

Let in the Stars, New Poetry for Children edited by Mandy Coe (Manchester Metropolitan University)

This anthology collected by the Manchester Writing School at MMU brings together fresh voices and brand new poems in a beautifully illustrated collection. It combines a wide range of themes and styles with the unconventional unfolding of individual poems.

Unexpected points of view abound, whether it's Goldilocks' angle on the three bears or a dog's perspective on waking a human companion. Several poems consider the impact of technology on contemporary language and its integration into young people's lives. 'tech-tock' may seem to posit a future 'life on the cloud' but are we there already, especially if you've been ensnared by keeping up with the latest 'Wipwapwop'?

This collection was shortlisted for the 2015 CLPE Poetry Award.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence.

- To explore, interpret and respond to poetry
- To respond to and play with language in poetry
- To use poetry as a stimulus for art
- To compose and perform own poetry
- To explore how language and structural devices are used in poetry to create powerful responses
- To make choices in selecting poems for anthologies

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 5 or 6 class.

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is approximately 4 weeks long if spread out over 20 sessions and is divided into three parts focusing on different poems within the collection. The anthology supports teachers to engage children in enjoying different poems and encouraging them to respond creatively. The themes and style of such poetry offer inspiration to young budding poets and serve as a model for the development of their own poetry writing.

Cross Curricular Links

ICT

- Children can understand computer networks including the internet; how they can provide multiple services, such as the world wide web; and the opportunities they offer for communication and collaboration
- Children can use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly; recognise

acceptable/unacceptable behaviour; identify a range of ways to report concerns about content and contact

- Children can explore developments in technology such as the use of robots in place of people or the advance of artificial intelligence

History

- Children can gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts through the study of key literary texts
- Children will begin to explore the history of the English language supporting their understand of the history of these islands as a chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day

Art

- Children can produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences
- Children create illustrations supporting their proficiency in drawing, painting and other art, craft and design techniques
- Children can take part in gallery walks in order to evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design

Music

- Children can explore the beat and rhythm of poetry linking this to their existing knowledge of music
- Children can improvise and compose music for a poetry performance

Teaching Approaches:

- Reading aloud
- Booktalk
- Responding to poetry
- Collaborative poetry writing
- Responding to visual imagery
- Illustration

Writing Outcomes:

- Poetry
- Discursive writing
- Persuasive writing

Before the Sequence

Before teaching from this poetry sequence and prior to reading the collection *Let in the Stars*, it would be useful to spend time exploring poetry more generally with the children in your class. If this is not part of the whole school ethos, consider immersing the school, and certainly your year group, in a wide range of poetry. Become familiar with CLPE's Poetryline website and other sites that enable the children to watch poets reading their own poems. It is important for the children to see a poet perform a poem as it was intended to be read. Make available collections of poetry books; collections by the same author and anthologies, planning in regular browsing and independent reading time when the children can access the books.

Teaching Sessions:

Part 1: Language Play

Session 1: Reading aloud and Booktalk

Discussion about books forms the foundations for working with books. The same is true of working with poems. Children need frequent, regular and sustained opportunities to talk together about the books and poems that they are reading as a whole class. The more experience they have of talking together like this the better they get at making explicit the meaning that a text holds for them.

As the collection *Let in the Stars* is not organised into themes or sections it would be useful to explore the notion of a poetry collection with the children at the start of the teaching sequence, comparing different anthologies with one another and considering the merits and disadvantages of thematic organisation. This would be a useful starting point for discovering what the children like and dislike about poetry, which poems are their favourites, if they have a favourite author that they turn to when reading poetry and if they read poems outside of the school setting.

Ask the children to share their favourite poems with each other, encourage the children to bring these poems into class and provide a setting in which they can explore their recommendations, such as in a poetry corner. From this starting point you can begin to explore the poems that the children are drawn to and respond to in the collection *Let in the Stars*.

