

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk **

Chan eil fhios agam cia mheud agaibh a tha nan iasgairean ach tha ceist agam dhuibh co-cheangailte ri iasgach. Ciamar a chanadh sibh ann an Gàidhlig “fourteen trout”? Smaoinichibh mu dheidhinn airson tiotan. *Fourteen trout*. ’S e a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air “trout” – singilte – *breac*.

Thairis air a’ cheala-deug a dh’fhalbh, thug mi sùil air puingean a thog mi à faclair Gàidhlig ùr le Cailean Mark. An t-seachdain seo tha mi airson suathadh air cuspair ris a bheil Cailean a’ dèiligeadh gu math aig deireadh fhaclair far a bheil e a’ toirt sùil air gràmair is rudan eile – cunntadh.

An tug mi ùine gu leòr dhuibh airson na ceist a chuir mi oirbh? Dè a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air “fourteen trout”? Uill, ’s e a th’ ann *ceithir bric dheug*. An d’ fhuair sibh sin? Bu mhath leam an suidheachadh a mhìneachadh oir tha eagal orm gun tuirt cuid agaibh ’s dòcha *ceithir breac deug* no *ceithir breacan deug* no *ceithir bric deug*, an àite *ceithir bric dheug* mar bu chòir.

Anns a’ chiad dol a-mach, ma tha fios agaibh gur e a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air “trout” *breac*, ach mura h-eil fios agaibh dè chanas sibh airson trì no ceithir dhiubh, feumaidh sibh coimhead ann am faclair. Seo na chanas Cailean fhèin anns an fhaclair aige: “breac, bric, bric, ainmear fireann, *trout*: cho fallain ri breac: *as healthy as a trout*.” Is toigh leam an samhladh sin. Ma chanas cuideigin riut “Ciamar a tha thu?”, faodaidh tu ràdh, “tha cho fallain ri breac.”

Tha an treas facal anns an t-sreath – *bric* – ag innse dhuinn de chanas sinn airson *trout plural*. Airson *ten trout*, canaidh sinn *deich bric*. Airson *eleven trout*, canaidh sinn *aona bhreac deug* no *aon bhreac deug*. Nise carson is e *deug* an seo, an àite *dheug*? Uill, tha *deug* ag obair anns an aon dòigh ’s a tha buadhair no *adjective*. Nan biodh buadhair air a shèimheachadh, bidh *deug* air a shèimheachadh. Mura bitheadh am buadhair air a shèimheachadh, cha bhi *deug* air a shèimheachadh.

Tha *breac* fireann. Canaidh sinn *breac beag* no *breac mòr*. Mar sin ’s e *deug* a chanas sinn an àite *dheug*. Aona bhreac *deug*. Tha *breac* air a shèimheachadh as dèidh aon ach chan eil *deug* air a shèimheachadh idir. Le facal boireann mar uinneag, ge-tà, chanamaid *aon uinneag dheug*.

Le dà-dheug, tha *deug* an-còmhnaidh air a shèimheachadh le faclan fireann agus boireann. Mar sin, canaidh sinn dà chù *dheug* agus dà eaglais *dheug*. Agus, airson *twelve trout* – dà bhreac *dheug*.

Agus le trì-deug, feumaidh sinn smaoineachadh air na thachras do bhudhair as dèidh “bric”. Canaidh sinn *bric mhòra* agus *bric bheaga*, nach can? Air an aon dòigh, canaidh sinn *bodaich mhòra*, *balach mhòra*, is *Sgitheanaich mhòra*. Tha am buadhair air a shèimheachadh le ainmear a th’ air a dhèanamh iolra le caolachadh. Gheibh sibh mìneachadh air seo ann am Beurla anns na notaichean gràmair.

Mar sin, le *bric*, bidh deug air a shèimheachadh. Canaidh sinn *trì bric dheug*. Agus mar a thuir mi na bu tràithe airson *fourteen trout* – ceithir bric dheug. Dè a’ Ghàidhlig, mathà, a th’ air *nineteen women no seventeen Scotsmen*? Innsidh mi dhuibh an ath-sheachdain. Agus tha ceist eile agam dhuibh. Dè a’ Ghàidhlig a th’ air *hour* is a bheil e boireann no fireann? Agus ciamar a chanas sinn “*eleven o’ clock*” is carson? Bithibh faiceallach! Agus coinnichidh sinn a-rithist an ath-sheachdain.

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Faclan na seachdaine: *treas: third; sreath: series; boireann: feminine; an-còmhnaidh: always; Sgitheanaich mhòra: big Skye men.*

Abairtean na seachdaine: *cia mheud agaibh a tha nan iasgairean: how many of you are fishermen; ma tha sibh cho math air iasgach ’s a tha mise: if you are as good at fishing as I am; ’s dòcha nach bi fios agaibh: perhaps you won’t know; thairis air a’ cheala-deug a dh’fhalbh: over the past fortnight; tha mi airson suathadh air: I want to touch on; ris a bheil X a’ dèiligeadh: which X deals with; aig deireadh fhaclair: at the end of his dictionary; ma chanas cuideigin riut: if somebody says to you; nam biodh buadhair air a shèimheachadh: if an adjective were lenited; air a dhèanamh iolra le caolachadh: made plural by slenderisation; mar a thuir mi na bu tràithe: as I said earlier; bithibh faiceallach: be careful; coinnichidh sinn a-rithist: we will meet again.*

Puing-ghràmar na seachdaine: *The Litir this week explains why we say ceithir bric dheug for “fourteen trout”. The rules for the teens are as follows: firstly you can work out “eleven trout” and “twelve trout” easily because they do not use the plural form of the noun. So we use a form of breac rather than bric. Next you have to work out if deug is lenited or not. The rule is that, with regard to lenition, deug works in the same way as an adjective. Breac is a masculine word – we say breac mòr in the nominative case, not breac mhòr. So for “eleven trout” we say aona bhreac deug, not aona bhreac dheug. Breac is lenited after aon but deug is not lenited at all. For twelve, a general rule operates – deug is always lenited, regardless of the gender of the noun. Thus “twelve trout” is dà bhreac dheug (dà lenites the noun); “twelve churches” (a feminine noun) is dà eaglais dheug. With thirteen, we need to use the plural form of breac, which is bric (dictionaries will give this). Now work out how you would say “large trout” (plural). Because breac is pluralised by slenderisation (of “ea” to “i”), the qualifying adjective is lenited (this is a general rule in Gaelic). Thus we say bric mhòra, not bric mòra. Now, deug operates in the same manner as an adjective. So for “thirteen trout” we say trì bric dheug. And for “fourteen trout” – ceithir bric dheug, and so on up to naoi bric dheug.*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: *cho fallain ri breac: as healthy as a trout. This simile might be used as a Gaelic equivalent of “as fit as a fiddle”. Another Gaelic equivalent is cho fallain ri fiadh (as healthy as a deer).*

* “*Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh*” is funded by Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig