

**National  
Literacy  
Trust**

Change your story

**West Yorkshire**

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# **Poetry Week 2024**

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Part of the West Yorkshire Young Poet  
Laureate Programme for 2024—2025

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## **Primary School Classroom Resources**

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In partnership with

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**West  
Yorkshire  
Combined  
Authority**

**Tracy  
Brabin  
Mayor of  
West Yorkshire**



**National Poetry Centre**



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# About the National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that empowers children, young people, and adults with the literacy skills they need to succeed. Over the last 30 years, we have continued to work with people who need us the most, supporting schools, families and communities on a local and national level.

Our Young Writers Programme supports schools to develop lasting writing-for-enjoyment practices with the radical view that every young person is a writer. Over the last nine years, we developed a range of writing programmes based on our evidence-based 'three-pillar model' for writing.

This year, we are thrilled to have partnered with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the National Poetry Centre again to run another year of the fantastic West Yorkshire Young Poet Laureate Programme to inspire the next generation of young poets in the region.

## West Yorkshire Poetry Week is back!

Bring the energy of contemporary poetry to your school with a week-long programme of free activities, class resources and events including a **National Poetry Day** celebration.

# Using this resource pack

West Yorkshire Poetry Week will run from **Monday 30th September** to **Friday 4th October 2024**. The daily lesson plans in this pack (for ages 5 to 16), have been designed to provide poetry writing ideas for teachers to use in the classroom during West Yorkshire Poetry Week and beyond. To complement your lessons:

- read the model poems donated by our ambassador poets with your students
- watch our pre-recorded videos featuring a different poet every day
- join in-person and remote events (visit the webpage to know more <https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poet-laureate-competition/> )
- use the *School Poet Laureate Toolkit* to run your own Class and School Laureate competitions.

Don't forget to enter your **Year 4** young poets to be considered for the post of **Young Poet Laureate for West Yorkshire**.

## Top Tips

- It is important to model the writing process. Take part in the writing activities alongside your class and share your efforts. Understanding your approach to creativity will enable you to better support the creative process of your students.
- Provide students with a separate notebook or folder to use as their poetry journal (rather than using their English/literacy books). This will provide a space that allows pupils to be 'messy' when collecting ideas and redrafting and some pupils are more likely to engage with the process in a book that will not be marked.
- Create a display or 'working wall' for Poetry Week. Use this as a space to display stimulus material, pictures, model poems, writing and artwork by the students.



# Suggested Scheme of Work

Date	Lesson	Resources	Objectives
Monday 30 September	What, exactly, is poetry?	<a href="#">Lesson plan 1 and introductory video</a>	I understand how poems work.
Tuesday 1 October	Poetry Everywhere.	<a href="#">Lesson plan 2 and introductory video</a>	I can generate a subject and purpose for my poem.
Wednesday 2 October	Let's get writing!	<a href="#">Lesson plan 3 and introductory video</a>	I can draft a poem that conveys a message to my readers in a self-chosen poetic form.
Thursday 3 October 	The Final touches.	<a href="#">Lesson plan 4 and introductory video</a>	I can explore the impact of language choices on a reader. I can proof-read through considering how my poem reflects the purposes for which it was intended.
Friday 4 October	Class and School Laureate Internal Competition	<a href="#">Lesson plan 5 and introductory video</a>	I can use intonation, volume and movement to convey meaning.

We produced a few printable files to decorate your classroom and celebrate your students' poetic efforts, you can download them here:

[literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poet-laureate-competition](https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poet-laureate-competition)



# Meet the Poets

## Sharena Lee Satti

Sharena is a project manager, published poet, spoken word artist, educator, radio host and festival producer. She believes in the power of poetry and works hard to make poetry accessible to all.

Sharena regularly teaches poetry in schools, colleges and universities across the UK and works locally and nationally as a freelance artist to deliver community projects and festivals in collaboration with several organisations. Most recently she worked with Wow Global, Bradford Phab Club, Desi Blitz, Sisterhood Festival, Bradford Council, Tappay Tales, Bradford University, Maya Productions, Hospice UK, Women Zone, Bradford Literature Festival, Huddersfield Literature Festival, Sangam Festival, The Leap, Bradford Libraries, Leeds Playhouse, UK Hospice and Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

Sharena was instrumental in delivering the first-ever West Yorkshire Young Poet Laureate Programme in 2022 and she has been shortlisted for the 2024 Ruth Rendell Awards for Services to Literacy. She has also been shortlisted for the Northern Asian Power List in 2022 and the National Diversity Award in 2022 and 2023. She was nominated as 'one of the 21' creatives most likely to make an impact on Bradford's cultural scene in 2021 and for the British Indian Awards in 2020.





# To Be a Poet

*by Sharena Lee Satti*

Is one that doesn't sail through ignorant bliss  
You feel everything and not an emotion is missed  
To be a poet  
Is to feel, like a universe of stars is dancing within you,  
an unknowing voice that feels so familiar  
A feeling that feels like a summer evening  
or sometimes a tornado, sometimes a raging storm that sends the tiles of your roof crashing.  
Setting ablaze your written pages amongst its ashes  
Within that feeling is a longing, or a wanting to belong in, your own story.  
A self-discovery of you, a hidden truth  
A feeling, when you breathe in  
Do you feel that, do your lungs feel grateful for the oxygen they receive  
Do you feel relief when the air circulates  
It's the same feeling when you release, the insides of you that ache,  
The pieces of you that have a story to tell but there is no escape  
Your thoughts and feelings need a place to stay  
And through your words, they find a home on the page  
And sometimes what you share isn't for everyone's ears  
It's not always what someone wants to hear  
Its build-up of your own rage, of your fears and sometimes hate  
As you take to the page, it relieves a burden off your plate  
And other times is breathtakingly beautiful, just like silence when you  
Hear the birds tweeting and the sky is so brightly blue  
And your smile is as golden as the rays that leave that summer silk shine  
In the sky  
And the pages you now write, match the happiness you feel inside  
To be a poet is to be you, it is to be true  
To the pages you are inspired to write or to the waves of your own ocean,  
That challenges your own tide  
For we all poets in our own right, just some never get to  
Ignite that light  
Being a poet is to be human, to express your own truth.  
Being a poet. Is just to be you

## Jamie H Scrutton

Jamie H Scrutton is a multidisciplinary artist, specialising in various art forms including Performance Poetry and Animation. He has recently released his second art book this year titled “The Vision of Storytelling” distributed through Troubador Publications. Jamie also performs and showcases his work Nationally and Internationally, at various events such as “Kino Open Mic Film Night” in London, “BBC Contains Strong Language” based in Leeds and “Freshly Squeezed” based in Newcastle. He made his debut appearance at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2023 and appeared as a wildcard contestant on “Sky Arts Landscape Artist of The Year 2024.” He continues to strive and thrive for the next adventure. Jamie is extremely honoured to be involved in such a prolific programme with The National Literacy Trust, inspiring the next generation of young Poets!



# I ALWAYS SEEM TO BREAK MY LENT

*by Jamie H. Scrutton*

It was a respectable sixty minute solace  
but now I have become lament  
because after just one hour of giving up sugar  
I always seem to break my Lent.

I have tried to obliterate the treacle taste  
In order to succeed and thrive  
but I cannot give up those hot syrupy drinks  
it is my addiction to survive!

As I grew older, I discovered an alternative  
sweeteners became my glee  
but I cannot accept any hot drinks  
Unless there are seven sweeteners in my tea!

My friends have warned me about the artificial detriments  
stating one day it'll become my fate  
but I would rather enjoy a nice sweetener brew  
and still contain my weight!

My grandma is the worst for synthetic condiments  
she has twelve sweeteners to be precise  
she will take a sip of her drink and state  
“Oh I say that is nice!”

I have offered a taste to my dear old friends  
their reaction is the best  
It might give them the scowling shivers  
but it gives me a taste of zest.

