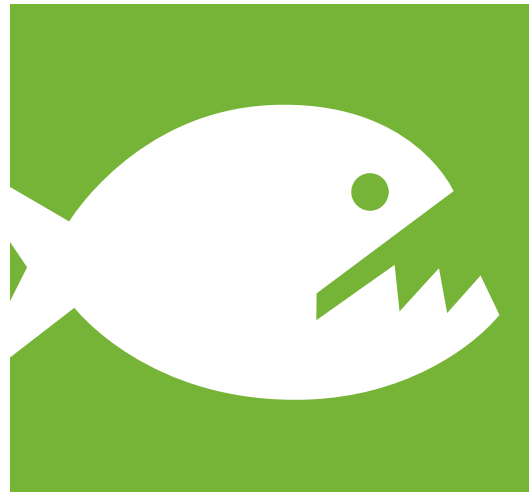


POETRY FOR
CHILDREN
Primary
showcase



A guide for
teachers
Summer 2016



POETRY BY
HEART

“The poems we learn when we’re young stay with us for the rest of our lives. They become embedded in our thinking, and when we bring them to mind, or to our lips, they remind us who we are as people, and the things we believe in. They become personal and invaluable, and what’s more they are free gifts – there for the taking. We call it learning by heart, and I think such learning can only make our hearts bigger and stronger.”

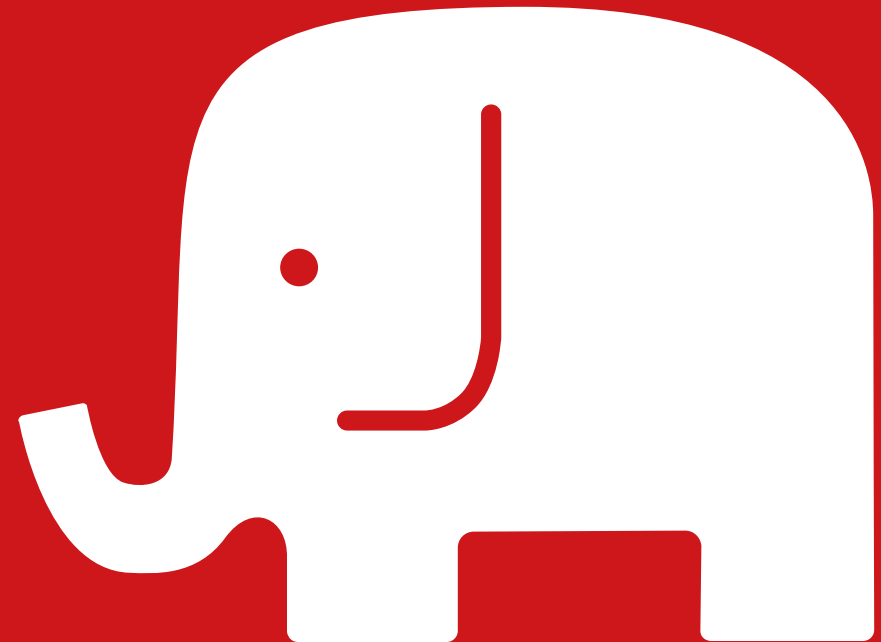
Simon Armitage
Poet



Icon by Agarunov Oktay-Abraham
(The Noun Project)

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POETRY FOR CHILDREN – PRIMARY SHOWCASE



In 2012, Poetry By Heart was launched as an England-wide school poetry recitation competition for 14-18 year old pupils. The fourth competition took place in March 2016 at Homerton College, Cambridge. In some ways starting a national poetry recitation competition was a new venture, but in others it was an organised remembering of valued practices. Poetry recitation in school dates back to the beginnings of mass education and its rapid acceleration of literacy. For all the affordances of digital technologies, reading rhyming verse with children and learning nursery rhymes is still a regular part of what we do in teaching children to enjoy language, to share in it, participate in it, and create with it.

When Primary school teachers asked us if we could develop some poetry recitation resources for them to use in class, we were delighted to help. The resulting showcase collection of 60 poems is designed to help Primary school pupils and teachers find poems they love, and enjoy them together through reading aloud and learning by heart. There were some very tough decisions along the way and we have not finished yet: we hope to add more poems and more recordings in audio and video form.

The showcase offers children a diverse and enticing mixture of poems, classic and contemporary, surprising and familiar, that are all perfect for reading aloud. There are classic poets who wrote poems for children, or poems suitable for children, like

William Wordsworth, Robert Browning, John Keats, Emily Dickinson, Robert Louis Stevenson and Edith Nesbit. There are also some of the best contemporary poets who write for children today such as Jackie Kay, Tony Mitton and Philip Gross. The collection includes a wide variety of times, styles and voices from the UK and beyond.

The poems offer many different kinds of pleasure for reading, learning and sharing aloud. Some poems tell stories, others relive moments of realisation, observation and discovery. There are serious poems and silly poems, long poems and very short poems, traditional rhyming poems and free verse. Some will suit individual recitation, others are good for paired readings and shared readings, choral readings and dramatic performances. The activities that accompany the poems encourage enjoyment, exploration, experiment and understanding. We hope you will find new treasures and old pleasures, and enjoy sharing these poems with the children you teach.

This guide has been designed to be read on-screen with links to the poems and additional online resources embedded in the text. We intend to add new poems to the site and to update the guide when we do. If you have subscribed to our mailing list, we will automatically send you updates. If you haven't and would like to receive these, or you would like to add other colleagues to our list, please register [here](#). We welcome your feedback via info@poetrybyheart.org.uk

Julie Blake

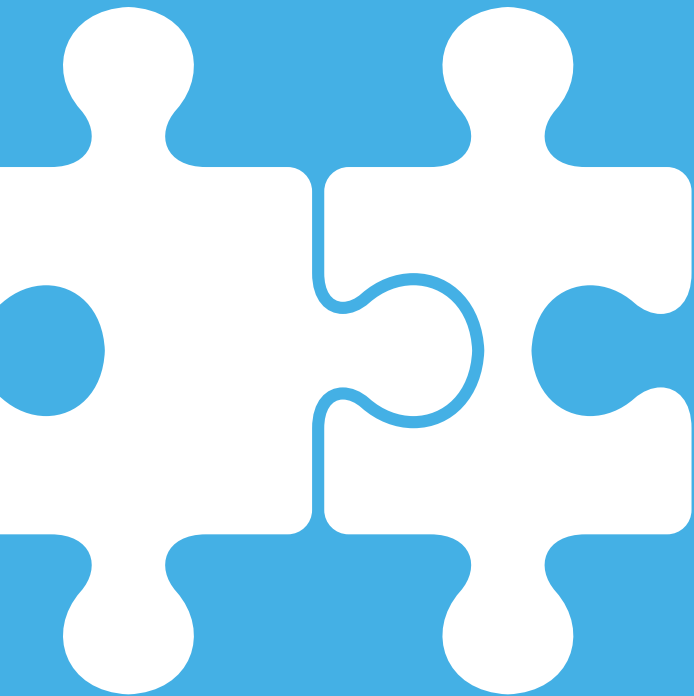
Co-founder and director, Poetry By Heart

“The range of poems in the Poetry for children Primary showcase resource is great. It allows every child access to high class poetry to be inspired and challenged by. With a new focus in the curriculum on learning and reading poems by heart, this is also a fantastic resource for teachers. The accompanying online resources are well presented so that children can develop independence within the learning process and explore the poems in different ways.

