples on the sheet operate so that a letter or symbol represents a specific sound (like English). However, others, like Chinese (D) and Japanese (Q), use symbols to represent a whole word or idea. For Amharic (O), each symbol represents a syllable.



Copy a script

Allow each pupil to choose the three examples from the table that they like best and ask them to copy them: either into their jotters or onto strips of paper/card which could then be included in the classroom exhibit (see Activity 2).



- *Facilitation notes:* post-activity, ask the pupils... which was their favourite one to write and why?; which one would they most like to learn more of?; did some scripts feel more difficult to write out than others?; what was difficult about them?

Exit task:

To reflect on what has been learned during the script-related activities, each pupil should work with a partner to write the best ending to the sentence:

“Today, we noticed that writing systems...”

Then invite pupils to share their sentences with the class.



EXTENSION: Create a new script for English!



English spelling is very messy: in many places, the pronunciation has changed over time but the spelling never caught up, resulting in lots of annoying silent letters (e.g. *night, though, comb, knee*, etc.).

Set pupils the challenge of developing a new script for English that they think will be easier for people to learn.

- Use the phonics system used in your school (e.g. sound mat, sounds chart, etc.)
- Pupils must create one new symbol per sound.
- Criteria: these should be...
 - different to English
 - quick to write
 - easy to tell apart.
- Each pupil will create a 'code sheet' that includes the phonic + their symbol.
- They should then write a secret message for their classmates to decode.
- For example:

The pupil creates a codesheet...

a = 

e = 

t = 

l = 

s = 

ch = 

and so on...

... and then writes a message of their choice:

= "Let's chat"

Facilitation notes:



- Differentiation:
 - Pupils who are very confident with their phonics may manage to create a new symbol for each sound on your phonics chart. To push them even further, they can introduce punctuation marks too. Also, some may wish to create a script that writes and reads right-to-left rather than left-to-right.
 - Pupils who are less confident may find it easier to start with the secret message and then work backwards, creating only the symbols that are needed for the sounds in their message.
- Alternatively, the task can also be run with pupils creating a *one word = one symbol* code (similar to how Chinese is written).
- This activity encourages pupils to develop phonemic awareness and think more deeply about how English spelling behaves compared to their new scripts. Encourage reflection on this post-task: *what do you think your new script does that makes it better/easier than the current English system?*