So I shall not be giving up sugar or anything  
although it was a one hour well worth spent  
I'll guess I will have to go and find another heinous habit  
In order to succeed in my Lent!

## Lence

Lence is a rap & spoken word artist from Leeds, known for a distinctive style of intricate lyrics, compelling music and impactful live performances that explore his own experiences.

An artist who blurs genre lines, performing poetry in rap settings & rap in poetry settings, Lence has supported the likes of legendary Grime MC D Double E, Mercury Prize nominated Joshua Idehen and Grammy nominated artist Kassa Overall. Lence also runs regular poetry and rap workshops across Yorkshire.

Lence's lyrics were recently compared to Emily Bronte's poetry by Professor Denis Flannery at the University of Leeds as part of a Masters Class. Recently Lence headlined BBC Contains Strong Language at the Wardrobe and Manchester based poetry night Verbose. Lence has performed his work at BBC Words First, received radio play on 6Music and also recorded a BBC Introducing Live Session.

As well as his creative work, Lence also runs his own event 'Blur the Lines' which is an eclectic showcase of 20+ Rappers, Poets, Musicians & Comedians based in Yorkshire, an interdisciplinary show connecting creative scenes throughout the North. Lence has produced 7 of these events, with 2 sold out shows at Leeds Playhouse, 3 at Leeds Lit Fest, 1 in association with Come Play With Me and 1 at the historic Leeds Library.



# Get Told!

*by Lence*

If I say I'm gonna do it, then I do it till I've done it,  
They say they're gonna do it, but it never gets done,  
If I say I'm gonna do it, then I do it till I've been there and done it,  
If I do it then I'm getting it done,  
So save it, revive it, escape it, survive it,  
Reclaim, Rebuild, rewrite it,  
I'm making them alter their tone,  
Get told, get shown!  
If they underestimate this hunger escalates,  
Bringing me to elevate the levels I've raised,  
I said I'm gonna do it, they were saying to me 'how?'  
But that's not what they're saying to me now.

## Tshepo Brown

Tshepo was born in South Africa to a South African mother and a Ghanaian father and raised in Bradford. He has been writing poems for half a decade, with the subject matter varying from poem to poem, however, common themes include race, friendship and his personal faith. Tshepo believes that poetry is similar to food in the sense that we are all entitled to our different preferences and just because one may not resonate with a particular poem and its form, it doesn't mean that poetry isn't for them.



# Representation Matters

*by Tshepo Brown*

My favourite past time was running on the grass

Carefree, I wasn't concerned about a lack of cash.

Wasn't well off, but Mum made sure we never lacked.

I Used to keep Secrets and pacts,

crossing my heart and hoping to die if I didn't keep my word.

But, I never spilled the beans, cause I wasn't ready to leave this earth.

Believe it or not, Power Rangers showed me my worth

Watching Space Patrol Delta left me in awe,

didn't know that a black man could battle aliens with so much sauce

Of course, Jack Landors made me Stan the Red Ranger to my core

Not sure how he'd fare in a galaxy far far away, but I'm sure he's got the force

All this to say that representation matters

Kids need to see themselves in others to know their skin ain't a factor

Growing up I looked up to actors

Denzel & Samuel L. Jackson will forever be goated

and please don't try and misquote me.

Representation matters and that's one for those who didn't hear me the first time



## Laura Baldwin

Laura is a disabled writer and spoken word performance artist from Bradford, UK. She writes about topical issues, her journey of faith, parenting, and living in an inaccessible world as well as her experiences of loving someone living with addiction. She has been published and featured in print and online both locally and further afield for several years. Her debut poetry collection 'It's Just Me' was published in December 2023 and features writing that spans a decade. Laura has recently been exploring scriptwriting and hopes to have completed her debut play by the end of 2024. When she is not delivering workshops, writing, or reading at events Laura is busy being a mother to three grown children, a wife, and an owner of two toy poodles.





# Not Everyone Will Like You

*by Laura Baldwin*

not everyone will like you  
sometimes it will be your fault  
sometimes it won't  
sometimes an apology  
may change their mind  
sometimes it won't  
we must try to live our lives still  
rise above, forgive  
love freely, right wrongs  
apologise where needed  
and sometimes when we shouldn't have to  
because that is love  
and sometimes people still won't like you  
you can't be everyone's cup of tea  
so when you've done all of these  
learn now to love yourself  
forgive yourself, heal yourself  
count those who do like you  
and be blessed!

## Bilal Saloo

Bilal is a poet and writer hailing from Dewsbury in West Yorkshire. He has always had a love of the written word, becoming interested in poetry as a teenager. It has been a constant in his life ever since.

Bilal is also a Director of Batley Poets CIC. It was at a Batley Poets open mic session that he first performed his poetry in public. He soon had the idea to create a website for the group to share poetry from local people. It was here that he was ensnared into becoming a volunteer.

In his involvement with Batley Poets, Bilal aims to encourage once lonely “bedroom poets” to share their distinctive styles and provide a platform for them to grow. He has organised and supported events, open mics, workshops, and poetry displays to promote poetry in the local and broader community.

Whilst poetry is his main writing outlet, Bilal can often be found attempting to write short stories and piece together the odd play.



# Gazing

*by Bilal Saloo*

Gazing, into this small window of time,  
I see stories unfold on crisp pages,  
I see beauty in this window of mine,  
Butterflies escaping cocoon cages,  
Bright eyed wings uncurl all in a flutter,  
on the branch of the tree with the green leaf  
Browning, drifting, crinkling, joining clutter.  
Dear window, in mind's eye, such a brief  
journey, to glimpse a faraway place  
I know not when I shall see once again,  
or feel the cold pinch, the hot slither lace  
down to the fingers, wrapped around a pen;  
In need I am of the window I see,  
That gathers dust and is locked with a key.

## Lauren Kara

Lauren Kara is a queer musician, poet and multidisciplinary artist from Leeds. Poetry and music have been instrumental in accompanying her throughout life's difficult chapters.

During school, Lauren channelled her thoughts and feelings into poetry to create a safe space to acknowledge and understand her story.

Creative expression has always been a guiding light in the darkness for her and she looks forward to showing just how impactful writing poetry can be.



## Promise...

*by Lauren Kara*

I promise to love myself through the darkness and all,  
To lift myself back up each time that I fall,  
To learn to be more patient and gentle with my soul.

I promise to spend the rest of my life...  
Tending to the scars which lay bare upon my chest,  
Piece by piece, pick up the pieces that were forgotten and lost along the way,  
To regrow and rebuild my own destiny.

One step forward then ten steps backwards,  
Big, medium or small,  
Every single step still counts as moving forwards,  
Progress is progress.

I promise to acknowledge how far I've come,  
To recognise that my path has been a twisted one,  
Accompanied by yours truly - it's them and I till the end,  
We have all we need within.

I am ready for what is to come,  
Life is a gift of promise to the lucky ones,  
To be lived or not to be,  
I do...  
I choose to live for me,  
And promise to choose myself for the rest of my eternity.

## Mohamed Saloo

Mohamed is a published poet, workshop facilitator, spoken word artist and co-founder of Batley Poets. He aims to create opportunities for poets of any age to showcase their poetry, saying a reason for founding the poetry group was to give bedroom poets a platform to share their poetry. More about Mohamed and his poetry can be found at:

[mohamedsaloo.co.uk](http://mohamedsaloo.co.uk)



# My Batley

*by Mohamed Saloo*

From the cobblestones, to the hills of green  
Timeless vision of a Batley scene  
Rich in history, diversity and faith  
United in pride, friendship and praise  
Vibrant in colour, fragrance and sound  
Pleasant by nature, friendly all round  
Red bricks, sand bricks, chimneys and slate  
Walls and rooftops that makes Batley great  
Towering clock, in the market square  
Memorial gardens to show we care  
Passing strangers with a friendly nod  
A place where friends don't mind being odd  
And then I witnessed from a cobble bay  
When Batley united, for Festival day  
A final boast, I think I should add  
It's nice to be a Batley lad.

# **Lesson Plans 5-7 (KS1)**



# Monday

## Lesson 1: WHAT, EXACTLY, IS POETRY?

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**Learning Objective:** I understand how poems work.

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Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

If possible, provide pupils with a separate notebook to use as their poetry journal for this project.

### Ice Breaker

A year 4 student once said: *poetry is an egg with a horse inside.*

Let's play a quick-fire word association game. Go around the room as fast as possible, each student has to finish the sentence *poetry is...*

Be as creative and spontaneous as you can.

**For example:**

*Poetry is a horse standing behind a brick wall.*

*Poetry is an angry cat with wheels.*

Poetry can take many infinite forms, depending on what a poet wants to say, talk about, express or explore.

This week is not so much about learning how to be 'good at' poetry, but about exploring how poems work and about playing with language, rhythm, volume and movement to discover our individual poetic style.

It is all about finding ways to communicate and perform feelings, experiences and ideas.

Poetry brainstorming is about not thinking too hard and trusting that you already know what you need for your poem. Poetry brainstorming is about welcoming the obvious ideas as well as the weird and off the wall ones.

## This is how poems are born

Freewriting is a technique poets use to warm up their 'writing muscles'.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** set a timer to 2 minutes.

Inspired by the prompts below, write as quickly as you can and, most importantly, continuously, for two minutes without worrying about style, spelling and grammar. Just write whatever comes up.

It can be sentences or words if you can't come up with full sentences.

If you are stuck, write the same word over and over again or doodle until something else comes up. There is only one rule: never lift your pen from the paper!

Choose from one of the following prompts:

*If I had wings...*

*A blue dog...*

*If the world run out of chocolate...*

*A trip to space...*

*I don't want to sit...*

When the time is up, ask volunteers to share their freewriting.

- How did you find the exercise?
- Were you able to write easily?
- Were you stuck at any point?
- Do you have any comments about the freewrites that have been shared?

Remember that you can freewrite without a prompt, or come up with your own prompts using something you have seen, a conversation you heard, etc...

Some writers use the first sentence/word they see when opening a book at random.

You can freewrite to explore ideas or to create a draft of a future poem. A draft, like a baby poem, is a quick sketch, outline, or an initial version from which a final poem is then produced.

# The Life of a Poem

## *Where does a poem live?*

A poem can be published in a book, scribbled on a notebook or a scrap of paper, but it can also live in the mind of its author, in the air around us as we hear it being read, in our eyes and minds as we read or watch it being performed.

A single poem can exist in all these forms and that is why poems are unlike any other piece of writing. Like a living organism, poems appear as a draft and continue to grow, develop and change into their final form as we edit them for different purposes.

Watch performances from the selection below (don't forget to click on the CC button for subtitles). You can watch them as a group or in several groups, each watching different performances.

### **Take notes while watching:**

- One word or sentence you particularly liked from one of the poems.
- How did the performance make you feel?

**Benjamin Zephaniah** – Pencil me in  
[youtube.com/watch?v=UxyS8fs1nBg](https://youtube.com/watch?v=UxyS8fs1nBg)

**Joseph Coelho reads his poem** – The Duelling Duo  
[youtube.com/watch?v=8NjltahxByY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=8NjltahxByY)

**Connor Allen Knock Knock**  
[youtube.com/watch?v=ZhuedbqqG6E](https://youtube.com/watch?v=ZhuedbqqG6E)



# Favourite words

## *Is there such a thing as one's 'favourite word'?*

**Watch favourite words and the power of words** – Simon Mole

[youtube.com/watch?v=UoudsbsU2ys](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoudsbsU2ys)

All the poets you watched today produced very different pieces of writing with specific words and sentences they picked from an infinite number of words and sentences to compose a unique poem.

Now pick your favourite word and write it at the centre of a page. It can be in any language.

### **Examine the word by answering the following questions in writing:**

- What do I like about this word?
- Is it its meaning?
- Is it the way it sounds?
- Is it the way it looks, the number of letters, or the kind of letters?
- How much does your favourite word weigh? To find out:
  - read the word aloud articulating every syllable
  - look at the shape of each letter (is 'l' lighter than 'b'?)
  - finally, consider the overall shape of the word and what it means to you.
- Which colour would the word be?
- Which animal would the word be?
- What does it smell like?
- What does it taste like?
- Do you use this word often?
- Is it a word for special occasions?
- Does it remind you of something or someone?
- Repeat it five consecutive times. How do you feel now (happy, relaxed, exhilarated, content)?

Ask volunteers to share their favourite words and some of their answers.

You may even turn your answers into a poem. Each favourite word could be the poem's title.

You may create a class word cloud and display it on your 'working wall'.

## Put it altogether

We end today's session by taking inspiration from:

- Our *poetry is...* exercise
- Our freewriting
- Any notes on the poems we listened to
- Our favourite word and our favourite word poem (if you wrote one)
- Your class word cloud (if you made one)

Use all of this to compose a 3 stanzas poem to summarise today's session.

Don't forget to choose a title!

1. (FROM EXERCISE 1, Poetry is...)
2. (INSERT YOUR FREEWRITING HERE, EXERCISE 2)
3. (INSERT YOUR FAVOURITE WORD POEM HERE, EXERCISE 3)

End today with performances from volunteers sharing their poems.

Display the poems on your 'working wall'.



# Tuesday

## Lesson 2: POETRY EVERYWHERE

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**Learning Objective:** I can generate a subject and purpose for my poem.

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### Why write poetry?

Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

We asked seven West Yorkshire poets to tell us why do they write poetry and what do they write about.

Watch our playlist [youtu.be/5MG39kJW3qY](https://youtu.be/5MG39kJW3qY) (don't forget to click on the CC button for subtitles).

#### Discuss:

- Which ideas and messages stand out?
- Why do the poets write?
- Can everyone really be a poet? Consider the poetry you already composed this week.

Now, draw a large circle at the centre of the page. Write your name inside the circle and draw 6 smaller circles around your main circle. Fill the circles with answers to the following:

1. What makes you angry?
2. What makes you laugh?
3. What could you not live without?
4. Where do you feel most safe?
5. What's your favourite object?
6. What's your favourite meal?

Spend 5 minutes looking and thinking about your circles and choose one you really want to say something about.

Set a timer to 10 minutes and write as many words or sentences as possible related to the circle you have selected. Don't think too much about what you are writing, just write what comes to mind as quickly as possible. Don't worry about spelling and grammar, you can fix that later.

This is all about digging into your minds for great hidden ideas and thoughts, so, don't let anything slow you down.

The topic of your poem is at the centre of the circle you have selected—can this be your title too?

You also have a library of words and sentences to choose from. If you need more material, choose a second circle and brainstorm more words and sentences—your poem can have more than one topic.

Highlight your favourite words or sentences: which ones sound or look great? Which ones are the most interesting or powerful?

You will use all this to compose your own poem in lesson 3 and 4.

## A miniature poem to get you started

To finish today's session, compose a Lune inspired by the ideas in your circles.

A lune is a 13 syllables and 3 lines poem that can have a 3,5,3 words pattern (or a 3,5,3 syllable pattern). Use this pattern for your lune:

**LINE 1:** 3 words

**LINE 2:** 5 words

**LINE 3:** 3 words

Ask volunteers from the class to share their lunes

Treasure and even display the lunes on your 'working wall'. You will need them tomorrow to compose your poem because tomorrow is all about writing!

# Wednesday

## Lesson 3: LET'S GET WRITING!

**Learning Objective:** I can draft a poem that conveys a message to my readers in a self-chosen poetic form.

Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

Today it is all about writing!

Make your own rules, write at your own pace and in your own way.

### Top Tips

- Some poetry rhymes but poetry doesn't have to rhyme
- Think about the types of sentences you use and decide if you need questions as well as statements
- Use questions directed to your reader to draw them in, e.g. Do you know what I mean?
- Don't forget that poetry allows you to use words in many ways, not just in sentences
- Use layout to control the way the poem is read, for example by creating space around important lines or phrases.
- Make punctuation work for you and guide your reader in the way you want the poem to sound if read aloud.
- Change any rhymes that sound forced or that you have heard before. Innovate!
- Avoid choosing words just because they fit the pattern or rhyme –only use words that really work.
- Re-read aloud as you write, to check how the structure sounds.
- You are the poet so you decide what works and what doesn't.

### Let's get drafting!

- Reflect on all of the writing and ideas you have so far in your notebook.
- Collate and reflect on your notes and tasks from the remote (or in-person) workshops and from previous lessons.
- Provide art materials: some young poets might prefer to create a collage of their ideas by cutting and sticking key words, phrases and images onto a blank page. Some might prefer to create an artistic impression of their ideas and stanzas.



**The rest of this session should be used for individual writing.**

- Make a start on your poem by composing a draft. A draft is a quick sketch, outline, or an initial version from which a final work is then produced.
- Write one or more stanzas at your own pace and in your own way looking for your personal poetic style.
- Write in any language or multiple languages.
- Use your circles and your word library from lesson 2 to select the topic/ message for your poem.
- If you can't get started, use the freewriting, the poem and the lune you composed in lessons 1 and 2 as your opening lines.
- Don't worry too much about spelling and grammar. Write everything that comes to mind as this is your time to be 'messy'. You will have the chance to fix, tidy-up and finalise your draft in our next session.

If you are struggling to compose your poem, use this structure as a prompt:

*I am...*

*I see...*

*I hear...*

*I wonder...*

*I dream...*

*I feel...*

*I hope...*

*I am...*



# Thursday

## Lesson 4: THE FINAL TOUCHES.

### Happy National Poetry Day!

National Poetry Day is a UK-wide celebration of poetry with a different theme every year.

This year the theme is **counting**. On this day, remember that you count and your voice counts. There is no better way to celebrate than by writing and performing your own poem! Find out more about National Poetry Day and download model poems here: [literacytrust.org.uk/resources/national-poetry-day-resources](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/national-poetry-day-resources)

Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

Start today's session by setting up a performance poetry corner in your classroom. Decorate your poetry corner with bunting, poetry books, printed-out poems, photographs of favourite poets, favourite words and other inspiring images.

Now pledge to use the poetry corner throughout the year:

- Start each school month with a 'poem of the month' to be chosen and performed by students on rotation
- Start your school week with ten minutes of freewriting inspired by the first sentence/word you see when opening a book at random or make up your own prompts. Ask volunteers to share their work
- Host a bimonthly 'open mic' poetry event in your poetry corner. You could also invite young poets from other classes to perform.
- Teachers to write and share their poems too.

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**Learning Objective:** I can explore the impact of language choices on a reader.  
I can proof-read through considering how my poem reflects the purposes for which it was intended.

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Today, it's all about editing to turn your draft into a final piece you can submit to your internal Class and School Poet Laureate competition. Editing is substituting, adding, deleting and moving lines around to ensure that your poem is as beautiful and impactful as it can be.

Remember that this is all about playing with language and inventing your own poetic style. There are no rules and you can make up your own rules.

## First things first

Read your opening line.

- Does it make you want to carry on reading?
- Does it grab your attention?
- Read it aloud. Are you happy with how it sounds?
- Are all the words there necessary? Can you take some out or substitute some?
- Can you improve it by creating space around important lines or phrases?

Sometimes, you will find that the opening lines you originally composed to get started, no longer work. In that case, look through the rest of the poem searching for a more impactful opening. If you find it, can move lines around, if you don't, you can rewrite your opening—it's a very common practice!

## What comes next

Now read your entire poem.

- Are your ideas and messages coming across in the right order?
- Do you need to move lines around for clarity or impact?
- How does the poem look on the page?
- Did you spell everything correctly?

Read your poem again aloud. Use two different colours to highlight: words or lines you really like and words or lines you think could be improved.

- **If you highlighted words:** use a thesaurus to find better words and substitute them with more effective ones.
- **If you highlighted sentences:** move words around until you are satisfied that the sound and meaning work together.

## Leave them with a lasting impression

- Now it is time to edit your closing lines:
- Do they leave a lasting impression?
- Do they leave the reader with a message/idea/emotion to take away, a question to answer or a problem to solve?
- Read it aloud. How does it sound?
- Can you improve it by creating space around important lines or phrases?

## The Final Touches

**At this point, you should have:**

- impactful opening and closing lines
- an effective structure
- the right words for the messages, ideas and emotions you are trying to convey.

**Read the poem aloud one last time.**

- Do you need to create more space around important lines or phrases?
- Are you happy with the way the poem sounds?

If your poem flows and all the right words are where you want them to be, it is ready!

Put it away for a while (perhaps for a day or so) and come back to it with fresh eyes one more time before submitting it to the competition.

Good luck!



# Friday

## Lesson 5: PREPARE FOR YOUR SCHOOL POET LAUREATE COMPETITION.

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**Learning Objective:** I can use intonation, volume and movement to convey meaning.

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Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson:

[qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

**Your poems are now ready and today is all about:**

- Preparing to celebrate everyone's poetic efforts in a poetry slam
- Appointing your Class Poets Laureate and your School Poet Laureate

### Performance brings poetry alive

Performance brings poetry alive and gives poets a chance to hear what works and what doesn't in their own work.

**Watch How to perform poetry** – Joseph Cohelo [youtube.com/watch?v=wFCcbFtd6Zo](https://youtube.com/watch?v=wFCcbFtd6Zo)

### Preparing for a performance

**Four key things to remember in performance:**

1. Pace yourself
2. Project your voice
3. Act relaxed
4. Practise, practise, practise!

**Repeat these often. You could turn them into a mantra and display them in your poetry corner.**

- Do breathing exercises or vocal warmups. This is good fun and great fun for whole group bonding. See Simon Moles' video for some ideas: [youtube.com/watch?v=y7EEMS9VPY8&list=PLOAbOJTjL\\_M5Q2Jef8opiRm89mXIJzJln&index=10](https://youtube.com/watch?v=y7EEMS9VPY8&list=PLOAbOJTjL_M5Q2Jef8opiRm89mXIJzJln&index=10)
- Think about how you would perform your poem. Discuss what emotion would best suit it and how you might change your style of performance.
- If you can, memorise the poem. This helps the audience really connect with what the poet is saying and prevents problems like getting distracted by the paper or losing your place.
- Set up a microphone or something similar. Learn to adjust the stand and speak directly into the microphone. Line up and speak into the microphone one at a time, saying something simple to begin with like 'hello, my name is...'
- When practicing their poems, young poets should take notes directly on the poems to show how they'll read it. This can help remind them of when to slow down, pause, emphasise a word or phrase, make a gesture or change their tone of voice. They can use symbols or words that make sense to them.
- When you are preparing for performance, rehearse in pairs, paying particular attention to voice projection, articulation, timing and rhythm, mood, facial expression and gesture. If you are shy, rehearse alone to start with.
- You could even stand around the room and whisper your poem to the wall all at the same time, increasing in volume as you feel more confident.

## How to be an audience member

When it comes to sharing work, the more inclusive and supportive the atmosphere the better. It's not possible to be too kind and encouraging – performing your work is a terrifying thing, even for seasoned professionals.

- An important part is to model how to be an audience. Ask yourself what the best audiences are like and how they respond to performers who struggle. Spend some time on learning how to listen and give feedback:
- Have each group select one person to give feedback and one to perform.
- Once everyone has had a go, bring the class together. Who were the best feedback providers and the best performers? Discuss what attributes made them so good.
- Critical friends: ask the listeners to think about what the sound and the sense of the poem is in certain lines and encourage them to discuss together how best to get that across with the performance.
- Teachers: one of the best ways to inspire your students to perform is to do it yourself. Write your own poems from these activities and perform your work in front of your young poets, sharing any emotions you might feel like nervousness or embarrassment

## Top tips for performers:

### Voice and tone

- **Projection** – make sure you speak loud enough for the whole audience to hear
- **Volume** – play with varying volume to make your audience lean in for important moments or to surprise them
- **Enunciate** – don't mumble and try to speak distinctly so every word is clear
- **Tone** – vary your tone during your performance to show the different emotions you are trying to convey

### Timing and Rhythm

- DO NOT RUSH. Take your time. It helps to practise reading your poem slower than you normally would. Rushing means the audience can't take in all the emotion of your performance and really connect with what you are saying
- Expression and body language
- Eye contact – it is important to keep eye contact with your audience, but make sure to not stare at one person too long. Try not to stare at the floor or at your paper for too long
- Use your face to express the emotion of your poem. You can do this in front of the mirror to help
- Use gestures to emphasise different parts of your performance. You can use hand or body movements to achieve this. But be sure to focus on the words more than the acting. Even the most exciting or emotional poem should be about the words themselves, so try not to overdo it!

- If you feel fidgety, harness that nervous energy by developing the unconscious movement into a choreographed gesture you can repeat. This does not have to be related to the action but can be a way of marking the rhythm. This is a trick that many professional performers use

## How to combat stage fright

- Practising in front of a mirror and in front of a friendly audience, if you can, really helps
- Practise a lot, so that the performance becomes second nature to you
- On the day, try and go somewhere quiet and relaxing. Meditation techniques help a lot. Connect with your here and now. Just sit still. Notice what you can see, feel on your skin, taste, smell and hear.
- Take deep, slow breaths. Do this instead of worrying about your performance
- Eat and drink like it is a regular day. Not too much. Be healthy
- Go to the toilet beforehand and try not drink too much water, only just before your performance to
- avoid getting a dry mouth
- Right before the performance, do some stretches, walk around a little bit, hum to warm up your voice
- Take a deep breath, then start

**Now use the School Poet Laureate Toolkit in this pack to run your internal competition and appoint your Class and School Poets Laureate!**

Download printable Class and School Laureates certificates here: [literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poet-laureate-competition](https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poet-laureate-competition)

# **Lesson Plans 7–11 (KS2)**



# Monday

## Lesson 1: WHAT, EXACTLY, IS POETRY?

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**Learning Objective:** I understand how poems work.

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Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

If possible, provide pupils with a separate notebook to use as their poetry journal for this project.

### Group Discussion

Watch Jasmine Gardosi's 'Rollercoaster'  
[youtube.com/watch?v=7IFMpF6Jlko](https://youtube.com/watch?v=7IFMpF6Jlko)

- Was that a poem?
- What makes it a poem?
- What is the poem about?
- How did the poem and the rollercoaster relate to each other?
- How is the poet feeling?
- How did watching the performance make you feel?

This week we will explore the world of poetry, but, *what, exactly, is poetry?*

This week is not so much about looking for one definition and learning how to be 'good at' poetry, but about exploring how poems work and about playing with language, rhythm, volume and movement to discover our individual poetic style. It is all about finding ways to communicate and perform feelings, experiences and ideas.

## This is how poems are born

Freewriting is a technique poets use to warm up their 'writing muscles'.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** set a timer to 3 minutes.

Inspired by the prompt below, write as quickly as you can and, most importantly, continuously, for three minutes without worrying about style, spelling and grammar. Just write whatever comes up!

If you are stuck, write the same word over and over again until something else comes up. There is only one rule: never stop writing! Choose from one of the following prompts:

*It doesn't matter how much...*

*Whenever you hear...*

*How can we complain...*

*This space is not big enough...*

When the time is up, ask volunteers to share their freewriting.

- How did you find the exercise? Were you able to write easily? Were you stuck at any point?
- Do you have any comments about the freewrites that have been shared?
- Do those freewrites have anything in common?
- If not, how are they different?
- Did you detect a particular tone?
- How did they make you feel?

Remember that you can freewrite without a prompt, or come up with your own prompts using something you have seen, a conversation you heard, etc... Some writers use the first sentence/word they see when opening a book at random.

You can freewrite to create a draft of a future poem. A draft, like a baby poem, is a quick sketch, outline, or an initial version from which a final poem is then produced.

# The Life of a Poem

## *Where does a poem live?*

A poem can be published in a book, scribbled on a notebook or a scrap of paper, but it can also live in the mind of its author, in the air around us as we hear it being read, in our eyes and minds as we read or watch it being performed.

A single poem can exist in all these forms and that is why poems are unlike any other piece of writing. Furthermore, like a living organism, poems appear as a draft and continue to grow, develop and change into their final form as we edit them for different purposes.

Poems come in different 'species'. While 'page poems' are written to be read on the page, 'performance poems' are written to be performed. With 'page poems', the focus is on how a poem looks on the page, while with 'performance poems', the focus is on the sound and rhythm.

Poems can be both 'page' and 'performance' poems, with more than one focus. In fact, lots of poems are both published and performed.

With 'spoken word' (a third 'species'), however, there is no focus on how poems look on the page as they are not composed to be written down or published. The focus is completely on sound, rhythm, movement, volume, facial expressions and how effective all these elements are in conveying ideas and emotions to a live audience. Some spoken word artists even use music and dance to enhance their performances.

**A Short History of Spoken Word Poetry** (don't forget to click on the CC button for subtitles) [youtube.com/watch?v=S4HV3t1nZgo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4HV3t1nZgo)

Watch performances from the selection below (don't forget to click on the CC button for subtitles). You can watch them as a group or in several groups, each watching different performances.

### **Take notes while watching (and discuss after):**

- One word or sentence you particularly liked.
- Did you spot any techniques you thought were effective (or worked well)? This can be anything, from rhyme and sound to volume and body language.
- What idea or emotion has been conveyed to you?
- How did the performance make you feel?
- What did it make you think about?

**Ariana Brown** - Ode to the City Bus

[youtube.com/watch?v=-pN5HtfzqTc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pN5HtfzqTc)

**Benjamin Zephaniah** - Ode to Aston Villa

[youtube.com/watch?v=9YVOHu8qYSo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YVOHu8qYSo)

**Hollie McNish** - British National Breakfast

[youtube.com/watch?v=xJw9yGqBYJ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJw9yGqBYJ8)

**You Look Like A Rainbow** - Joseph Coelho

[youtube.com/watch?v=hEMmsBPW19w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hEMmsBPW19w)

**Isaiah Hull** - Hallelujah

[youtube.com/watch?v=9XYrbUW9z8Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XYrbUW9z8Y)

**Rowan McCabe** - Deer in a Licence Plate Shop

[youtube.com/watch?v=NtxB-4ujlIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtxB-4ujlIA)

**Arji Manuelpillai** - Tulips

[youtube.com/watch?v=605FL0UNopg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=605FL0UNopg)

# Favourite words

## *Is there such a thing as one's 'favourite word'*

All the poets you watched today produced very different pieces of writing with specific words and sentences they picked from an infinite number of words and sentences to compose a unique poem. They also positioned their words and sentences in a specific order, focusing on both their message or meaning, and how they sound and look. Each poet crafted (or made up) their own personal language composed of a soul (the message or meaning) and a body (sound, rhythm and overall look).

Let's try and do the same starting with our favourite word. Pick it and write it at the centre of a page. It can be in any language.

### **Examine the word by answering the following questions in writing:**

- Why did I select this word and what do I like about it?
- Is it its meaning?
- Is it the way it sounds?
- Is it the way it looks, the number of letters, or the kind of letters?
- How much does your favourite word weigh? To find out:
  - read the word aloud articulating every syllable
  - look at the shape of each letter (is 'l' lighter than 'b'?)
  - finally, consider the overall shape of the word and what it means to you.
- Which colour would the word be?
- Which animal would the word be?
- What does it smell like?
- What does it taste like?
- Do you use this word often?
- Is it a word for special occasions?
- Does it remind you of something or someone?
- Repeat it five consecutive times. How do you feel now (happy, relaxed, exhilarated, content)?

Ask volunteers to share their favourite words and some of their answers.

You may even turn your answers into a poem. Each favourite word could be the poem's title.

You may create a class word cloud and display it on your 'working wall'.

# Half-Found Poems

**We end today's session by taking inspiration from:**

- Our own freewriting
- Our notes on the poems we listened to
- Our favourite word and our favourite word poem (if you wrote one)
- Your class word cloud (if you made one)

Use all of this to compose a 'half-found poem'. A 'found poem' is composed by taking words, phrases or whole paragraphs from ready-made sources reorganising them, as well as adding or deleting words and spaces the from ready-made text. A 'half-found poem' is only partially readymade.

Use the ready-made poetry lines below to start your 4 stanzas and compose your half-found poem. Don't forget to choose a title!

*A poem is...*

*Tell them that...*

*Sometimes I wonder...*

*But my story...*

End today with performances from volunteers sharing their half-found poems.

Display the poems on your 'working wall'.



# Tuesday

## Lesson 2: POETRY EVERYWHERE

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**Learning Objective:** I can generate a subject and purpose for my poem.

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Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

### How to be a poet

**Watch Dean Atta** – ‘How to be a Poet’

[youtube.com/watch?v=y-sRByubpXY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=y-sRByubpXY) (don't forget to click on the CC button for subtitles).

**Discuss:**

- To whom is the poet speaking?
- Which images and ideas stand out?
- What is the purpose of the poem?

Divide the class up into two groups, each with a sheet of paper split into two. Inspired by Dean Atta's poem, each group should come up with 2 words/sentences for each column:

- Poets seek...
- Poets avoid...

### Poets can be poems

Provide each group with a larger sheet of paper and allocate one line from Dean Atta's poem to each group (suggestions below). These will be their opening lines.

In their group, each pupil should write a new line of poetry (or even a word!), fold the paper over the new line and pass the sheet on to their neighbour.

Make sure you set a time limit.

- Look at things differently,  
[close your eyes and feel...](#)
- Stand out in the sun and pretend to be a flower,  
[See all people as flowers...](#)

When the time is up, ask each group to write the 2 words/sentences from the previous exercise (poets seek.../poets avoid...) at the bottom of the sheet. These will be their closing lines.

Share the different poems after the race and display them on your 'working wall'.

## Why write poetry?

We asked seven West Yorkshire poets to tell us why do they write poetry and what do they write about.

Watch our playlist [youtu.be/5MG39kJW3qY](https://youtu.be/5MG39kJW3qY) (don't forget to click on the CC button for subtitles).

### Discuss:

- Which ideas and messages stand out?
- Can everyone really be a poet? Consider the poetry you all composed this week.

Now, draw a large circle at the centre of the page. Write your name inside the circle and draw 6 smaller circles around your name. Fill the circles with answers to the following:

1. What worries me most?
2. What excites me most?
3. What am I passionate about?
4. What am I really scared of?
5. One word about who I am.
6. One word about who I want to be.

Spend 5 minutes looking and thinking about your circles and choose the one you really want to say something about.

Set a timer to 10 minutes and write as many words or sentences as possible related to the circle you have selected. Don't think too much about what you are writing, just write what comes to mind as quickly as possible. Don't worry about spelling and grammar, you can fix that later. This is all about digging into your minds for great hidden ideas and thoughts, so, don't let anything slow you down.

The topic of your poem is at the centre of the circle you have selected—can this be your title too?

You also have a library of words and sentences to choose from. Highlight your favourite ones: which ones sound or look great? Which ones are the most interesting or powerful?

You will use all this to compose your own poem in lesson 3 and 4.

## A miniature poem to get you started

To finish today's session, compose a Lune inspired by the ideas in your circles.

A lune is a 13 syllables and 3 lines poem that can have either a 3,5,3 syllable pattern or a 3,5,3 words pattern.

**LINE 1:** 3 syllables **OR** 3 words

**LINE 2:** 5 syllables **OR** 5 words

**LINE 3:** 3 syllables **OR** 3 words

If you choose the syllables pattern, clap to the syllables as you compose to ensure you have the right number in each line.

Ask volunteers from the class to their lune. Ask the rest of the class to walk and clap in time to the rhythm of the poems.

- What do they notice about the pattern?
- What effect does this have on rhythm?

Treasure and even display the lunes on your 'working wall'. You will need them tomorrow to compose your poem because tomorrow is all about writing!



# Wednesday

## Lesson 3: LET'S GET WRITING!

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**Learning Objective:** I can draft a poem that conveys a message to my readers in a self-chosen poetic form.

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Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

Today it is all about writing! Write at your own pace and in your own way but choose your form first!

### Free Verse

A lot of poets enjoy being completely free to invent their own form, so they write in free verse. Free verse is not restricted by conventions. It does not have a specific form, pattern and rhyme scheme. Free verse can be as short or as long as you want it to be.

**Is free verse for you?**

#### Top Tips:

- Make the most of the wide choices that free verse gives you and try out different ways of using words, lines or verses instead of sticking to predictable patterns.
- Think about the types of sentences you use and decide if you need questions as well as statements.
- Don't forget that poetry allows you to use words in many ways, not just in sentences.
- Use questions directed to your reader to draw them in, e.g. Do you know what I mean?
- Use layout to control the way the poem is read, for example by creating space around important lines or phrases.
- Make punctuation work for you and guide your reader in the way you want the poem to sound, if read aloud.

## Structured Poems

Some poets, however, prefer structure. Structured poems follow a consistent form based on line length, syllable count, rhyme scheme and metre. These features affect the sound quality of the poem reinforcing meaning through sound and rhythm.

### Top Tips:

- Double-check that any deliberate patterns of rhyme or rhythm work all the way through.
- Remove clichés and change any rhymes that sound forced.
- Avoid choosing words just because they fit the pattern or rhyme –only use words that really work.
- Re-read aloud as you write, to check how the structure sounds, especially to hear rhyme and metre.
- Don't let the poem's structure take over and make all the choices for you – you are the writer so you decide what works and what doesn't.

## Cinquain

A five-line poem. The most common cinquain follows this syllable pattern for each line: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2. The pattern for the reverse cinquain is backward.

You can use multiple cinquains to create a longer poem called 'quintile'.

## Quatrain

Quatrain is a generic term for a four-line stanza or poem of any kind.

## Couplets

Two successive lines, usually part of a poem longer than two lines and typically at the end of a verse or stanza. Couplets have two lines, each with the same metre and often share the same rhyme (rhyming couplets).

## Haikus

Three lines: syllable pattern 5, 7, 5. A personal but universal comment on nature and/or humankind's place in the world. The poet aims to capture a single moment or thought and also aims to leave half the work for the reader to do.

## Tanka

Five lines: syllable pattern 5, 7, 5, 7, 7. The first three lines usually describe a situation and the last two provide more detail, or the poet's comment.

## Lune

A lune is a 13 syllables and 3 lines poem that can have either a 3,5,3 syllable pattern or a 3,5,3 words pattern.

## Let's get drafting!

- Reflect on all of the writing and ideas you have so far.
- Choose a form, collate and reflect on your notes and tasks from the remote (or in-person) workshops and from previous lessons.
- Provide art materials: some young poets might prefer to create a collage of their ideas by cutting and sticking key words, phrases and images onto a blank page. Some might prefer to create an artistic impression of their ideas and stanzas.

The rest of this session should be used for individual writing.

- Make a start on your poem by composing a draft. A draft is a quick sketch, outline, or an initial version from which a final work is then produced.
- Write one or more stanzas at your own pace and in your own way looking for your personal poetic style. Write in any language or multiple languages.
- If you can't get started, use the haiku you composed in lesson 2 as your opening lines.
- Don't worry too much about spelling and grammar. Write everything that comes to mind as this is your time to be 'messy'. You will have the chance to fix, tidy-up and finalise your draft in our next session.



# Thursday

## Lesson 4: THE FINAL TOUCHES.

### Happy National Poetry Day!

National Poetry Day is a UK-wide celebration of poetry with a different theme every year.

This year the theme is **counting**. On this day, remember that you count and your voice counts. There is no better way to celebrate than by writing and performing your own poem! Find out more about National Poetry Day and download model poems here: [literacytrust.org.uk/resources/national-poetry-day-resources](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/national-poetry-day-resources)

Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

Start today's session by setting up a performance poetry corner in your classroom. Decorate your poetry corner with bunting, poetry books, printed-out poems, photographs of favourite poets, favourite words and other inspiring images.

Now pledge to use the poetry corner throughout the year:

- Start each school month with a 'poem of the month' to be chosen and performed by students on rotation
- Start your school week with ten minutes of freewriting inspired by the first sentence/word you see when opening a book at random or make up your own prompts. Ask volunteers to share their work
- Host a bimonthly 'open mic' poetry event in your poetry corner. You could also invite young poets from other classes to perform.
- Teachers to write and share their poems too.

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**Learning Objective:** I can explore the impact of language choices on a reader. I can proof-read through considering how my poem reflects the purposes for which it was intended.

---

Today, it's all about editing to turn your draft into a final piece you can submit to your internal Class and School Poet Laureate competition. Editing is substituting, adding, deleting and moving lines around to ensure that your poem is as beautiful and impactful as it can be.

Remember that this is all about playing with language and inventing your own poetic style. There are no rules unless you make up your own rules, or choose to use a specific pre-made poetic form.

## First things first

### Read your opening lines.

- Does it make you want to carry on reading?
- Does it grab your attention?
- Does it set the mood for what is to come?
- Read it aloud. How does it sound?
- Are all the words there necessary? Can you take some out or substitute some?
- Can you improve it by creating space around important lines or phrases?
- Can you change the punctuation to guide your reader?

Sometimes, you will find that the opening lines you originally composed to get started, no longer work. In that case, look through the rest of the poem searching for a more impactful opening. If you find it, can move lines around, if you don't, you can rewrite your opening—it's a very common practice!

## What comes next

### Now read your entire poem.

- Are your ideas and messages coming across in the right order?
- Do you need to move lines around for clarity or impact?
- Is your poem too straightforward? Poetry can be made enigmatic and obscure, indirectly asking the reader to work harder to reconstruct the meaning.
- How does the poem look on the page?
- If you choose to write in a particular form, make sure that you are satisfied: is the form conveying your ideas effectively? If it's not, change it!

Now that you have a better sense of your poem in its entirety, read it again aloud. Use two different colours to highlight: words or lines you really like and words or lines you think could be improved.

- **If you highlighted words:** use a thesaurus to find better words and substitute them with more effective ones.
- **If you highlighted sentences:** move words around until you are satisfied that the sound and meaning word together. substitute verbs and adverbs to that carry the messages and ideas you are trying to convey better.

## Leave them with a lasting impression

- Now it is time to edit your closing lines:
- Do they leave a lasting impression?
- Do they leave the reader with a message/idea/emotion to take away, a question to answer or a problem to solve?
- Read it aloud. How does it sound?
- Are all the words there necessary? Can you take some out or substitute some?
- Can you improve it by creating space around important lines or phrases?
- Can you change the punctuation to guide your reader?

## The Final Touches

At this point, you should have:

- impactful opening and closing lines
- an effective structure
- the right words for the messages, ideas and emotions you are trying to convey.

Now assess your line breaks by reviewing how each line ends and a new line begins. The most effective way to do this is reading the poem aloud again taking into consideration the following:

- If a thought/message is complete at the end of the line, do you want them to end with a period or a semicolon? Choose the punctuation that guides your reader best.
- If a line feels clunky, could you perhaps carry your thought from one line to the next? Do you want to leave that unpunctuated to signal a continuation?
- Do you need to create more space around important lines or phrases?

If your poem flows and all the right words are where you want them to be, it is ready!

Put it away for a while (perhaps for a day or so) and come back to it with fresh eyes one more time before submitting it to the competition.

Good luck!

# Friday

## Lesson 5: PREPARE FOR YOUR SCHOOL POET LAUREATE COMPETITION.

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Learning Objective: I can use intonation, volume and movement to convey meaning.

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Watch your daily message from one of our poet ambassadors to introduce your lesson: [qrco.de/bfCvxq](https://qrco.de/bfCvxq)

### Your poems are now ready and today is all about:

- Preparing to celebrate everyone's poetic efforts in a poetry slam
- Appointing your Class Poets Laureate and your School Poet Laureate

#### Don't forget to:

- Enter your Year 4 young poets to be considered for the first-ever post of Young Poet Laureate for West Yorkshire
- Nominate one of your young poets to represent your school at the wrap up West Yorkshire virtual event.

### Performance brings poetry alive

Performance brings poetry alive and gives poets a chance to hear what works and what doesn't in their own work. Establish performance as an important part of the writing process:

### DRAFT → PERFORM → RE-DRAFT → PERFORM → RE-DRAFT

- Create opportunities to listen to people performing poetry. Watching videos is very helpful (try CLPE's poetryline website). Discuss what you enjoy about the performances.
- The process of writing poetry is iterative with the preceding stage informing the next until the poet thinks their work is done

As a class discuss how performing might help writers with continuing to draft their poem.

Try to reach a consensus on why performing is important to the process of creating a poem.

## Preparing for a performance

Four key things to remember in performance:

1. Pace yourself
2. Project your voice
3. Act relaxed
4. Practise, practise, practise!

Repeat these often. You could turn them into a mantra and display them in your poetry corner.

- **Do breathing exercises or vocal warmups.** This is good fun and great fun for whole group bonding. See Simon Moles' video for some ideas: [youtube.com/watch?v=y7EEMS9VPY8&list=PLOAbOJTjL\\_M5Q2Jef8opiRm89mXlJzJln&index=10](https://youtube.com/watch?v=y7EEMS9VPY8&list=PLOAbOJTjL_M5Q2Jef8opiRm89mXlJzJln&index=10)
- **Think about how you would perform your poem.** Discuss what emotion would best suit it and how you might change your style of performance.
- **If you can, memorise the poem.** This helps the audience really connect with what the poet is saying and prevents problems like getting distracted by the paper or losing your place.
- **Set up a microphone or something similar.** Learn to adjust the stand and speak directly into the microphone. Line up and speak into the microphone one at a time, saying something simple to begin with like 'hello, my name is...'.
- **When practicing their poems, young poets should take notes directly on the poems to show how they'll read it.** This can help remind them of when to slow down, pause, emphasise a word or phrase, make a gesture or change their tone of voice. They can use symbols or words that make sense to them.
- **When you are preparing for performance, rehearse in pairs,** paying particular attention to voice projection, articulation, timing and rhythm, mood, facial expression and gesture. If you are shy, rehearse alone to start with.
- You could even **stand around the room and whisper your poem** to the wall all at the same time, increasing in volume as you feel more confident.



## How to be an audience member

When it comes to sharing work, the more inclusive and supportive the atmosphere the better. It's not possible to be too kind and encouraging – performing your work is a terrifying thing, even for seasoned professionals.

An important part is to model how to be an audience. Ask yourself what the best audiences are like and how they respond to performers who struggle. Spend some time on learning how to listen and give feedback:

- Have each group select one person to give feedback and one to perform.
- Once everyone has had a go, bring the class together. Who were the best feedback providers and the best performers? Discuss what attributes made them so good.
- Critical friends: ask the listeners to think about what the sound and the sense of the poem is in certain lines and encourage them to discuss together how best to get that across with the performance.
- Teachers: one of the best ways to inspire your students to perform is to do it yourself. Write your own poems from these activities and perform your work in front of your young poets, sharing any emotions you might feel like nervousness or embarrassment



# Top tips for performers:

## Voice and tone

- **Projection** – make sure you speak loud enough for the whole audience to hear
- **Volume** – play with varying volume to make your audience lean in for important moments or to surprise them
- **Enunciate** – don't mumble and try to speak distinctly so every word is clear
- **Tone** – vary your tone during your performance to show the different emotions you are trying to convey

## Timing and Rhythm

- DO NOT RUSH. Take your time. It helps to practise reading your poem slower than you normally would. Rushing means the audience can't take in all the emotion of your performance and really connect with what you are saying
- Expression and body language
- Eye contact – it is important to keep eye contact with your audience, but make sure to not stare at one person too long. Try not to stare at the floor or at your paper for too long
- Use your face to express the emotion of your poem. You can do this in front of the mirror to help
- Use gestures to emphasise different parts of your performance. You can use hand or body movements to achieve this. But be sure to focus on the words more than the acting. Even the most exciting or emotional poem should be about the words themselves, so try not to overdo it!
- If you feel fidgety, harness that nervous energy by developing the unconscious movement into a choreographed gesture you can repeat. This does not have to be related to the action but can be a way of marking the rhythm. This is a trick that many professional performers use

## How to combat stage fright

- Practising in front of a mirror and in front of a friendly audience, if you can, really helps
- Practise a lot, so that the performance becomes second nature to you
- On the day, try and go somewhere quiet and relaxing. Meditation techniques help a lot. Connect with your here and now. Just sit still. Notice what you can see, feel on your skin, taste, smell and hear.
- Take deep, slow breaths. Do this instead of worrying about your performance
- Eat and drink like it is a regular day. Not too much. Be healthy
- Go to the toilet beforehand and try not drink too much water, only just before your performance to avoid getting a dry mouth
- Right before the performance, do some stretches, walk around a little bit, hum to warm up your voice
- Take a deep breath, then start



Now use the School Poet Laureate Toolkit in this pack to run your internal competition and appoint your Class and School Poets Laureate!

Download printable Class and School Laureates certificates here:

[literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poet-laureate-competition](https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poet-laureate-competition)

# School Poet Laureate Toolkit

Appoint your Class Poets Laureate and your School Poet Laureate by hosting poetry slams.

## What is a poetry slam?

A poetry slam is a competitive form of performance poetry. It was invented by Chicago poet Marc Smith in 1984 and spread to New York in 1988. Slam pioneers wanted to invent a way of doing poetry that was different from the traditional poetry scene, which they saw as stuffy and elitist.

## How does it work?

In a slam, poets perform for a live audience. Their poems must be their own work and less than three minutes long. Poets are not allowed to use music, props or other aids. The audience is the ultimate arbitrator of quality and is encouraged to be vocal in their opinions. Judges are often selected at random from the audience. This system is why the form is so popular: it creates a communal experience where poetry can be delivered straight to a live audience.

## Preparing for and running your poetry slams

Start by holding mini-slams within tutor groups to appoint your **Class Poets Laureate**, then get each Class Laureate to compete with the others from their year group.

The winner from each year group can take part in an **inter-year slam** to decide the ultimate **School Poet Laureate**.

## You will need

- A venue. *You could host your mini-slams in your poetry corners and the inter-year slam in the school library.*
- Performers
- Time-keeper
- Audience
- Scoring Grids for each judge
- 3-5 judges

Slams usually have an MC\* to host the event. You could choose a student or invite a teacher or ex-student to be the MC for your slam.

Slams also often feature well-known poets who perform a short set before and halfway through the slam competition. Why not invite a local poet to perform at your slam? Websites such as [applesandsnakes.com](http://applesandsnakes.com) can help with this. You could otherwise prepare a playlist of performances from YouTube and play them before and half-away through the competition.

*\*or Master of Ceremonies, or someone who acts as host.*

## Rules

- Each poet has three minutes to perform.
- Scores are given by the judges.
- Scores to be given using specific criteria (download your score grid).
- With five judges, for consistency, sometimes the highest and lowest scores are discounted and the three remaining scores make up the final number.
- The winner is the poet with the highest score.

## Appoint your Class Laureates

As a result of your tutor groups and year group mini-slams, you will have winners from each participating class, or Class Poet Laureate.

### **Celebrate their achievement by:**

- officially appointing them as your Class Young Poets Laureate. They will be in post for one year (you can appoint a new Laureate next year!)
- Provide them with their Young Poet Laureate Certificate and post description.
- Ensure that they are supported to run the suggested activities during their tenure. You can find all the relevant printable documents here: [literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poetry-week](https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poetry-week)

## Appoint your School Laureate

It is now time to run the second round of your competition. Host an inter-year slam to appoint a School Young Poet Laureate:

### **Celebrate their achievement by:**

- officially appointing them as your School Young Poets Laureate. They will be in post for one year (you can appoint a new Laureate next year!)
- Provide them with their Young Poet Laureate Certificate and post description
- Ensure that they are supported to run the suggested activities during their tenure. You can find all the relevant printable documents here: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers/west-yorkshire-poetry-week/>
- Share their photograph, a quote from their poem, or a video of their performance on the school's social media channels, or/and the school's website
- Contact the local media to interview your Poet Laureate and/or publish their winning poem
- Display a quote from the winning poem in the school, or get it painted on a wall.



# Follow-up activities

Don't forget to **submit your winning young poet and runner-ups** from your Year 4 students to the competition for the post of **West Yorkshire Young Poet Laureate** (further info in this pack).

Following on from this you could also use the students' experience of performing in the slam as a stimulus for discussion about ownership of their poems. How would they feel about other people performing their poem without permission, or using ideas from their poem without crediting them? It's a great opportunity to explore the world of copyright and creative ownership.

Download our free Lesson 2 plan on creative ownership from the Scheme of Work here: [literacytrust.org.uk/resources/write-poetry-slam](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/write-poetry-slam)

- Film the event for the school
- Form a slam poetry club for your school
- Hold an inter-school poetry slam with other schools in your local area.

## Publish your poems!

Kindle Direct Publishing provides a brilliant platform for pupils to experience the spine-tingling excitement of becoming published authors.

Use our **How to create a pupil anthology** resources to produce a book of your finalists' poems [literacytrust.org.uk/resources/kindle-direct-publishing](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/kindle-direct-publishing)



YOUNG POET NAME:

POEM TITLE:

Scoring criteria	Examples	My score	Total score
<b>Enjoyment of hearing the poem</b>	<i>How much are you enjoying this poem?</i>	__/10	
<b>Audience reaction</b>	<i>How much are you and the rest of the audience enjoying the performance?</i>	__/10	
<b>Content</b>	<i>What's this poem about? How much are you enjoying the story being told?</i>	__/10	
<b>Sounds</b>	<i>How does this poem sound (interesting line breaks, alliteration, rhyming patterns, etc.)?</i>	__/10	
<b>Voice</b>	<i>Can the poet's own voice be perceived? How original and fresh is it?</i>	__/10	
<b>Imagery</b>	<i>Are pictures being created in your mind as a result of hearing the poem and what's their effect?</i>	__/10	
<b>Bonus</b>	<i>Something additional excited you about this poem. Add a bonus point.</i>	__/10	
<b>TOTAL</b>			

# The West Yorkshire Young Poet Laureate Competition

## The post of West Yorkshire Young Poet Laureate

The winning West Yorkshire Young Poet Laureates will be young ambassadors for poetry in the region and inspiration for a new generations of poets and creatives. They will have the opportunity to:

- shadow Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire and the National Poet Laureate Simon Armitage
- attend a number of key cultural events across the region
- write poems to commission
- have their work promoted and amplified by West Yorkshire Combined Authority and partners

The young poets will be appointed officially at a celebratory event and they remain in post for one year following their appointments.

## Competition outline

The West Yorkshire Young Poet Laureate Competition is free to enter and open to students in **Year 4** and **Year 9** from primary and secondary schools in West Yorkshire. Entries will be judged in two age group categories.

Guest judges include Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire, and National Poet Laureate Simon Armitage.

**The competition will open on National Poetry Day 2024 (Thursday 3rd October).**