The website is very engaging and has been well designed to support all learners such as those with dyslexia. The inclusion of a widget for children to record themselves speaking their poem and hear their performance back is a brilliant, easy to use way for them to critically evaluate and improve their performances. I can't wait to use this resource with my own class.”

Emma Kesper

Deputy Head and Subject Leader for English at Sedlescombe Church of England Primary School, East Sussex



MIX IT UP POEMS

Older pupils taking part in the Poetry By Heart competition often talk about the strong motivation for learning that came from first finding a poem they loved in our collection. The Poetry for children Primary showcase has been designed to make exploring poems fun. It encourages independent exploration by offering playful visual and textual 'lures' to the poems, breadcrumb paths to other poems, random rabbit hole adventures, and the opportunity to mix it all up and start a completely new voyage of discovery.

Click the "mix it up" button to jumble the poems up and spark new ideas and connections.



WHAT'S ON THE TOOLBAR

With audio, video and text versions there are many ways of enjoying the poems. Each one is enhanced by activities that celebrate and develop voice, language, imagination and creativity. Look out for some or all of the following icons on the poem pages to help you and your pupils explore what the site has to offer.



POEM ACTIVITY

Each poem is associated with a unique activity. Pupils might tackle them independently - on their own or with friends and family - or they could be the starting point for a lesson.

Example activity for 'Eletelephony' by Laura Richards:

Have fun with the poem by trying this...

This poem is quite a tongue twister. Read it slowly a couple of times silently and then read it out loud slowly. Now you have got used to the sounds of the words and pronouncing them see if you can read it out loud really quickly without tripping over the words. Good luck!



PRINT PAGE

A printer-friendly version of the poem without the illustrations to save that all important printer ink!



SHARE

The arrow tool invites you to share the poem on Facebook and Twitter – a tool for teachers and parents!



WATCH VIDEO

Press play for a video transcript of the poem, read by a contemporary poet. Pupils can begin to appreciate the relationship between the form of the poem and its sound.



LISTEN

Listen to a poem being read by a poet.



RECORD

You will only see this icon if you have the latest browsers, a microphone, and speakers. If your browser does not support a microphone it will not be available to you.

Things to check before recording:

- You might see a pop-up message that says Poetry By Heart wants to use your microphone. Click 'allow'.
- Check that you don't have a pop-up blocker enabled on your web browser. This will show an icon of a video camera with a red cross through it in the top right-hand corner of your screen. You need to click on this and choose to disable it on the Poetry By Heart site in order for the record function to appear on the sidebar of a poem page.
- If your browser says 'missing plugin' you may need to download a programme like Adobe Flash Player in order to use all the functions on the site. Follow the instructions on your computer to install the suggested plugin.

To record:

- Hover over the microphone icon on the poem page sidebar.
- Click the red record button to begin. The button will pulse to let you know that it is recording.
- Speak into or near your microphone and when finished click the stop button.
- Click the play button to listen back to your recording.
- If you aren't happy with it, start the process again to re-record.
- If you are, click the arrow icon to download the recording as a file to your computer.

TAKING A POEM TO HEART

Teachers tell us that their primary pupils memorise their poems easily, enjoy doing this, and find it helps them to commit other information to memory. If you want to find out more about methods for memorisation take a look at poet Ted Hughes's ideas in the introduction to his anthology, *By Heart*. There are also books and websites about how to memorise by Tony Buzan among others. Secondary school teachers entering their pupils for Poetry By Heart competitions tell us that they respond well to the teacher learning a poem alongside them. Here we offer some approaches which pupils and teachers have used to help them take a poem to heart.

Get to know the poem

It is helpful to think of a poem as a living thing. Recent research in neuroscience suggests that the brain responds to works of art, including poems, in the same way as it responds to people. Learning a poem is like getting to know a person – it takes time.

Another helpful way of thinking about a poem is as a written text with multimodal dimensions. To bring it alive in its fullest form, pupils need to experience it through reading it, listening to it being read and speaking it aloud. Teachers have a key role to play in modelling these approaches, especially in reading poems aloud to the class.

Poems need to be read and reflected on many times to reveal themselves. Readings might be silent or aloud, individual and together, and there should be time to talk and share enjoyments. It can be interesting to listen to different readings of the poem, by pupils themselves as well as by expert readers, including poets. We have included some audio recordings on the website and the resources section of this guide will point you to particularly good sources for more. The activities accompanying the poems on the website very often suggest ways of engaging with the poem as a spoken form.

Listening to and trying our different readings can help pupils to find their own appreciation of the poem. Poetry By Heart competitors often tell us that this kind of personal meaning-making was the critical first step in learning their poem by heart. The following methods will help you and your pupils take this initial exploration further and could be used in lesson planning.

Prepare a reading aloud

Read each line several times and try emphasizing different words and phrases. Try different tones of voice in different parts of the poem. Think about pace, volume and timing. Think about voice sound patterns, rhyme and rhythm. When you have worked out how best to read it aloud, try marking up a copy of the poem to show this using highlighting and other annotations.

Record it

The website includes a recording device (if you have the right browser) and you may have access to other recording technology. When pupils record themselves, they often want to rehearse the poem and re-record it seventeen times until they are happy with it. They can also play the recording back as a means to learn it. They could also record a version leaving a pause after each line or couple of lines, to allow them to repeat it aloud while they listen.

Make a poem poster

Another way that pupils might explore their appreciation of the poem is through visual design. You could show them William Blake's *'The Tyger'* in its original print form, richly illustrated and with a print representation of his handwriting. In fact, the process of handwriting is linked to memory and the action of putting pen to paper can help to improve recall. Pupils could write out and decorate their poem with patterns and pictures, then take a mental snapshot that they can visualize when learning it by heart.

Embody it

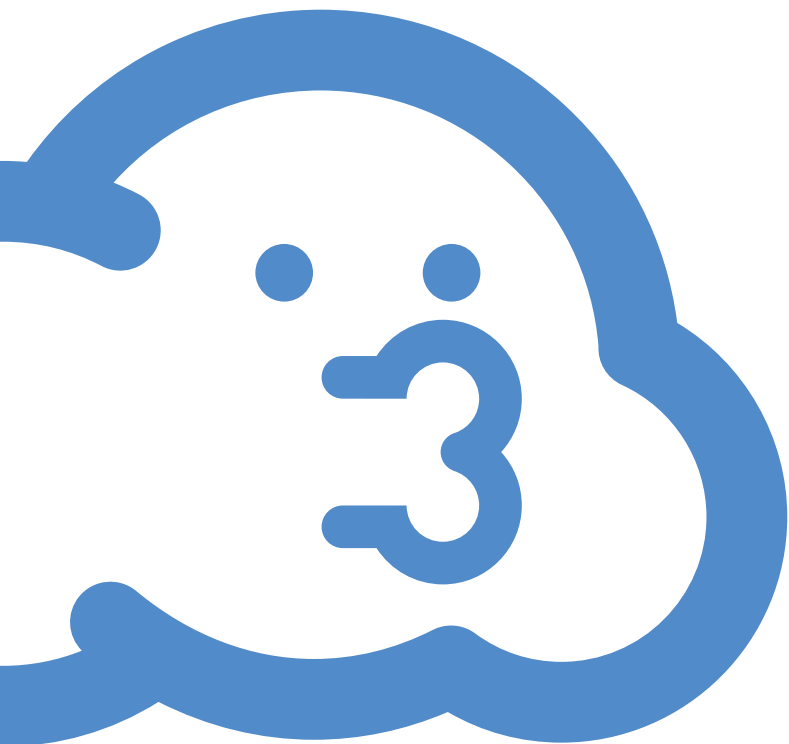
Movement is a powerful memory trigger as well as a good way of exploring the poem's form. Some pupils might find it helpful to sing, chant, clap, dance or drum the poem as way of experiencing its sounds and rhythms. The challenge is then to include a sense of that musicality in a recitation of the poem. If you have enough space get pupils walking as they say lines of the poem aloud – try different speeds, and stops and starts, to fit the poem's pace and rhythm.

