

Michael Rosen: A Poet Study through *Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things* illustrated by Joe Berger (Puffin)

Childhood memories of the poet's parents, continuing conversations, are interspersed throughout this book. He draws on observations of the minutiae of everyday life within his own family and beyond, memory and musings on language play a significant role. Many poems have the humour we've come to expect from Michael Rosen but these are often at least tinged with matters that are serious and thought provoking.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence.

- To experience poetry as pleasurable and meaningful
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the work of a contemporary poet
- To compare how a common theme is presented in poetry
- To explore the language and style of poetry through talk, performance, visual art, reading and writing
- To learn how to bring out the meaning of a poem through performance
- To learn more about writing poems (as a class, group and individually) based on observation and experience
- To read beyond the poet to poems that have influenced his work

This teaching sequence is designed for Key Stage 2

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is designed to be delivered over a number of sessions but teachers will want to use their own judgement about the length of time their class will need to spend on each of the sessions and how they plan them in to their literacy programme across the year and across year groups. The teaching sequence is split into three sections. The sequence is planned this way so that teachers can study Michael Rosen, the poet, and explore key themes central to the collection. In this collection, Michael explores childhood memories and identity, engaging readers to do the same for themselves. Michael offers lots of valuable advice and performs several poems on CLPE's Poetryline website. These films are explored throughout the sequence, either in guiding teachers or as a means to which children can take inspiration. Michael's advice can be adopted to influence practice and lay the foundations by developing a poetry friendly learning environment. The second section explores what we can learn about a poet from reading their poetry and looks at poetry as a means of self-expression. The sessions in the third section are designed to explore personal response and expression and to help children understand the different ways in which they can respond to poetry as well as understanding how it can be a vehicle for personal storytelling. Central to many poems in the

collection is a sense of cultural identity as well as a strong sense of place. The final section investigates ways in which we can support children in taking inspiration from Michael Rosen when composing their own poetry. The sessions are designed so that the children’s experience of this collection, and their understanding of a poet’s voice and use of language, will support them to use similar techniques, poetic devices and wordplay in their own writing. Teachers can choose how best to create their own sequence from the ideas presented in each of the sections.

Teaching Approaches

- Reading aloud and re-reading
- Shared reading
- Word collections
- Looking at language
- Responding to illustration
- Book talk - responding to poetry
- Role-play, drama and Freeze-Frame
- Visualising
- Drawing and annotating
- Poetry Box
- Performing poetry
- Shared writing
- Creating anthologies

Outcomes

- Experience and appreciation of a wider range of poetry through the compilation of anthologies
- Develop creative writing through a poetry journal
- Understanding and appreciation of the use of language and vocabulary by creating word and phrase collections and playing with words
- Deeper understanding of meanings and poet’s intent through performance of poems
- Mastery of language in pieces of writing through visualisation and artwork
- Understanding of poetic devices and structure and seeing oneself as a poet by composing poems inspired by the collection
- Write poems individually and collaboratively

Developing Phonological Awareness:

- Discriminating environmental sounds
- Onomatopoeia
- Exploring voice sounds
- Exploring instrumental sounds
- Keeping and following a rhythm
- Identifying rhyming words
- Onset and rime
- Syllabification

Exploring Vocabulary and Language

Structure:

- Generate vocabulary experientially
- Drawing to describe and think
- Explore onomatopoeia, alliteration and other devices that make words memorable
- Identify and playing with rhyming words
- Joining in with predictable patterned phrases

Cross Curricular Links:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- This collection provides the ideal platform for children to explore identity, family relationships, childhood and diversity, not only through their personal experience but also in developing an understanding of the experiences and viewpoint of others.
- Children can use the characterisation and themes in the poems as a safe vehicle through which to explore these experiences, responding in a range of ways and, in doing so, developing wider skills of discussion and debate.

Science:

- Whilst responding to the poem, *The Raft*, the children could explore Forces and Materials and investigate why the raft tipped over when it did and perhaps how it could be avoided.
- Geography and History:
- Many of the poems in the collection reflect Michael Rosen's childhood experience of growing up in East London as well as referencing his grandparents' journeys from Russia, Poland and Romania. The sequence could therefore provide a starting point for a cross curricular study of this part of London in post war Britain as well as the experiences of Jewish refugees prior to this.
- Children could be supported to make a comparative study of the current experience of refugees fleeing war torn countries as well as exploring attitudes towards immigration and personal identity.

Art:

- Children use drawing and painting to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination in response to poetry.
- Children can develop illustrative techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space, e.g. using drawing pencils, charcoal, pen and ink and watercolour paints in the style of Joe Berger, illustrator of Michael Rosen's *Big Book of Bad Things*.
- Children can learn more about the work of well-known illustrators that have worked with Michael Rosen, for instance: Quentin Blake, Chris Riddell, Helen Oxenbury, Alan Baker, Arthur Robins, Tony Ross, Bob Graham, Korky Paul, Clare Mackie, Hervé Tullet, Neal Layton.

Music:

- Children use their voices expressively and creatively in reading poetry and in performing.
- When rehearsing poetry recitals and performances, children could be encouraged to experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music.
- Throughout the sequence children can explore the beat and rhythm of poetry linking this to their existing knowledge of music.

Physical Education:

- Children might incorporate simple sequences of dance movements into performance readings.

Links to other books and resources:

Anthologies and collections:

There are so many anthologies and collections that will provide the children with a broad range of poetry to listen to, read aloud and perform, as well as enabling children to choose poems when creating their own anthologies on given themes.

- *Here's a Little Poem* collected by Jane Yolen and Andrew Fusek Peters, illustrated by Polly Dunbar (Walker)
- *The Puffin Book of Fantastic First Poems* edited by June Crebbin (Puffin)
- *Caribbean Playground Song* read by James Berry (*Poetryline*)
- *Dog in the Playground* read by Allan Ahlberg (*Poetryline*) from his *Collected Poems* Puffin
- *Poems to Perform* edited by Julia Donaldson (Macmillan)

Other books by Michael Rosen:

- *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* illustrated by Helen Oxenbury (Walker)
- *The Bear in the Cave* illustrated by Adrian Reynolds (Bloomsbury)
- *Bear Flies High* illustrated by Adrian Reynolds (Bloomsbury)
- *Little Rabbit Foo Foo* illustrated by Arthur Robins (Walker)
- *The Sad Book* illustrated by Quentin Blake (Walker)
- *You Wait Till I'm Older Than You!* illustrated by Shoo Rayner (Puffin)
- *Michael Rosen's Book of Very Silly Poems* illustrated by Shoo Rayner (Puffin)
- *Centrally Heated Knickers* illustrated by Harry Horse (Puffin)
- *Mustard, Custard, Grumble Belly and Gravy* illustrated by Quentin Blake (Bloomsbury)
- *You Tell Me* (with Roger McGough) Frances Lincoln
- *Bananas in My Ears* illustrated by Quentin Blake (Walker)
- *Quick, Let's Get out of Here* illustrated by Quentin Blake (Puffin)

Books to support work around immigration and cultural and personal identity:

- *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna (Flying Eye)
- *Blue Penguin* by Petr Horáček (Walker)
- *Beegu* by Alexis Deacon (Red Fox)
- *A Place to Call Home* by Alexis Deacon and Viviane Schwarz (Walker)
- *Here I Am* by Patti Kim and Sonia Sánchez (Curious Fox)
- *The Colour of Home* by Mary Hoffman and Karin Littlewood (Frances Lincoln)
- *Ice In The Jungle* by Arianne Hofman-Maniyar (Child's Play)
- *Kasia's Surprise* by [Stella Gurney](#) and Petr Horáček (Walker)
- *My Dad, the Hero* by [Stella Gurney](#) and Katharine McEwen (Walker)
- *My Friend Amy* by [Anna McQuinn](#) and [Ben Frey](#) (Alanna Books)
- *My Friend Jamal* by [Anna McQuinn](#) and Gareth Williams (Alanna Books)
- *My Two Blankets* by [Irena Kobald](#) and Freya Blackwood (Houghton Mifflin)
- *A New Year's Reunion* by [Yu Li-Qiong](#) and [Zhu Cheng-Liang](#) (Walker)
- *The Silence Seeker* by [Ben Morley](#) and [Carl Pearce](#) (Tamarind)
- *Azzi In Between* by Sarah Garland (Frances Lincoln)

A CLPE list of books focusing on identity, belonging, conflict, migrant and refugee experiences can be downloaded from here <https://www.clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/booklists/refugee-booklist>