- Begin the session by picking a selection of poems to read aloud that you responded to and that interested you as a reader. Share your thoughts, feelings and responses with the children as a model of how they can join in with discussions about poetry.
- It is useful at the start of a poetry sequence to debunk the myth that exploring poetry means deconstructing the use of language in the poem or looking only at the poetic form and devices, as it is also about responding emotionally to a poem and the children need to be encouraged to do this.
- At this point it would be useful to explore what the children already know about poetry, not only to inform future planning, but also to address any misconceptions that may arise. Some children, for example, may think that all poems have to rhyme.
- To extend the session go on to explore with the children the poems that will hook the children in with humour, word play or themes that they can relate to. For example, *Goldilocks*, *The End of Year Six* or *Dressing Gowns*.
- Read the poems aloud and discuss the children's responses to the poems.
- Here you can use techniques taken from Aidan Chambers' book *Tell Me: Children, Reading & Talk with The Reading Environment* (Thimble Press 2011). These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:
 - *Tell me...was there anything you liked about this poem?*
 - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?*

- *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
- *Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...?*

- You may wish to record the children's responses on A3 pieces of paper or on the IWB. You could then add this to an ongoing working wall or poetry display, which the children can continue to add to as the sequence continues.
- Encourage the children to return to the poems individually or in small groups, continuing their exploration of the poems after the session.

Session 2: Using visual images

The children's books featured on Poetryline have also been chosen because of the quality of the illustrations they contain and the ways in which the illustrations work with the text to create meaning for the reader. Children will need time and opportunities to enjoy and respond to the pictures and to talk together about what the illustrations contribute to their understanding of the text.

For this session you will need to colour copy the illustrations that accompany the poems in *Let in the Stars* and display them somewhere so that it mimics an art gallery. These illustrations have been created by students at Manchester School of Art and provide a range of styles and techniques for the children to explore and evaluate.

- Take the children to the 'gallery' that you have set up using the images of the illustrations from the anthology.
- Allow time for the children to explore the gallery. The children could respond to the pictures by writing their thoughts down on paper or on large post-it notes.
- Prompt them with some questions to support their exploration. For example, what is it that they think they are seeing? Which of the images do they like the most/least? Do they like one style of illustration more than another?
- Once back in class you could have the same images on the IWB to enable a whole class discussion.
- Talk about the difference between the style of the illustrations, some more realistic and others more abstract. Ask the children which they prefer and when would you use one style and when would you use another.
- Explain that the images that the children have been looking at are the illustrations from the anthology *Let in the Stars*. Now spend time looking at the illustrations in the anthology and consider how they fit in the context of the text. Consider how they are placed in or next to text and the impact that this has on the reader's experience.
- Record the children's thoughts and responses on the class working wall or poetry display.
- Return to this discussion later in the sequence when the children come to illustrate their own anthologies.

Session 3: Listening to poetry

One of the best ways of involving children in poetry is to make a habit of reading aloud to them as

often as possible. The experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of their knowledge of poetry, and is also going to be a major influence on how they write themselves. Poetry is rooted in word games, word play, song and rhythm, and it's therefore particularly important that it should be heard as well as read.

- In this session, reading aloud a selection of poems that have word play at their centre will enable you to explore with the children the language of poetry and the way in which poets often play with language.
- *The Chase* and *King of the Dance* provide a good starting point for this session.
- Although the way in which the words are presented on the page add another layer of meaning to the poems, begin by reading the poem aloud without giving the children copies of the text.
- Read the poem/s aloud several times and each time ask the children to try to concentrate on the pictures that form in their minds as they listen to the poem. You could then explore what words or phrases stood out for the children as they were listening.
- Ask the children to discuss in small mixed ability groups or pairs their response to the poems and what they think the poems are about – here you can draw on the question types from the previous session.
- You may want to extend this by giving the children a grid on which they can record their responses.
- Now you could give the children copies of the poems and ask them to re-read the poems in their small groups. They could then repeat the same process but this time looking at how the poem is structured and presented on the page.
- Ask the children to consider if the shapes of the poems on the page have altered their understanding or interpretation of the poem. The children can add these responses to the grid; it may be useful to do this in another colour so that they can track their ideas.
- The grids can then be placed on a working wall or onto the ongoing poetry display.

Session 4: Reading aloud and Booktalk

Booktalk is supportive to all readers and writers, but it is especially empowering for children who find literacy difficult. It helps the class as a whole to reach shared understandings and move towards a more dispassionate and informed debate of ideas and issues.

As this session explores the history of language the following links may be useful for teacher subject knowledge and to explore with the children:

- <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/changlang/across/languagetimeline.html> [Accessed on 28.04.15]
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/interactive/timelines/language_timeline/index_embed.shtml [Accessed on 28.04.15]

In the following session the poem *Sondry Folk* is explored. This poem takes inspiration from *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. The poem refers to the different characters that feature in the

tales, those that Chaucer details in his prologue. Although Kate O’Neil has played with the idea to create something quite different.

