**PRIMARY LANGUAGE CURRICULUM**

# Integrating Digital Technologies into the Learning and Teaching of *Gaeilge*

## Learning Outcomes

Children develop concepts, dispositions and skills in relation to:

- **Teanga ó Bhéal** – e.g., Engagement, listening and attention; Motivation and choice; Vocabulary; Requests, questions and interactions; Playful and creative use of language
- **Léitheoireacht** – e.g., Vocabulary; Purpose, genre and voice
- **Scríbhneoireacht** – e.g., Vocabulary; Sentence structure and grammar; Purpose, genre and voice; Writing process and creating text

Through the integration of technology with learning and teaching of *Gaeilge*, children have the opportunity to develop **key competencies** such as:



KEY COMPETENCIES

- Being a digital learner through curious, confident, responsible and creative use of digital technology.
- Being a communicator and user of language through the development of their literacy skills and competence to communicate *as Gaeilge*.
- Being an active learner through playing, learning, and working, both individually and with others.

This Support Material provides suggestions for learning and teaching in English-medium schools in relation to:

**1.** Creating texts *as Gaeilge*

**2.** Voice-recording technology

**3.** Using online resources

Using digital technologies in language learning and teaching can enhance children's engagement and proficiency in *Gaeilge* across the three strands of oral language, reading and writing. It provides opportunities to integrate *Gaeilge* into cross curricular tasks, activities and projects. Digital technology be accessed both inside and outside the classroom, in discrete language lessons and informal daily activities.

## 1. Creating texts as *Gaeilge*

'Text' in the Primary Language Curriculum is defined as '*all products of language use*' including **digital and multimodal**. Digital resources complement traditional resources, and the multimodal features bring something extra to the learning experience. Creating digital texts allows children to demonstrate their learning for all three strands of the curriculum in multiple modes including text, visual and audio.

### Benefits of creating digital texts

✓ Introduces & reinforces new vocabulary through the addition of images and audio

✓ Encourages choice & engagement as children can use a variety of digital platforms and see the connection between creating digital texts and real-world communication

✓ Develops children's digital literacy skills

✓ Promotes critical thinking and creativity as children experiment with combining text, images and sounds

✓ Explores genres and encourages child's voice as children can choose topics, formats, and styles adaptable to all learning abilities

When choosing digital tools to support language development, it is useful to select tools that incorporate the use of text, images, video and audio narration.

Before creating a digital text, children need opportunities to learn and use the language required for the task. **Model the process**, exposing the children to language in context. Following this **co-create a text** with the children before they engage in **independent work**. Language scaffolds like sentence starters, word banks, and dictionaries can support children throughout. Provide opportunities for children to share their texts and receive feedback. Below are three digital technologies for creating texts *as Gaeilge* with suggested learning experiences from Stage 1 to Stage 4.

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### Digital Storytelling using Creative Child Friendly Apps

Digital storytelling supports the development of Oral Language as children create, animate and narrate their own stories using child-friendly apps. It's useful to start with English to familiarise children with the process before transitioning to *Gaeilge*.

At Stages 1 and 2 children can record simple dialogue between characters in the app, using sentences like: '*Is mise Áine, cé tusa?*' '*Is mise an chailleach, ha, ha, ha*'.

At Stage 3, children can create a digital recount or narrative using sentences like: '*Lá breithe Sheáin a bhí ann. Chuaigh Seán agus a chairde go dtí an zú. Ar dtús chonaic siad moncaí ag damhsa. Ina dhiaidh sin …*.'

At Stage 4, the task can be extended by using sentences of increasingly complexity. For example, if focusing on **Requests**, **questions and interactions** *as Gaeilge*, children can work in groups to ensure each *carachtar* in the story asks at least one question. In a zoo context, they might interview the zookeeper using questions like '*Cén t-ainmhí is fearr leat?*' or '*Cé mhéad banana a itheann an moncaí gach lá?*' etc.

Useful child friendly apps include: *Toontastic 3D available on Google Play* and *Puppet Pals available on the AppStore*

Examples of language related to time
- *Fadó fadó …*
- *Ag an tús,*
- *Ar dtús báire …*
- *Ina dhiaidh sin, ansin, tamall ina dhiaidh, ag an deireadh, an lá ina dhiaidh sin …*
- *Oíche Aoine a bhí ann …*
- *Maidin inné ….*
- *Lá fada a bhí ann inné …*

### Creating eBooks in the classroom

E-books are digital versions of printed books with text, images, and audio. They can be used across a range of genres and curriculum areas. Using apps like Book Creator, children can create digital texts *as Gaeilge*, in Social and Environmental Education (SEE), for example.