Move it

Involve pupils in making up movements and gestures to go with lines of the poem. This is a fun way to enjoy the poem together and it will make learning the poem by heart a sociable activity. The result could be the basis of a class performance in itself.



ORGANISING A POETRY BY HEART EVENT



Having run Poetry By Heart a number of times now, we know lots about recitation competitions but that isn't necessarily where you will want to start – or finish. Thinking about poetry as a shared in-the-moment experience, on the other hand, is a really fruitful idea. Poetry is an oral form and it needs speakers and hearers to bring it fully alive. The former American poet laureate, Robert Pinsky, advocates an inclusive 'Favourite Poem' model for this. Everyone chooses a favourite poem and has to read it aloud to everyone else, also saying why they chose it. Simple. Find out lots more at www.favoritepoem.org/teachers.html

But poetry recitation is very special. It brings its speakers and listeners even closer together. In even the liveliest classrooms you can hear a pin drop when someone recites. We think it is something to do with having nothing in the way of the sound of the words, just a voice speaking to you directly. There is also respect for the risk it involves, the same breath-taking anticipation as watching someone walking a tightrope. It is always a precious moment. A recitation competition can focus that and encourage pupils to stretch to a higher level – a challenge we think is both serious and fun!

To hold a recitation competition, you will need:

A format

How many poems will pupils recite? One might be enough although teachers tell us that makes judging harder, as there is less to choose between pupils with only one poem. You could have a first round with one poem with the best going through to a second round with two poems. Do you want pupils to recite individually, in pairs, or chorally in groups? You could have different categories to suit pupils with different strengths.

Some poems

Which poems will pupils recite? You could choose from our selection, or set a selection of your own. Alternatively, you can let pupils pick a poem of their own choice but you can hear 'The Owl and the Pussycat' too often! The reason we set an anthology for our competition is so that pupils who don't come from a house of books are not disadvantaged by not knowing where to begin choosing. If your pupils speak other languages and can find poems to recite in them, then it could be a wonderful way to share and celebrate diverse cultural heritages.

Some judges and judging criteria

This could be the class teacher and learning assistants, parents or a local poet. Decide what a good recitation will look like or use or adapt our judging criteria, scoring for Voice, Understanding, Performance and Accuracy. Download criteria and scoresheets from the '**Competition resources**' page. One judge can be enough, although if you're judging accuracy as well you'll need two, and we recommend three – two recitation judges and an accuracy judge. A prompter and score keeper are useful too!

An event

Will your competition take place in class, assembly, or at an after-school event? All you need is space so that everyone can see and hear the reciters easily – especially the judges! If a microphone is needed, make sure pupils can rehearse with it. We recommend 4-5 minutes per recitation to allow time for the poem and scoring – that will be plenty of time and you won't over-run. There is a sample event schedule on the '**Competition resources**' page noted above and a certificate template.

Questions? Drop us a line at info@poetrybyheart.org.uk

POETRY FOR LIFE: RESEARCH INSIGHTS



Now that we have a thousand poems quite literally at our fingertips – on tap – why should we bother keeping any in our heads? Although poetry learning and recitation has been reinstated on the primary curriculum, as with many policy initiatives the move was made with little research evidence to indicate why (or indeed whether) the memorized poem may be of value. The Poetry and Memory Project at Cambridge University has been investigating this very question for the past two years. We are still analysing a large quantity of gathered data, but already a number of points are emerging about poetry learned early in life:

- Poems are usually learned with relative ease. In fact many of our adult participants told us they learned poems as children simply because they wanted to, and many relished the sense of achievement.
- They often stay in the memory for life, though for some they slip away.
- Poems that are retained often gain value for people over the years, acquiring layers of meaning from life's experiences – and giving those experiences meaning and a form of expression in return.
- Poems that slip away still leave their impression. As Seamus Heaney suggests, they have a role in “bedding the ear with a kind of linguistic hardcore that could be built on some day”.

A memorised poem is more likely to:

Let its music sound

Poetry is a multimodal form in which sound is dominant, so it has an important relationship with the body. A poem's phonic

and auditory aspects are activated every time it is read aloud. But by bringing the poem into memory and speaking it (even to ourselves) from within the body, its music seems to sound more clearly. We may find, as Seamus Heaney says, ‘a music you never would have known/to listen for’.

Become a living thing

A memorized poem is taken inside us where it becomes a living thing. This poetic metaphor is a physical reality: the acoustic patterns and visual images are encoded within our neurological pathways. Once there, they may make connections with other patterns and images in ways that are enlightening, pleasurable or surprising.

Be owned

The memorized poem becomes our poem. This sense of ownership may play a vital part in developing a relationship with poetry. It establishes a sort of base camp whence we can make future forays. And for many of us, the known poem becomes strongly associated with certain people, places or times in our lives – a thread in language that connects us to our own feelings and experience.

Have time and space to unfold

Education has shifted its objectives from acquiring knowledge to learning skills – including the skills to find the things we need to know, as we need them. It reflects wider society, where knowledge is increasingly situated externally, to be used ad hoc. To learn a poem, however, is to make time and space for a different kind of knowledge within ourselves. As the poet Charles Causley once said, “if, say, 80 per cent of a poem comes across, let us be satisfied. The remainder, with luck, will unfold during the rest of our lives”.

Debbie Pullinger and David Whitley

The Poetry and Memory Project, University of Cambridge

Directory of poems

Pages 11-21 list the poems you will find on the Poetry By Heart Primary showcase along with a brief description of their potential for classroom learning. The sixty poems are listed A-Z by poem title and clicking on the image will link straight to that poem on the website. You can use these pages to help plan teaching and in class to go straight to a particular poem rather than finding it from the "mix it up" home page.

These poems were selected by Morag Styles, formerly Professor of Children's Poetry at the University of Cambridge. Read Morag's argument for the importance of poetry in children's education [here](#).



Icon by iconmind.com (The Noun Project)



A Bird Came Down the Walk

Emily Dickinson

'He bit an angle-worm in halves and ate the fellow, raw'

This charming poem is typical of Emily Dickinson's sharp observations which use simple but evocative language. Children of all ages will be able to picture the bird she describes, and the activity encourages children to link this to their own observations of birds. It is a straightforward and enjoyable poem for children to read out loud.

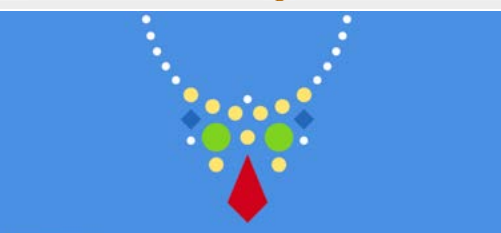


Answer to a Child's Question

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

'Do you ask what the birds say?'

An evocative poem, where a child imagines what different birds may be saying in their songs. The activity marries this 19th century poem with modern technology, using the web to allow children to listen closely to bird song and use their own imaginations to think about the power of birdsong. If the opportunity presents itself, this could link wonderfully to outdoor learning.



Cargoes

John Masefield

'Emeralds, amethysts, Topazes, and cinammon, and gold moldiores.'

Some of the language and the images in this short poem will be familiar to children, others may not, though all will be familiar with the idea of different cargoes ships may have carried in the past or in the modern day. The activity encourages the reader/listener to enjoy the feel of the language and be inspired by this to write their own verse for the poem.



Casabianca

Felicia Hemans

'The boy stood on the burning deck, Whence all but he had fled;'

The opening line: 'The boy stood on the burning deck' is much better known than the title of a poem which was hugely popular in the heyday of poetry recitation. A powerful and challenging poem about war, bravery and duty the activity invites older children to file a news report for television based on the events of the poem.



Child's Song in Spring

Edith Nesbit

'The willow is smart in a suit of yellow,'

In this poem Nesbit describes 11 different trees which gives the perfect invitation for children to find images of trees or actual trees and consider the effect of the poet's descriptions. The activity extends this to encourage fun actions also.

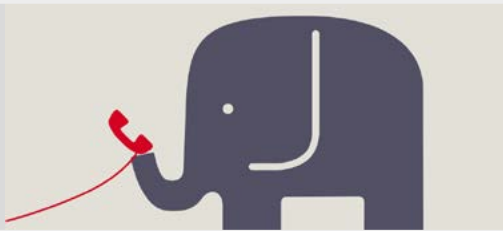


Double Trouble

Jackie Kay

**'We were Laurel and Hardy
We were Jekyll and Hyde'**

A perfect poem to explore the idea of opposites, and also the idea of the number two. It could be used as a link to the mathematical concept of pairs, or to introduce ideas about friendships and relationships. With accessible language and a simple list structure, the activity encourages paired reading and performance.



Eletelephony

Laura Richards

**'Once there was an elephant,
Who tried to use the telephant.'**

A simple, playful poem that has a lot of fun with the words 'elephant' and 'telephone' and is enjoyable for out loud reading. Older children can be introduced to other kinds of word play such as spoonerisms and could be invited to create and control language after looking at examples.

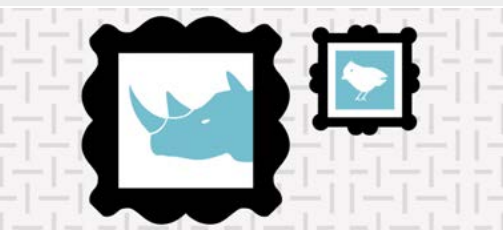


Escape at Bedtime

Robert Louis Stevenson

**'The lights from the parlour and
kitchen shone out'**

The poem evokes a child's sense of wonder at the thousands and millions of stars in the night sky mentioning certain constellations at one point. Written in two eight-line verses rhyming a-b-a-b the formal structure of the poem can be discussed as can the way in which the child observes the stars but is also observed by them.

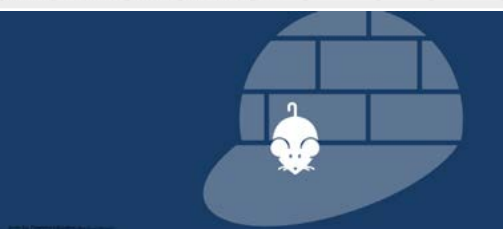


Extinct

Mandy Coe

'Our stories all begin with 'Once','

A thought provoking poem about animals which have become extinct, with an activity designed to support children in thinking more about this important environmental issue.



Extract from The Pied Piper

Robert Browning

**'Great rats, small rats,
lean rats, brawny rats,'**

This extract from the classic narrative poem which has entranced readers for generations describes the piper leading the rats from the houses and then asking for his payment. A brilliant poem to read out loud to children, perhaps as part of telling them the full story. The activity allows children to enjoy the language, playing with voice and volume to convey the movement and drama of the poem.



Fisherman Chant

John Agard

**'From my boat I cast my net to
your heart'**

This poem could be used to develop movement and mask work and also lends itself well to choral recitations. The very short, three or four syllable lines and the use of repetition to enhance the chant like qualities of the verse can be explored as can the relationship between the narrator and the river.



The Peacock at Home

Catherine Ann Dorset

**'The peacock resplendent,
unfur'd his broad fan,'**

This is a lovely, long poem to read out loud or to listen to. The activity supports children in joining in with the reading out loud of a poem without the need for them to read whole sections themselves (just focusing on the names of the birds). The activity then uses the poem as a springboard for discussion about birds. This is a great example of a chance to use a relatively long poem in an engaging way, building children's confidence with longer poems.



Granny Is

Valerie Bloom

**'Granny is stories in the
moonlight'**

This poem of 25 short lines by the Jamaican born poet Valerie Bloom can help introduce children to poems from other cultures and the use of dialect in poems. The suggested activity offers children a chance to imitate the style and structure of the poem in thinking about the special people in their lives.



Hiawatha: Fishing

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**'On the white sand of the bottom
Lay the monster Mishe-Nahma,'**

This is an extract from the classic longer poem, and would work well to be read out loud to children so the rhythms and power of the language can be felt (without the need for the listeners to understand every word). The activity suggests using a section of the poem to help children feel the strong rhythms of the poem through a clapping exercise.

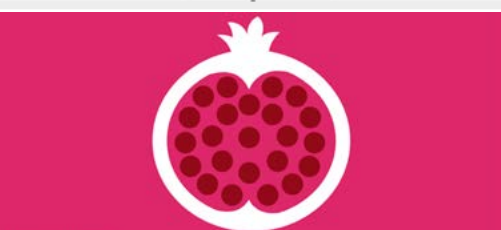


House of Air

Philip Gross

**'A letter was sent but no one was
there'**

The poem focusses on the mysterious disappearance of the house between numbers sixty eight and sixty four. Children can discuss what might have happened to the house and why the poet has chosen not to use any punctuation. Children can prepare a reading of the poem where, in the absence of punctuation, they have to make choices about pace.



How to Cut a Pomegranate

Imtiaz Dharker

**'The pomegranate reminded me
that somewhere I had another
home.'**

This poem explores the speaker's enjoyment of cutting and eating pomegranates, though it also works on a deeper level in that it connects her to another country she also calls home. Children can explore the poem on different levels – exploring the look, feel, taste of fruit or thinking about connections between food and family/belonging. The activity uses the poem to encourage children's own description of fruit – a perfect opportunity to eat some fruit together in class?



Hyena
Edwin Morgan

'I am waiting for you.'

A powerful, imaginative description of a hyena in a poem where the free verse, the use of first person and the relatively straightforward language contribute to our sense of the animal. The activity supports children in being inspired by the poem to write about an animal which fascinates them.



If You Were a Carrot
Berlie Doherty

**'I wish I could tell you
that I like you a lot'**

This poem creates six four-line verses around pairs of things: 'carrot...sprout'; 'conker...string' etc. The pairing idea is reinforced in the rhyming of the second and fourth line in each verse. The activity invites children to create their own pairs of objects in four line verses using the poem as a model.



Instructions for Growing Poetry
Tony Mitton

**'Now those little
words are sprouting'**

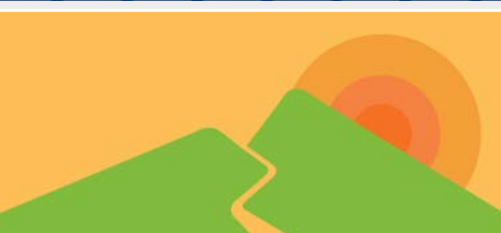
This poem works well within lessons introducing children to poetry as a genre. When read out loud by the teacher children can be encouraged to explore the idea of a poem growing and developing in the imagination like a seed becoming a flower. The activity invites children to create their own poetic instruction manuals.



Isn't My Name Magical
James Berry

**'My name gets called in a
whisper,'**

This poem, suitable for use with Key Stage 2 children, invites discussion of individuality and diversity and how we and those around us use names to convey different feelings in different situations. The activity invites children to play with the sounds and rhythms of their own names, creating something quite magical in the process.



It Was Long Ago
Eleanor Farjeon

**'And how the long dusty road
seemed to have for me
No end, you know.'**

The simple language and repetition of 'remember' and 'long ago' build to make this a moving poem about a childhood memory. The activity asks children to write about a happy memory of their own and the strong, straightforward images in the poem can help children describe scenes they remember themselves.



Jamaica Market
Agnes Maxwell-Hall

**'Plantains, wild-thyme, pallid leeks,
Pigeons with their scarlet beaks,'**

This eighteen line-poem written in rhyming couplets contains references to about thirty different foods and brings to life the richness and colour of the market. Children may need some support in identifying all the fruit and vegetables mentioned but the poem is excellent for exploring the relationship between sound and meaning.

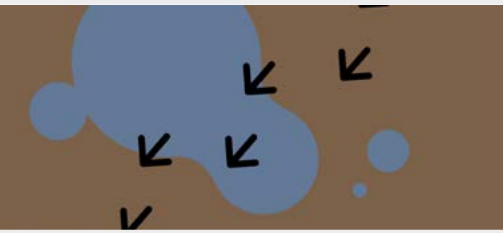


Lament of an Arawak Child

Pamela Mordecai

'They made my people into slaves'

Born in 1942 the Jamaican poet Pamela Mordecai writes a moving lament in the voice of a Jamaican Arawak child trying to come to terms with a time when the 'strange men came and took this land' in the fifteenth century. The activity encourages research in to the history of the Arawak people.



Little Trotty Wagtail

John Clare

'Little trotty wagtail he waddled in the mud'

Written in the early 19th century, Clare's description of a wagtail bird 'tittering tottering' in the rain beautifully conveys the movement of the little bird vividly for today's readers. The activity supports children in describing birds they may know, focusing on verbs to describe movement and also having fun with actions.



Lone Dog

Irene McLeod

'I love to sit and bay the moon and keep fat souls from sleep.'

An unsentimental poem written in pacy rhyming couplets that invites discussion of what kind of a dog is speaking in the poem and the character that emerges. Lots of opportunities here to talk about the use of adjectives, repetition, alliteration and assonance. The activity invites children to write a poem in rhyming couplets about another animal.



Miss Lucy Had a Baby

Anon

'He tried to eat the bathtub,'

This anonymous jump rope poem has lots of variations but this version with its six verses is ideal for a group activity with six children working together to create a performance with actions. In the playground children might try it as a jump rope rhyme and consider how it might be sung or chanted by the whole class.



Mosquito One

Anon

**'Mosquito one,
Mosquito two,
Mosquito jump in de callaloo.'**

A simple counting and chanting poem for small group work with Key Stage 1 children. Coming from the Caribbean the poem can be used to introduce children to words and dialect from a different culture. The activity invites children to clap to the rhythm of the poem, ideal for developing their 'ear' for poetry.



My Cat Jeoffry

Christopher Smart

'For he is of the tribe of Tiger.'

Christopher Smart's charming and audacious meditation upon the qualities of his cat, Jeoffrey, was written in the mid eighteenth century. Year 6 children might enjoy discussing the poem's inventiveness and descriptive detail that captures the movements of the beautifully observed cat. It will probably be unlike anything the children have ever read or heard before.



Nothingmas Day

Adrian Mitchell

'No it wasn't.'

A poem that plays with the idea of opposites, imagining a Christmas which defies expectations – sure to appeal to the imagination of many children, and providing an unusual contrast to other poems about the festive season!



On a Night of Snow

Elizabeth Coatsworth

**'Cat if you go outdoors
you must walk in the snow'**

In the first eight lines of the poem the 'mistress' addresses her cat who replies in the next six lines of this sonnet. Its short length and rhyming pattern make it particularly suitable for learning by heart whilst its content offers plenty of opportunities to discuss themes of safety versus risk, security and danger.

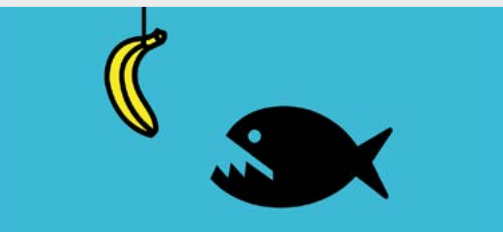


Pirate Pete

James Carter

**'Pirate Pete
had a ship on the sea'**

Perfect for a pirate themed day at school! The poem is ideal for a group recitation with five children each taking responsibility for learning a verse. The first four verses have easily remembered rhyming triplets. The suggested activity is a creative writing response from the perspective of one of the parrots.



Please Do Not Feed the Animals

Robert Hull

**'Remember that piranhas
are not allowed bananas'**

Full of surprising and funny rhymes concerning zoo animals and food this poem allows children to revel in the sound effects and texture of words, and to enjoy its gleeful absurdity. How many other poems rhyme 'piranhas' with 'bananas'? The activity invites children to write a poem in imitation where 'Do not' is replaced by 'Do'.



Rules

Brian Patten

**'Some rules are wild and woolly
And some are tame and neat.'**

A typically humorous, cheerfully subversive Brian Patten poem that imagines there might be rules for all kinds of individuals, institutions and actions in life. Full of alliteration and assonance and simple rhyme it is ideal for developing sounds inspired by the people and animals it mentions. The last two lines give children an opportunity to exercise their vocal chords.



Some One

Walter de la Mare

**'I listened, I opened,
I looked to left and right,'**

A lovely poem for children to learn by heart with lots of recitation decisions to make about pacing, volume and the handling of the repetition and rhyme in this traditional popular poem. Sound effects are frequently employed and can be discussed along with how the mysterious atmosphere is created.



Song For a Banjo Dance

Langston Hughes

**'Shake your brown feet, chile,
Shake your brown feet, honey,'**

Langston Hughes was born in 1902 and wrote extremely popular, insightful portrayals of African-American life in the USA for forty years. This dialect poem is a lively song about dancing and very enjoyable to perform but it also contains a poignant message that could be discussed with older children.



Spell of the Air

Elizabeth Jennings

'I am necessity.'

This short eight-line poem works well when encouraging children to learn whole poems by heart. The sounds the poet chooses to associate with air will stimulate imaginations and may prepare children for the suggested activity of writing about another one of the elements after brainstorming words connected to their chosen element.