The poem contains words that have dropped out of use in the English language so the children may think that the words have been made up by the poet. You may want to supply word origin dictionaries such as the *Oxford School Dictionary of Word Origins* (Oxford University Press 2013) but also refer to the appendix provided here for the definitions of the words featured in *Sondry Folk*.

To support the learning you may also want to have children’s versions of the Canterbury Tales available. For example, *Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales* retold and illustrated by Marcia Williams (Walker 2008) or *The Canterbury Tales* retold by Geraldine McCaughrean (Puffin Classics 1997)

- At the start of the session you could spend some time exploring the meaning of the title before showing the children the whole of the poem. *Sondry Folk* means ‘of various kinds or types’, referring to the range of characters and ordinary people who featured in *The Canterbury Tales*.
- In this session you may want to give the children copies of the poem from the start of the session, including the illustrations, as this should help support the children to unpick the content of the poem.
- The children will need time to hear the poem read aloud and should work in mixed ability groups or with partners to spend time re-reading the poem again in order to decipher the poem. Ensure the children also have time to explore the illustrations together.
- At this point you can also encourage the children to look up the words featured in the poem *Sondry Folk* in dictionaries. They will find some words in class dictionaries but some of the words will probably not be in a standard class edition. This could generate discussion around the words and their meanings. The children can also refer to the poem itself to guess the meanings of the words.
- At the end of the session reveal the definitions of the words that the children have not been able to find. Discuss why the children think that some of the words are no longer commonly in use. Ask if there are any words they would like to begin using. You could encourage the children to try to use the words in their discussions and conversations for the rest of the day.
- Discuss how language evolves and changes and that this is an ongoing process – you could link this discussion to the poem *Hamid* which also explores this idea.
- In a separate spelling session you may want to explore further the roots/origins of words in the English language.

Session 5: Poetry and Wordplay

One of the most basic pleasures of poetry is the pleasure of wordplay, the opportunity for playing games with language and for using all the elements of language to the full, so that the shapes and sounds and rhythms of words are enjoyed as well as their meaning.

Following on from the previous session, you may want to link this session to the children’s prior

knowledge or explore the links to other books that can be made from using *Sondry Folk* as a starting point. For example, the children may have noticed a similarity between the nouns and following descriptions of the characters in *Sondry Folk*, to the language used and the names given to the giants in Roald Dahl's book *The BFG*.

- The names of the giants, which suits their human diet, are:
 - The Bonecruncher, who "crunches up two whoppsy-whiffing human beans for supper every night!"
 - The Fleshlumpeater, "...the horriblemest of them all."
 - The Bloodbottler
 - The Childchewer
 - The Meatdrinker
 - The Gizzardgulper
 - The Maidmasher
 - The Manhugger
 - The Butcher Boy

- Have these names on display or readily available for the children to look at while re-reading *Sondry Folk* and encourage the children to draw comparisons between the two.
- This could lead into a discussion with the children around the power of a well chosen noun.
- Explore with the children why authors think carefully about the nouns they choose. For example, considering why rottweiler or poodle is a more powerful noun choice than dog? Or why eagle or vulture is a more powerful choice than bird?
- You could also make links here to the works of J.K. Rowling as the children may be very familiar with the Harry Potter series. Ask the children to consider her choice of names for characters and the words Rowling created for her imagined worlds, such as Kneazle (a magical cat-like creature.) There is a whole list on the following website:
<http://harrypotter.bloomsbury.com/uk/fun-stuff/glossary/>
- Following this exploration the children could work together to create their own powerful nouns for objects, people, animals or places using their imaginations and based on the work in this session.
- You may also want to draw comparison in this session with Shakespearean language and the way in which Shakespearean words and phrases have imbued our culture. At this point you could explore some of the insults the characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* dole out to one another as this compares well with *Sondry Folk*. For example: you juggler, you canker-blossom, you thief of love, you puppet, thou painted maypole.
- You could also ask the children to research words and phrases in the English language that originate from Shakespeare's writing such as Arch-villain, as a home learning activity.

Session 6: Collaborative Poetry

Creating poems collaboratively provides opportunities for children to discuss the effect of the words that they are choosing and using in their poetry. Encourage the children to discuss the words,

explaining to each other why they were chosen and the effect they have. Consider and reflect on the poetic devices present and why they were used by the author.

- Display on the IWB or around the room a range of acronyms associated with texting/social media such as OMG, FOMO, TTYL, TMI and SWALK. Ask the children to discuss these and what they stand for – you might find the children have different interpretations of the different letters and their meanings.
- Allow for a debate about the meanings and you might find some of the children use their imagination to pose suggestions for what the different letters mean.
- Read aloud the poem *lol*
- Allow the children to discuss it in small groups or partners before feeding back their opinions of the poem.
- Have a discussion of ‘text’ speak and the evolution of language which takes into account how technology has driven this change in the 21st century. These could be collected in a class word bank and displayed.
- Link this back to poem *Hamid* and the learning that took place in the previous sessions. Reiterate how language has evolved over time and will keep evolving.
- The children could then work together in pairs to expand the nouns they created in the previous session by adding descriptions to the nouns, imitating the style of the poem *Sondry Folk*.
- The class could then spend time illustrating these.
- This work could then be displayed in class and the children could present their work to another class or the whole school in an assembly.

Part 2: Nature Vs. Technology

Session 7: Responding to poetry

The experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of children’s knowledge of poetry, and is also going to be a major inference on how they write themselves. So it’s important that it should be as rich and Interesting and ‘ear-catching’ as it can be.

- Begin with reading aloud the poem *Wipwapwop*. This poem has also been recorded by the poet for the poetryline website. <http://www.poetryline.org.uk/>
- After reading the poem ask the children to think about how the author has played with language in this poem and what words or phrases they found more challenging to understand.
- Let the children have copies of the poem and read the poem aloud again.
- Ask the children to consider the made up words that the poet has included in this poem. Ask the children to work out how they were able to read and understand the poem even though all the words are not ‘real’.
- This should generate a discussion on language use and should further reveal to the children that the English language is constantly evolving.

- Spend time gathering some recent examples of new language with the children such as iphone, android phone, USB, tablet, surface, ipad, ipod nano, apple tv. You can also look at new meanings for existing words such as surfing, tapping, tweeting, tagging, liking, which have evolved due to changes in technology.
- Explore with the children what these words mean and the children could reflect on how Chaucer or Shakespeare would understand these words.
- Then you could introduce the poem *tech -tock* which examines the changing nature of human interactions in an ever increasingly technological world, including the changes in language and the way in which people talk to each other.
- Ask the children to discuss the poem and the life that it depicts. Ask the children to think about any similarities there might be in the life of the girl in the poem and their own. Can the children imagine living in the way presented in the poem? Why? Why not?
- This could then link to the poem *Tinker* in which a man is building a robot who can think and carry out tasks just like a human. This could link to a wider discussion, or even a project, in which the children explore current evolutions in technology including artificial intelligence.
- Japan is a leading innovator of robots and Japanese businesses use robots in place of people in the retail sector – the children could explore this phenomenon to support the work completed in the poetry sequence.

Session 7: Creating poetry

After listening to poetry, children may want to write their own poems. These, too, can be recorded with music or sound effects, and be kept together with a class anthology.

- In this session the children can create a poem based on the poems that they have read, the discussions that they have had on current advances in technology and the changes technology has brought about.
- They might want to imitate *lol* or *Wiwapwop* and play with the language of the technology or they may want to imagine a life in which robots rule the earth.
- Allow the children to choose the poetic form that they want to adopt and give them time to experiment with their ideas.
- Following this allow the children to spend time refining, re-drafting and editing their work.
- The children could record their poems adding music or they could animate them.

Session 8: Drawing and annotating

Opportunities to draw, both before and during writing, increase children's motivation to write, and can help them to think. Drawing can help all writers to plan their writing, develop their ideas and use vivid description.

- Using the poem *where zebras go* as a starting point, the children can now begin to draw comparison with the technological world presented in the previous poems, to the world of nature presented in other poems in the collection.
- Have a range of coloured pastels and paper available.

- Read the poem aloud and ask the children to visualise the words you are reading in their mind's eye.
- Following this, read the poem again. Ask the children to use the art materials to draw the images that come to mind as they hear the poem again.
- Repeat for a third or fourth time, but this time ask the children to annotate their drawings with words or lines from the poem that stand out to them as they hear the poem read aloud.
- There may be some words that the children are unfamiliar with such as acacia or tallow. Ask the children to make predictions of what these words could mean based on context and then allow the children to find their meanings in the dictionaries. They want to consider the origins of these words to extend their previous learning.
- Ask the children to compare the world they have created and imagined from listening to *where zebras go*, in comparison to the technological worlds depicted in the previous set of poems.
- Explore other poems in the collection with similar themes of nature such as *Queen of Seals*, *Little Red Bug*, *End of the Day*.
- Display the children's responses to these poems and their art works on the working wall or continuing poetry display.