At Stages 1 and 2, the children can take pictures of items in the school environment and create an e-book using examples of language functions such as describing an opinion: '*Is maith liom…*' or asking a question such as '*Cá bhfuil an…?*'

At Stage 3, the children can create an e-book showing the signs of spring. The children can take pictures around the school and add a simple voice-over to the e-book; e.g., '*Sin bláth. Tá an t-earrach ann. Tá an féar ag fás*'.

At Stage 4, the children can create an e-book celebrating their local environment. They can take pictures of buildings, facilities and landmarks and add simple information as text and a voice-over.

Tá an t-earrach ann anois.
Tosaíonn bláthanna ag fás.
Tagann ainmhithe óga ar an saol.
Fásann bachlóga ar an gcrann.

Teachers and children can watch/listen to digital texts created by the children to assess language learning and to plan for next steps of learning in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure or new *feidhmeanna teanga* that could be introduced.
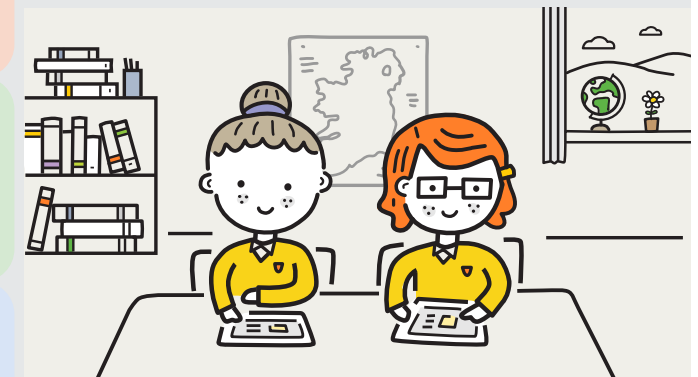
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### Creating texts *as Gaeilge* using Stop Motion Technology

Stop motion is a technique where pictures are taken of objects or characters, making small changes between each photo. When the pictures are put together, the objects appear to be moving. Toys, puppets, lego, clay figurines or images drawn by the children can be used. Children can also use their artwork to create backdrops for their Stop Motion activity. This technology makes tasks *as Gaeilge* **engaging**, allowing children to demonstrate their language learning.

At Stages 1 and 2, the children can use stop-motion to animate familiar *rainn* or *dánta* such as '*Tá Teidí ag Siúl*' as they actively demonstrate their understanding of the action words *ag siúl*, *ag léim*, *ag titim* etc.

At Stage 3, stop motion can be used to animate figures in order to practise prepositions; e.g., *tá sé sa leaba*, ...*ar an leaba*, ...*faoin leaba* etc.

At Stage 4, children can collaborate and create a stop-motion text to recount a text *as Gaeilge* which enables them to consider and make decisions about the language needed and improves their **vocabulary**.

Oide Technology in Education have online videos that give an insight into how teachers have effectively used technology to enhance learning and teaching and are available here.
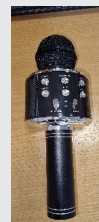
### Voice-recording technology

There are many accessible and cost-effective pieces of voice-recording technology that can be used to enhance learning experiences across *Teanga ó Bhéal*, *Léitheoireacht agus Scríbhneoireacht*.


**Recording microphone**


**Talking buttons**


**Recordable card**

Recording microphones and talking buttons are simple-to-use audio recording tools that offer instant play back. Recording microphones have the added feature of audio file storage and download options.

Recordable cards are wipeable whiteboards with an audio-recording function.
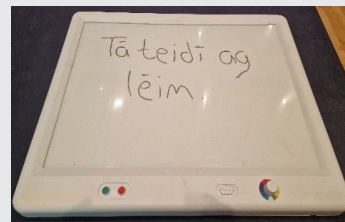
### Benefits of using voice-recording technology

✓ Contribute to more inclusive learning environments as they facilitate multiple modes of representation.

✓ Offer children the opportunity to hear target language repeatedly, aiding the language acquisition process.

✓ Develop children's active listening skills by asking children to listen for a specific piece of information in an audio clip.

✓ Support children in recognising themselves as speakers of *Gaeilge*.

Below is a sample of activities which utilise voice-recording tools.

### *Teanga ó Bhéal*:

● Use a recording microphone as the 'talking object' during *Am Ciorcal*. By utilising the record function, children's contributions can be saved and reviewed for assessment purposes. Recordings taken at different times over the course of a year can be used to gauge progression.

● Use a recording microphone or talking button to play a 'Guess Who' clue games. Record a description of a child in the class / a member of staff / a character from a recent story / a famous person in advance. Play the recording for the class and the children try to guess '*Cé mé?*'

● Use a recording microphone or talking button to record a child giving a message / a weather forecast, a recount of what they did yesterday etc. Play this for the class and children have three chances to try and guess '*Cé atá ag caint*'? The recording can be done in a funny voice or a character's voice to make the activity more playful.