Tarentella

Hilaire Belloc

**'And the cheers and the jeers of
the young muleteers'**

The strong rhythms and rhymes of this poem work to create the feel of the lively Spanish dance it describes. It is a poem which begs to be enjoyed by being spoken out loud, and the activity encourages this sense of enjoyment, also using clapping and movement so the rhythms can be felt.

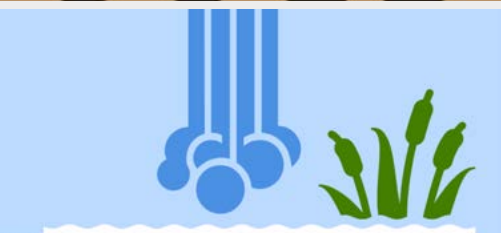


Tell me, tell me, Sarah Jane

Charles Causley

**'Tell me, tell me, Sarah Jane,
Tell me, dearest daughter,
Why are you holding in your hand
A thimbleful of water?'**

The poem makes powerful use of the senses to convey a child's impression of the sea, also using question and answer to present a dialogue between a mother and child. The writing activity supports children in using their five senses to enable them to think of their own response to and descriptions of the sea.



The Cataract of Lodore

Robert Southey

**'How does the Water,
Come down at Lodore?'**

A relatively long poem about a fast flowing waterfall which may be suitable for reading aloud to children, then perhaps dividing up so children can read it in groups. The poem makes strong use of present participles to describe the fast flowing water, and the writing activity uses the poem as inspiration in asking pupils to describe other things which move fast.

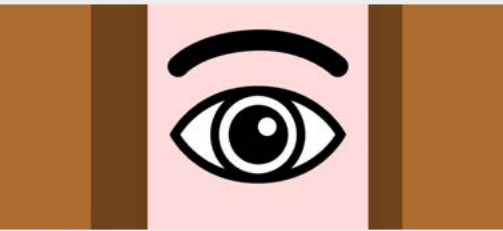


The Ceremonial Band

James Reeves

**'The old King of Dorchester, He
had a little orchestra,'**

A nonsense poem about an imaginary orchestra, and an ideal poem to be read out by several readers. Children can have fun with the sounds of the instruments, perhaps accompanied by actions. Even very young children could enjoy making the sounds, with an adult reading other sections.



The Door

Miroslav Holub

**'Maybe you'll see a face,
or an eye.'**

A good possible introduction to the power of free verse for children, this poem uses simple language to encourage the reader to think about what may be outside a door. It's a simple idea, but one which opens up so many possibilities. The activity uses the structure of the poem to support children in writing their own poem to convey their ideas.



The Language of Cat

Rachel Rooney

'Teach me the language of Cat;'

This poem suggests that cats have their own language which they express through their movements and actions. The activity focuses on verbs in the poem and invites children to think about ways to describe cats, using actions to bring their ideas to life in a fun way.



The Mock Turtle's Song

Lewis Carroll

**'will you come and
join the dance?'**

Carroll's fun poem from *Alice in Wonderland* provides plenty of opportunity for children to use their voices and accompanying actions to enjoy the vibrancy of the language and the irresistible invitation to dance! The lively verbs and the use of question and answer should allow children to have lots of fun reading the poem out loud.

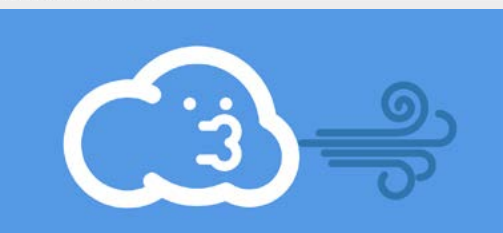


The Months

Sara Coleridge

**'May brings flocks of pretty
lambs, Skipping by their fleecy
dams.'**

A perfect poem to support children's learning about the months of the year and the seasons, with the poem giving a lovely description for each month of the year, and the activity allowing children to think about their own experience of and feelings about the movement of the year.



The North Wind Doth Blow

Anon

**'The north wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow,'**

This eight-line poem might be suitable for Key Stage 1 children. The image of the robin in the wintry scene is a simple but strong one and the emotional undertones in the poem are appealing and worth exploring. The activity encourages the use of handwriting and drawing skills in imagining the mood and setting for themselves.



The Owl

Alfred Tennyson

**'Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.'**

Tennyson describes this poem consisting of two seven-line verses and written in 1830 as 'A Song'. The pervading tone of the poem and the way in which the owl is presented are interesting topics to discuss with children. The activity asks some comprehension questions that encourage research, for example, into what the 'five wits' mentioned might be.



The Quangle Wangle's Hat

Edward Lear

**'On the top of the Crumpetty Tree
The Quangle Wangle sat,'**

Edward Lear's late nineteenth century nonsense poem stimulates imagination and speculation as to what the Quangle Wangle and Crumpety tree might look like. The use of rhyme and sound effects can also be discussed. The activity offers a link to a YouTube video and an invitation to draw the Quangle Wangle's hat.



The Sleepy Giant

Charles E. Carryl

**'My age is three hundred and
seventy-two,'**

Four humorous four-line verses are the vehicles for this giant's story and his decision to start eating eels rather than little boys. Good for discussing rhythm and rhyme and syllable patterns. Also helpful for vocabulary development with words like 'voraciously', 'regret' and 'slumber'. The activity invites children to create a 'Wanted' poster.



The Song of the Wandering Aengus

W.B. Yeats

**'I will find out where she
has gone,'**

With fairly simple language, Yeats creates a magical atmosphere in a poem which uses an Irish mythical figure to explore lost love. The activity is designed to let children simply enjoy the magic, mystical atmosphere of the poem through a focus on the images Yeats creates.



The Spider and the Fly

Mary Howitt

'Will you walk into my parlour?'

This famous fable poem written in 1829 offers opportunities to explore the use of a narrator and dialect within a suspenseful story in which a devious spider traps a trusting fly. Work on the poem can also touch upon rhyming patterns while encouraging vocabulary development as several words will be unfamiliar.



The Tyger

William Blake

**'Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,'**

This famous poem can be read on many different levels – here the focus is on simply allowing children to enjoy Blake's use of language to convey the might of the tiger. There is a writing/drawing activity which encourages children to consider the powerful words in the poem. You could start by showing children Blake's original **hand-drawn design** of the poem.



The Way Through the Woods

Rudyard Kipling

**'Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,'**

This poem with its undertones of mystery and the supernatural invites discussion of how a mood or atmosphere can be created in a poem. The activity encourages children to create a short story based on the events of seventy years ago and the apparent haunting of the woods by ghostly figures.



The Witch

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge

**'Oh, lift me over the threshold,
and let me in at the door!'**

Witches have a strong place in many children's imaginations and appear regularly in children's literature, but this poem may encourage children to think about witches in a different way, through using their voices to convey the supernatural, spooky power of an imagined encounter with a witch!



There Was a Naughty Boy

John Keats

'There was a naughty boy,'

The playful rhymes, jaunty rhythm and self-deprecating humour in Keats' light hearted, whimsical self-portrait make this a poem that appeals strongly to the ear. It can also be used to discuss how we see ourselves, the different roles we adopt in life and how we view the world around us.



Time Transfixed *by Rene Magritte*

Carol Ann Duffy

'It has no passengers at all,'

This poem is about a painting called 'Time Transfixed' by Rene Magritte – and could be used either to explore the connection between this poem and this picture (the activity suggests some ways to do this) or as a springboard to use other famous pictures as inspiration for pupils to write and recite their own poems.



Vegan Delight

Benjamin Zephaniah

'What do we eat?'

A lively list poem, with a strong beat, which is about all the things the speaker can eat as a vegan. An enjoyable poem to read aloud that is short enough to be divided into sections for different groups to learn. The activity encourages children to write extra sections which they can add to their recitations.



What is Pink?

Christina Rossetti

'What is pink? A rose is pink'

A question and answer poem that enables children to think about different colours in a simple but fun way. This could be used well at either Key Stage 1 or 2, with the writing activity supporting children to use the format of the poem to think through what colours might mean to them.



Written in March

William Wordsworth

**'The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising'**

This exuberant celebration of the coming of Spring and the departure of Winter was written in 1798. Children can identify the concrete nouns and note the simple but ingenious rhyming scheme in a poem that generally uses simple diction. The activity invites children to write vividly about their favourite season.



Wynken, Blynken and Nod

Eugene Field

**'But I shall name you the
fishermen three: Wynken,
Blynken, And Nod.'**

This poem is about a scene a mother imagines with her child as she sings them to sleep in their bed. The activity supports children in understanding the power of volume when speaking a poem out loud as it encourages them to whisper and think about images we might use to lull a small child to sleep.



Ye Spotted Snakes

from A Midsummer Night's Dream

William Shakespeare

**'Weaving spiders, come not
here; Hence, you long-legged
spinnners, hence!'**

This is a lullaby, sung by fairies in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, where they warn away creatures like snakes and spiders from their fairy queen as she falls asleep in the woods. A lovely introduction to Shakespeare's language, with an activity which allows children to write their own poem using similar ideas.



“There has never been a better time to become a lover of poetry. The introduction of a new curriculum that promotes poetry by heart from the first year of primary school is a challenge and a worthy one.

Poetry is a beautiful medium, beautiful to speak and hear, beautiful to read and write but many young people are unaware of what it can offer. For many teachers poetry remains largely untouched since their own school days.

In a context of raised expectations, mastery levels, growth mindsets and a completely new approach to assessment, I venture a suggestion: turn to the very best. The new curriculum demands more; the best poetry offers more.

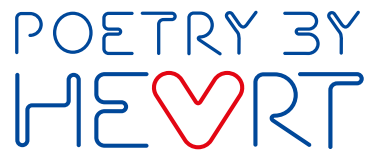
The Poetry by Heart Primary showcase is fun to browse and this pdf guide provides a clear road map to using poetry well in the classroom. Gently instructive, brisk and reassuring, it is in short an invaluable resource for all Primary teachers”.

Dr Josephine Brady

Lecturer in Primary Initial Teacher Education, University of Birmingham

SITES FOR PRIMARY POETRY

Pages 23 to 35 list websites you can visit to get more resources and support for poetry teaching and learning. Many offer poetry written for children in text, audio or video format with copyright clearance that makes them suitable for free educational use. Click on each logo to go to the website.



Poetry By Heart

www.poetrybyheart.org.uk

The Poetry By Heart website offers primary teachers a resource for exploring poetry written in English. Click [here](#) to see a timeline anthology of more than 200 poets and poems with video performances by former Poetry By Heart competitors, and audio recordings of readings by contemporary poets. The site also has a showcase collection of First World War poetry and a new Shakespeare collection is to be added in 2016.



Centre for Literacy in Primary Education

www.clpe.org.uk

CLPE is the National Poetry Centre for Primary Schools. Our teaching centre and library hold an extensive children's poetry collection and we celebrate the best new publishing with our annual CLIPPA award. Action research forms the basis of our CPD. You can find research-informed guidance about teaching poetry in our [What we know works pdf](#) and on our [PoetryLine](#) website which includes videos of CLIPPA shortlisted poets performing their work.



National Poetry Day (NPD)

www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk

National Poetry Day, Thursday 6th October 2016, is a mass celebration of all things poetical and a chance for all to enjoy, discover and share new ways into poetry. Use this year's theme – Messages – to kickstart a whole year of poetry activity: memorizing, displaying, creating, designing, performing, listening. Whatever you want to say, say it with a poem. More inspiration and free resources [here](#).



The Poetry Archive

www.poetryarchive.org

The Poetry Archive makes new digital recordings with key English-language poets from around the world, finds existing recordings of living poets and historic recordings by great poets from the past, and makes substantial extracts from all these recordings freely available at www.poetryarchive.org. There is a separate Children's Archive.



THEPOETRYSOCIETY

The Poetry Society

www.poetrysociety.org.uk

The Poetry Society has been working with schools for over 40 years. Our broad programme encompasses competitions, workshops and free teaching resources, including **Poetry Train**, a book full of practical classroom activities for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Our Poets in Schools consultancy service connects schools with poets for workshops and training. Visit the PoetryClass website [here](#).



Poetry Foundation

www.poetryfoundation.org

The Poetry Foundation offers a wealth of materials for all ages, including a database of more than 13,000 poems, 3,000 poet biographies, audio recordings, and articles for teachers and pupils. Visit the **Children's Poetry section** to access animated videos and articles about children's poetry.



The Poetry Library

www.poetrylibrary.org.uk

The Poetry Library offers resources for teachers and poets who work with children in schools. Group visits can be organised inviting children to interact with the collection in various exciting ways including taking a Poetry Word Trail across Southbank Centre, exploring how the worlds of science and poetry interact and becoming a Poetry Explorer. Contact the library at info@poetrylibrary.org.uk to arrange a visit.

Scottish Poetry Library

Bringing people and poems together

Scottish Poetry Library

www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk

The Scottish Poetry Library supports primary teachers and pupils to enjoy poetry and develop confidence as readers and writers through our wide range of online resources. Our **website** features poems, teaching activities and posters. Plus, **Making Makars**, our education blog offers schools the opportunity to celebrate and share pupils' poems online.

Poetry Please

www.bbc.co.uk/poetryseason

Poetry Please is a BBC Radio 4 request programme which offers selections of poetry on various themes, introduced by poet Roger McGough. Look out for other poetry programmes including The Echo Chamber, Poetry Extra and The Verb.

The Poetry Station

www.poetrystation.org.uk

The English and Media Centre's Poetry Station provides a high quality audio visual experience of poetry – from poets reading their own work, to animation and short films. Poems are searchable by both poet and topic. Readings and performances for primary age pupils include those by Jackie Kay, Michael Rosen, Sophie Hannah, John Hegley and John Agard.



POETRY STATION



UKLA

www.ukla.org

The UK Literacy Association is committed to promoting good practice nationally and internationally in literacy and language teaching and research. It aims to support and inform all those concerned with the development of language, literacy and communication, encourage them in reflection and dialogue, challenge them in their practice and give public voice to their concerns. Our members include teachers, advisers, librarians and academics.



NAWE

www.nawe.co.uk

The National Association of Writers in Education is the UK Subject Centre for Creative Writing, supporting the development and enjoyment of the discipline at all educational levels. It offers associate membership for teachers and publishes a range of **classroom resources** and an online **directory of professional writers** available for school visits. **The NAWE Annual Conference** is a celebrated meeting point for teachers and writers.