Session 10: Composing poetry

Poetic form is often a big obstacle to children who are beginning to write poetry. One way of helping them to overcome such an attachment is to encourage them to ignore form altogether and to focus completely on the experience they want to write about, so that the resulting poem takes its own shape.

- In this session the children can compose poems focusing on the themes of the natural world.
- To support this you could also refer the children to the text *One Night, Far From Here* by Julia Wauters (Flying Eye 2013). In this book different worlds are shrouded in darkness but as dawn arrives different habitats are revealed with a multitude of creatures. The habitats include the Amazonian rainforest, the savannah, the tundra, the forest and the deep blue sea.
- You can use videos to support the children's understanding of these different habitats:
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/habitats/Tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests [Accessed 11.05.15]
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/habitats/Temperate_broadleaf_and_mixed_forests [Accessed 11.05.15]
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/habitats/Taiga> [Accessed 11.05.15]
- Following on from an exploration of this text the children can write a poem of their choice about a creature, or a habitat either local or global.

Session 11: Conscience alley

Conscience alley is useful technique for exploring any kind of dilemma faced by a character, providing

an opportunity to analyse a decisive moment in greater detail. The class forms two lines facing each other. One person (the teacher or a participant) takes the role of the protagonist and walks between the lines as each member of the group speaks their advice. It can be organised so that those on one side give opposing advice to those on the other. When the protagonist reaches the end of the alley, they make their decision.

- Begin by asking the children to think about the different worlds depicted in the poems *tech-tock* and *where zebras go*; one world dominated by the use of technology and one without any.
- Also ask the children to think about the difference in the poems they created in response to the previous sessions.
- Ask the children to compare these imagined worlds using a grid in which they record their feelings about each type of world.
- Begin by asking the children to record what they would like about ‘life on the cloud’. Then, on the other side of the grid, what they would enjoy about a life free of technology. The children could then repeat recording their dislikes about both scenarios.
- Ask the children to consider which world they would prefer and why.
- Then complete conscience alley with the children. They can work with each other to prepare arguments for a world with technology and a world without.
- Choose some children to take turns to listen to the arguments by walking down the alley.
- Following this have a whole class discussion. Listen first to the children who walked down the alley – which side persuaded them? Why? The teacher or another adult, such as a teaching assistant, could scribe and record the children’s responses. Then hear the other children’s responses and compare and contrast their opinions.
- To complete the session the class could read the book *Dot*. written by Randi Zuckerberg and illustrated by Joe Berger (Picture Corgi 2013).
- Although a book designed for younger readers, the children will probably engage more thoughtfully with the content of the book. The book could also provide a more ‘balanced’ opinion for the children and suggest ways in which children can use technology but remain connected to the natural world.
- The children may notice the author’s name and they might be interested to know that she is the sister of Mark Zuckerberg, the creator of Facebook. This could also prompt discussion around the merits and disadvantages of social media platforms. They may speculate on Randi Zuckerberg’s opinion of Facebook and whether she and her brother agree.
- Once you have finished reading and discussing the book, ask the children if their opinions have changed since the beginning of the session, why? Why not?
- The children may also make links to other creators whose inventions went beyond their initial aims or motivations. For example, the story *Frankenstein* could also serve as a good comparison to the work the children have completed on artificial intelligence and the increasing use of robots in society.

When children have explored a situation through talk or role-play, they may be ready to write in role. Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different viewpoint and involves them writing in a different voice.

- Following on from these sessions the children can begin to work towards composing a piece of writing on the increasing influence of technology on people's lives.
- The children may be inspired to write in a range of different genres; some may want to write a persuasive piece in which they argue the case for a world with or without technology, some children may want to write a balanced argument in which they present both sides of the argument, as in the book *Dot.*, some children may want to write a poem.
- Allow the children time to write without constraint and with free choice of genre. The children may even want to complete several pieces in different genres.

Session 13: Redrafting and editing

Some children may need to work with the teacher during this process in shared writing. This is where the teacher and children work as active partners, talking together to share ideas and while the teacher guides the children through all the decisions that writers need to make and helps them shape their thoughts on paper.

- Give the children time to re-draft their writing.
- Those not working with adult support could work with a response partner who supports the editing process by giving them time to read their work aloud.
- In this session you can introduce the features of the genre and ensure that the children are considering this in their re-draft.
- The children could also prepare for an oral debate or presentation of their work.

Part 3: Emotional response

Session 14: Shared Writing

Shared writing is one of the most important ways a teacher can show children how writing works and what it's like to be a writer. Shared writing gives children a model for their own independent writing and can introduce them to an unfamiliar genre or style of writing.

- Begin by encouraging the class to respond to the illustration which accompanies the poem *I am going off to be a hill*. Encourage the children to scribe comments about what they can see, anything that puzzles them or that they are curious about and any emotions or feelings the image provokes. It could be useful to model this first.
- Gather the class together and share their responses. Write children's suggestions on a flip chart, IWB or in a class journal under three headings: I can see, I wonder why, I feel. Try to draw out from the questioning what they think the image tells the viewer about the

- personality of the person depicted.
- Now read the poem aloud to the children and then give the children time to re-read it again in small groups or individually.
 - Again, consider with the children when reading the poem, what the reader learns about the personality of the person speaking, perhaps linking back to the previous sessions where the children thought about the ways in which we can feel connected to nature.
 - Following this the children could spend time in small groups considering their personalities and the personalities of their friends through discussion.
 - Then ask the children to mind map key words and ideas which capture their sense of themselves for example, energetic, running, exploring, loud, quiet, shy, and slow. The teacher and other adults in the room should join in too in preparation for shared writing.
 - Next model how to use these notes and ideas to write a poem in which the central character becomes something else. For example, I am going off to be a lake...
 - Then work together as a class to create a whole class poem. Each child can take a verse of the poem and write about themselves 'going off to become...' Ask the children to consider what features of their personalities could be drawn on in making this decision and writing their verse of the poem.
 - At the end of the session put these separate verses altogether to make a whole class poem based on the children, their personalities and interests.
 - The children could also create illustrations to accompany the poetry imitating the style of the image that accompanies *I am going off to be a hill*.
 - This shared composition can be added to the ongoing poetry display.

Session 15: Using visual images

In the best books illustration and text work closely together to create meanings. Children are naturally drawn to the illustrations in a book and are frequently far more observant than an adult reader. Children's interest in images and their ability to read them can be developed through carefully planned interventions with an emphasis on talk.

Note for teachers: Sensitivity would need to be shown when introducing this poem to a class in which a child may have been recently bereaved; although the poem may provide a context through which bereaved children might be able to express their feelings. You may also want to consider the different religious beliefs that your children hold and the impact that may have on their understanding of the content of the poem.

- Begin the session using the illustration that accompanies the poem *The Shape of Anne Frank's Soul*.
- Put the children into mixed ability groups. Give the children enlarged copies of the image, but do not include the title of the poem. Ask the children to talk in their group about their response to the image.

- Ask the children to write their comments and responses around the picture and discuss the different responses the children give. Ask questions to draw out further responses using the 'Tell Me' model such as: *Is there anything you liked about the image? Is there anything you disliked? Does anything puzzle you? Are there any patterns that you notice?*
- Display the children's work on the class working wall and return to their ideas as you move on to reading the poem. Compare their opinions at the start of the session and then again at the end, noting the differences in their opinions and exploring why their opinions have changed.
- Next read the poem but still omit the title, only revealing this at the end of the session.
- Explore the children's responses to poem, drawing on the same questions you used to consider the illustration and link back to the work in previous sessions. For example, would a robot or computer have a soul? Do animals have souls? Ask the children what shape they think their souls are? Why?
- At the end of the session reveal the title to the children and discuss if this changes the children's opinions of the poem and if so why? Consider with the children why the poet may have chosen Anne Frank as the subject of the title.
- Refer to the work completed at the start of the session and compare their original responses to their feelings at the end of the lesson.
- If appropriate, in a separate PSHE or RE lesson, you could also spend time considering the ending of the poem and the religious reference. This could lead to a discussion around what the children believe happens when we die and this could link back to the poem, *I am going off to be a hill* which suggests that we all return to nature.
- Following this you could also explore the other poems by Jennifer Watson who has performed her work from the collection, along with two additional poems for the poetryline website. Her poems *Missing you*, *Tell me about love* and *Gone* also focus on loss and sadness and could complement the previous sessions.