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### *Léitheoireacht:*

- Children can record themselves reading on a recording microphone or a talking button. Allow them to listen back to their recordings and self-correct for pronunciation etc. Teachers can also use the recordings to identify gaps in children's reading and plan mini-lessons to target common reading errors etc.

- Use talking buttons during Reader's Theatre[1] practice. Teachers can record the lines for each character. This means that each group has repeated access to their character's lines to ensure accuracy in pronunciation, suitable intonation etc.

- Use recordable cards during phonics activities. Children can draw pictures, write words and/ or orally record words with the target sound.

### *Scríbhneoireacht:*

- Use recordable cards for emergent writing activities at Stages 1 and 2 or for *Mo Nuacht* and other writing tasks including idea-generating at Stages 3 and 4. Children can use the whiteboard for the written / illustrated piece and add an audio description using the record function.

- Recordable cards can also be used for dictation exercises. Sentences can be orally recorded onto the card which the children have to write /

illustrate on the card. The recording provides opportunities to replay and self-check the sentence as they write.

- Talking buttons or the recording microphone can be used during spelling activities where children explore grammatical changes to words. The teacher can pre-record a list of words with a particular grammatical feature (e.g., a '*séimhiú*' on verbs beginning with a consonant in the *Aimsir Chaite*). Children listen to this and work out what the change is.

### 3. Using online resources

Integrating digital technology into learning and teaching *Gaeilge* **enhances engagement** particularly through interactive online books and games. They are particularly supportive in additional language learning as they can encourage children to practise a skill or vocabulary repeatedly in an engaging way. Another benefit to using online resources is that they can be accessed outside the classroom and can support home-school links, enabling children to **continue engaging with the language at home**. Below are some free resources and although primarily aimed at Irish-medium schools, they are suitable for use in English-medium schools. In selecting the use of these online resources for whole class teaching and group activities, it is important to consider the children's stage of language development.

### Séideán Sí

This comprehensive multimedia resource offers books and interactive games for all class levels, allowing teachers to select content that **suits the childrens' needs and abilities**. The multimodal features of the online books, including visuals and audio, support comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure. The choice of interactive games supports progression in learning as the children can practise areas of language

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[1] Reader's Theatre is an approach where repeated reading of the same text occurs across a number of days. This repeated reading takes different forms, with children engaged in a different type of reading each day (modelled reading, echo reading, choral reading, independent reading). This is then followed by a performance of the text on the final day.

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learning relevant to their stage of development, e.g., matching sentences to images or *briathra san aimsir chaite*. The resource is available in all dialects. Access *Séideán Sí* at this website: https://seideansi.ie

### Léigh Anois

This resource provides graded online books (Levels 1–4) with read-aloud features, supporting comprehension and pronunciation. It also includes '*alt nuachta*' (news articles) which may be suitable for use at Stages 3 and 4, and feature interactive dictionary links to support comprehension. Access *Léigh Anois* at: www.leighanois.com/baile.php

### Foghlaí Focal

This interactive game focuses on the 200 High Frequency Words *as Gaeilge*, divided into Adjectives, Nouns, and Verbs. It offers a playful way to build vocabulary, explore sounds, spelling, sentence structure, and meaning. Vocabulary is introduced in sentences which are read aloud to support pronunciation. Encourage the children to practise reading the sentences aloud, independently or with a partner, to **build their confidence using *Gaeilge***. Access the game at: https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/foghlai-focal

### Féasta Focal

Féasta focal is a collection of interactive games also based on the 200 High Frequency Words *as Gaeilge* in children's reading at primary level. The flashcards can be used for matching or memory games, and it is recommended to introduce the words in phrases/sentences to enable the children **to use the vocabulary in context**. Access *Féasta Focal* at: https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/feasta-focal

### Snas ar Scéal

This resource encourages children to explore alternative ways to express their ideas and to extend their vocabulary for *scríbhneoireacht*. The website hosts free interactive games to reinforce the phrases / sentences from the printed materials in a **playful and engaging way**. The vocabulary is introduced in sentences which are read aloud and this can support pronunciation. These interactive games can be played on laptops and tablets and can be accessed here.

### Eleathanach

Eleathanach is a free weekly newsletter as Gaeilge for children at Stage 4. Teachers can adapt the content and language to the children in their class; e.g., use simpler vocabulary, reduce word count etc. Eleathanach may be accessed here.

There are many more online resources available to support the learning and teaching of *Gaeilge* and a comprehensive list is available on the COGG website at An Tairseach. www.cogg.ie/en/tairseach

### Online dictionaries

Teaching children to use online dictionaries is important because it helps them to independently discover the meaning of words they encounter in texts. Teachers can model how to use an online dictionary or thesaurus to explore a word's multiple forms and meanings and how to match a meaning to specific contexts. Useful online resources include teanglann.ie (for words used in context), téarma.ie (for terminology), and potafocal.com (thesaurus).