NATE

www.nate.org.uk

The National Association for the Teaching of English promotes standards of excellence in the teaching of English from Early Years to University. It promotes innovative and original ideas that have practical classroom outcomes. Its magazine *Primary Matters* covers all the topics for those teaching English or Literacy to learners in their Early Years or Primary stage. See this **sample article** about reading poetry out loud to children.



Poetry and Memory Project

www.poetryandmemory.com

The Poetry and Memory project is a three-year interdisciplinary study investigating experiences of poetry learning and examining the relationships between memorisation, recitation and understanding. The project is funded by the Leverhulme Trust, and based at the Faculty of Education in the University of Cambridge.



Apples and Snakes

www.applesandsnakes.org

Apples and Snakes is an organisation specialising in performance poetry and spoken word. Participation is at the heart of our work and we love working in schools. We can find an appropriate poet to inspire your students whether for a day of workshops or an assembly, or to help your staff explore more creative ways to teach poetry. To find out more about our work in performance and participation please check out our website at www.applesandsnakes.org

“A poem is just a little machine for remembering itself...”

Whatever other function a rhyme, a metre, an image, a rhetorical trope, a brilliant qualifier or stanza-break might perform, half of it is simply mnemonic. A poem makes a fetish of its memorability. It does this, because the one unique thing about our art is that it can be carried in your head in its original state, intact and perfect. We merely *recall* a string quartet or a film or a painting, actually, at a neurological level we're only remembering a memory of it; but our memory of the poem *is* the poem.”

Don Paterson

Poet

Click [here](#) to read the full 2004 T.S. Eliot Lecture; 'The Dark Art of Poetry' on the Poetry Library website.

Icon by Robert Salazar Jr and Cassie McKOWN (The Noun Project)



CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The sixty poems on the Primary showcase are a selection from the longer list of over two hundred chosen by Morag Styles, a Trustee of The Poetry Archive and formerly Professor of Children's Poetry at the University of Cambridge. The value of this showcase depends in great measure on Morag's work over many years spent teaching, researching and advocating for the comparatively neglected field of children's poetry. Her book on the history of children's poetry, *From The Garden To The Street: Three Hundred Years of Children's Poetry*, is an exemplary, accessible and wide-ranging treatment of the subject.

The Primary showcase was developed by the The Full English with Howoco for The Department for Education and for the Poetry Archive. Thank you to the Department for Education for funding the showcase initiative. Thank you to the Poetry Archive for all kinds of help and support, including the provision of links to its archive recordings, for the quality of the new recordings made and for the initial selection of poems by Morag Styles, Julie Blake and Andrew Motion.

Thank you to Kei Miller, Mimi Khalvati, Maurice Riordan, Jo Shapcott, Alice Oswald, Daljit Nagra and Simon Armitage for their readings of the classic poems featuring in the videos on the Primary showcase. These readings were funded by the Department for Education and recorded by Richard Carrington and colleagues at the Poetry Archive. Thank you to Jon Stevenson for turning the poems into spoken videos with such skill and enterprise. Thank you to Poetry By Heart Project Assistant, Lily Owens-Crossman, for all her meticulous work in sourcing, proofreading and securing copyright permissions for the poems.

Thank you to Mike Dixon and Karen Lockney from the Poetry By Heart team who prepared the activities for each poem and the descriptions

in the PDF teacher guide. As a Primary school governor and a Primary Initial Teacher Educator respectively, their advice and guidance has been invaluable in creating this resource.

The design of this resource was informed by empirical and theoretical research in the fields of poetry education, poetry and memory, and multi-modality.

We would especially like to thank David Whitley and Debbie Pullinger of the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge for their generous sharing of 'work in progress' from their Leverhulme funded Poetry and Memory research project. Sue Dymoke (Leicester University), Andrew Lambirth (Greenwich University) and Anthony Wilson (Exeter University) provided a rich foundation for this week in the ESRC seminar series they hosted, *Poetry Matters*, and in the two books which derived from it, **Making Poetry Matter** and **Making Poetry Happen**.

As with so much in the field of literacy, we acknowledge the pervasive influence of multi-modality as theorized by Gunther Kress, Carey Jewitt, Jeff Bezemer, Diane Mavers and colleagues at the UCL Institute of Education. We would like to add a special thank you to Professor Catherine Robson of New York University, whose book **Heart Beats: the Everyday Life of the Memorized Poem** provides an invaluable reference point for the history of poetry recitation and memorization within mass education.

Poetry By Heart hopes to obtain funding to add more poems and more recordings of poems being read by poets. Additions will trigger a mailing of a revised version of this PDF guide with coverage of the new content.

Please subscribe to our mailing list of primary teachers so you receive this notification automatically. Please register [here](#).

Poetry By Heart welcomes feedback about your use of this guide and showcase collection including any suggestions you think will help us to improve it. For example, please tell us about the features of the website you and your pupils enjoy most and how you have used these.

info@poetrybyheart.org.uk

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and credit Kirstie Orpen for her work on Poetry By Heart before it was even launched right through to this special Primary showcase collection, first as an intern working for The Full English and later as Project Manager at Howoco.

Referencing the Primary showcase and its guide for teachers

Please cite the showcase as:

Blake, J., Dixon, M., Lockney, K., Shortis, T., Styles, M., 2016 *Poetry By Heart Primary showcase collection* < <http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk/poetry-for-children/> >

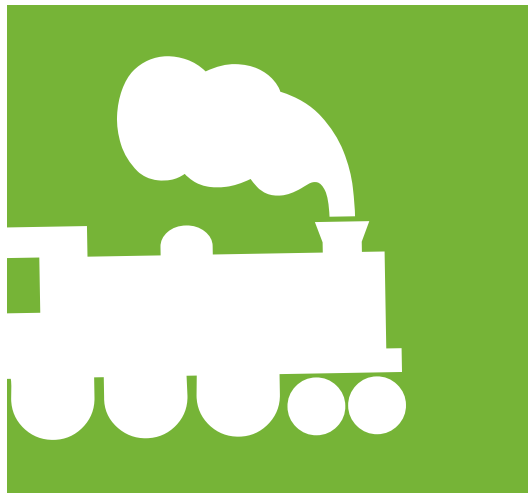
Please cite the guide for teachers as:

Blake, J., Shortis, T., with Dixon, M., Lockney, K., 2016 *Poetry for Children: a guide for teachers* available via < <http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk/primary-registration-form/> >

Poetry By Heart was co-founded in 2012 by Julie Blake and Andrew Motion. It was the principal education initiative of The Poetry Archive, developed in partnership with The Full English. It has been funded by the Department for Education since 2012.

THE FULL
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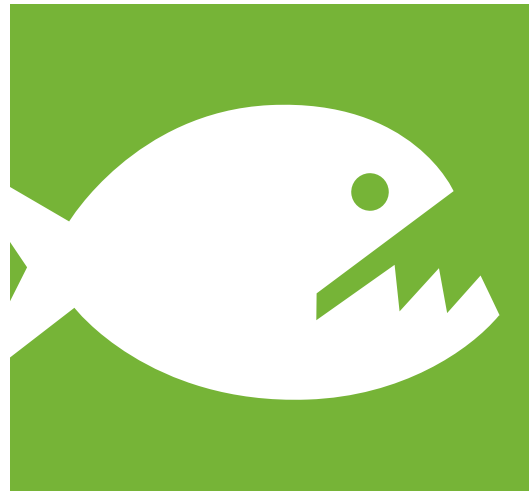




Summer 2016



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