Session 16: Writing Poetry

After listening to poetry, children may want to write their own poems. These, too, can be recorded with music or sound effects, and be kept together with a class anthology.

Two of the poems written by the same author, Louise Greig lend themselves to imitation and innovation: *A Memory and My Secret*. In the following sessions the children can respond to these poems and create their own poems in the same style.

- Read *My Secret* and ask the children what they notice about the structure of the poem. Explore through discussion with the class the pattern in the poem and the way in which the author has chosen things that will enable the secret to be kept. For example, the ocean drowns the secret.
- In preparation for writing, ask the children to work in small pairs or groups to mind map what they could tell a secret to and what it would do with it. For example, I told my secret to the wind – she blew it away.

- Place their mind maps on display on the working wall ready to use later in the session.
- Here you may want to extend the session or link the session to a PSHE lesson in which you explore keeping secrets; when the children should keep something private and when they should tell a trusted adult the secret.
- Following this explore the poem *A Memory*.
- Read the poem aloud and then allow the children to re-read the poem in mixed ability pairs.
- Ask the children to consider different objects or living things that may 'hold a memory' of something e.g. the sun holds a memory of heat, a drum holds a memory of the beat. Again, let the children spend time mind mapping these in their pairs.
- Using their mind maps to support their writing, now ask the children to write their own poems in the same style as *My Secret* or *A Memory*, also considering the structure and organisation.
- After the children have written their own poems they can spend time editing and re-drafting their poems.

Session 17: Performance

Dramatic poetry performance can be a fruitful way of working with poetry, both in terms of encouraging and eliciting responses from children to the poems they read, and also in providing opportunities for poems to be lifted 'off the page' and brought to life.

- The children should now have several poems that they have created throughout this sequence and it is important that the children have opportunities to read or perform their poems aloud so that they can bring their poems alive.
- Use the *poetryline* website as well as those belonging to poets themselves to enable the children to watch poets reading their own poems. It is important for the children to see a poet perform a poem as it was intended to be read.
- Discuss with the children the different aspects of poetry performance that enhance the experience for a reader such as tone of voice, intonation, volume, facial expression and gesture.
- Give the children time to work together to read their poems aloud ready for a poetry reading.
- This would work best if the children have a real audience and purpose. For example, you could invite the parallel year group class in to hear their work, or other teachers or even their parents.

Session 18 -19: Bookmaking

Publishing their work for an audience helps children to write more purposefully. Bookmaking provides a motivating context within which children can bring together their developing understanding of what written language is like; making written language meaningful as they construct their own texts.

In the following sessions the children will have the opportunity to create their own poetry anthologies. This can be made up of poems that the children have written throughout this teaching sequence, poems the children have written outside this sequence, some of the children's favourite poems from other anthologies and their favourite poems from the collection *Let in the Stars*. It will support the

children to have a display of a wide range of anthologies for the children to refer to and to draw inspiration from during these sessions.

- Begin by creating individual books for the children to use as their personal poetry anthologies.
- How to make a simple origami book:

1. Take a sheet of A4 or A3 paper. Hold the paper in the landscape position and fold the left edge to the right edge. Open out.
2. Then fold the left and right edges into the centre. Open out. You now have 4 equal panels.
3. Fold the top edge to the bottom edge. Open out.
4. You now have a sheet with 8 equal panels.
5. Fold the left edge to the right edge. Cut through the centre crease on the folded side—to the width of one panel.
6. Open the sheet out—you now have a cut in the centre of the sheet.
7. Fold the top to the bottom. The cut is on top.
8. Push the left and right edges to the centre—carry on till you have a cross shape.
9. Fold round into a book.

- In the remaining sessions the children can compile their anthologies using a range of poems; those they have written themselves, a selection from *Let in the Stars* and any others that the children enjoy reading.

Session 20: Illustrating the text

Opportunities to illustrate a story during an activity such as bookmaking give children the chance to build on ideas that they have gained from talk, story making, role-play and drawing. They enable them to engage in creative re-interpretations of the texts.

- Allow the children to create a cover for their anthology using a range of art materials.
- The children can also illustrate the poems that they have included.
- Refer back to session 2 where the children considered the illustrations in *Let in the Stars* and ask the children to think about where they might place their illustrations to enhance meaning.
- To give the bookmaking an additional purpose you could display the children's finished anthologies in the school library or in a 'pop up' display in the school where a wide audience can access them and the other children and adults in the school can browse them.