

# Scottish Clans



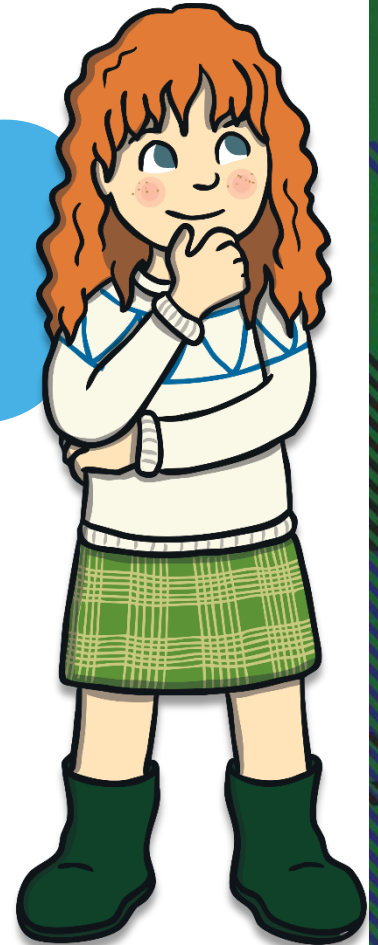


# Clans

What do you  
know about  
clans?

Have you heard  
of the word  
'clan'?

Have you ever wondered  
where your surname  
came from? Maybe it's  
one that belonged to an  
ancient clan!



# History of the Clans

Clans in Scotland date back hundreds of years to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, which is over 800 years ago! Older than your great-great-great grandparents!

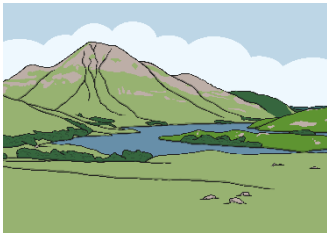
The Scottish clans were originally big families who had one chief. However, despite sharing the same surname, as time went on not everyone in the clan was related.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, clans were a strong part of the culture in the Highlands of Scotland.

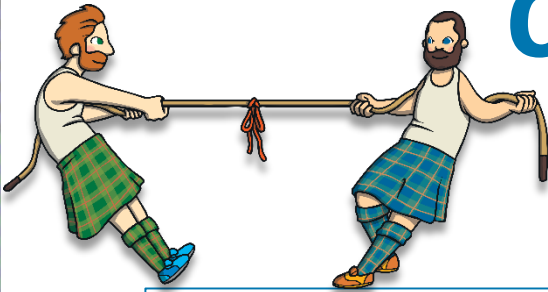
In Scotland some clans still exist today with clan chiefs.

## Did You Know...?

The word 'clan' comes from the Gaelic word *clann* which means family or children.



# Clan Daily Life



Daily life in a Scottish clan revolved around farming. This was how they made their income and supported the clan members.

Clans sold their goods at markets so tending livestock and crops was very important. Reiving was common among clans, which involved stealing the livestock of another clan. As a result, guarding your animals was very important too.

Clans would gather together for entertainment which involved singing, dancing and storytelling.

In August, many clans competed in sports and took part in Highland Games competitions. These were attended by several clans and were a very exciting event.





# Clan Names



Clan names usually came from the area where the clan lived.

Clans lived off the land which means that they were mostly farmers. Many clans had cattle which is how they made money.

Clans would argue and fight over different things, mostly where their land started and ended.



The clan chiefs were in charge. If they managed to get more land, the people living on the land would have to do what they said and take their name, so it wasn't always just family in the clan.

# Clan Chiefs



The clan chiefs had a very important role.

They acted as the king of the clan, the protector and the judge if there were arguments to be settled within the clan.

The members of the clan swore allegiance to them and followed their rules.

There were strong rivalries between some clans, but over time these were solved or forgotten.

There are still clan chiefs in Scotland today. They don't have the same power that they used to, but their job is to protect the history of the clan.

# Clans Today

Many clans can still be traced back to where they were originally from.

- The MacLeods of Skye
- The MacNeils of Barra
- The Mackays of Sutherland

People research their history and travel to the home of their ancestors to find out about where they lived. They describe this as an unforgettable and moving experience.

People all over the world celebrate their history and ancestry of their clan. They still wear their tartan to important events.

Some clans have regular reunions where they gather together and celebrate their families history and present.



# Tartan

Many clans had their own special seal, crest and tartan which lets them know which clan they were from.

Have you ever worn tartan?

Why did you choose that tartan?



As time went on and surnames changed, families still wore their clan tartan. You can research your tartan today and find out which clan your surname belongs to.

Some examples of Scottish clan tartans include:





# The Clan System

The clan system lasted for hundreds of years in Scotland until 1746 and the Battle of Culloden.

The Jacobites were defeated by the Duke of Cumbernauld, the son of King George II, and the clan system was never the same. Tartan was banned after this battle!

The Highland clearances then brought the end to the clan system as people were forced from their homes and many emigrated to find a better life away from Scotland.

Clan chiefs no longer had the same power or influence in Scotland and never would again.

# Tracing Your Own Clan

The clan structure is no longer the same in Scotland, but it is still so important to the history, culture and stories of Scotland.

People all over the world enjoy finding out about their clan history and take pride in their ancestry.

Many people from all over the world attend clan reunions.

Grooms at weddings still wear their clan tartan and families find out which tartan they should wear based on their ancestry. Many take great pride in continuing the tradition.