Letterbox Library have created a refugee and migration book pack including these and other titles suitable for Key Stage 2 children: <http://www.letterboxlibrary.com>

Resources to support work around the collection:

- *Tell Me (Children, Reading and Talk) with The Reading Environment* by Aidan Chambers (Thimble Press)
- Watch Michael Rosen perform his poetry and stories on own website, his Youtube channel or CLPE's Poetryline:
 - <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline>
 - <http://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1A647BA0576977F2>
- Underwater creatures:
 - Turtles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nC-r3ylepk>
 - Octopus: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CINSh3YEUw>
 - Giant Clam: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mO44qj7evA4>
 - Jellyfish: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJUuotjE3u8>
 - Whale: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8xdz92lj60>
- *Down Behind the Dustbin*:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eL6VB56RxPM>
- *There is a Green Hill Far Away* by William Horsley being performed by Kings College, Cambridge:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0ybUpLn8M>
- You can find guidance in creating a positive reading and writing culture by downloading the free **CLPE Reading and Writing Scales** on our website:
 - <https://www.clpe.org.uk/aboutus/news/have-you-downloaded-free-clpe-reading-and-writing-scales>

Links to other resources on the Poetryline Website: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline>

- Watch Michael Rosen talk about his creative writing processes as a poet and the advice he offers children.
- Watch Michael Rosen perform his own poems from this and other collections.
- Look up poets by age range or themes, enabling you to access a wide range of poetry to inspire budding poets.
- Find examples of children's work around poetry, including videos of performances submitted for the 2015 and 2016 CLIPPA School Shadowing Scheme.

All the films of Michael Rosen performing or speaking on Poetryline are hyperlinked throughout the sequence.

In preparation for this teaching sequence:

- Create a poetry corner in which to display the collected works of Michael Rosen, including his poetry collections, anthologies, stories with repeated and patterned language, and picture

books – books and audio format.

- Become familiar with CLPE's Poetryline website as well as those belonging to Michael Rosen himself and other sites that enable the children to watch the poet reading his own poems, bringing them alive. Through hearing poetry read aloud and told in a variety of languages, regional accents and styles, the children will be inspired to find their own voices and to express themselves in poems of their own.
- Create a class poetry journal in which to record the children's responses and ideas. This can be created by folding and binding large pieces of sugar paper.
- Enlarge any poems featured in the teaching sequence or those that you and the children choose to read and revisit.

Building on prior experiences:

- Before beginning this part of the sequence, ensure younger children are provided with experiences of hearing and joining in with nursery rhymes and songs with strong beats and memorable refrains. Make rhyme and song central to the Key Stage 1 curriculum, making up jingles relating to everyday experiences, observations and routines and chanting them together.
- Provide the foundations for learning around poetry by modelling having fun with language, playing with sounds, and innovating familiar rhymes for amusement and purpose. Support children's growing sense of rhythm and explore the musicality of language through a growing repertoire of poetry, rhyme and song.

Teaching Sessions

Part 1: Introducing Michael Rosen and Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things – life, poetry and language

Introducing Michael Rosen – The Role on the Wall

- Explain to the children that you will be studying one particular poet over the coming three weeks. Set the scene by asking the children what they think they know about Michael Rosen and the books that he has written. Most children will have experienced ***We're Going on a Bear Hunt*** at home or school and perhaps other stories with patterned language, such as ***Little Rabbit Foo Foo*** and ***The Bear in the Cave***. They may have shared books like ***This is Our House*** and ***Howler, Rover*** and ***Monster*** which they can relate to personal experience. Some children may have shared his poetry with parents or teachers or seen him perform his poems on his website or even live, e.g. ***Chocolate Cake***, ***Down Behind the Dustbin*** or ***Don't***.
- Create a list of the books, poems and stories with which the children are familiar. Later, provide opportunity for the children to refer to the list when they set about collecting his

works to display in the class poetry corner.

- Create an enlarged outline of Michael Rosen upon which to collect the children's ideas about the poet himself.
 - *How would you describe him? Why? What makes you think that?*
- On the outside of this Role on the Wall, record what they know for sure about him, such as his appearance, facts about his life, what he does for a living, etc. On the inside, record what the children infer about him; his personality, his thoughts and feelings.
- Some children may think he is funny and be able to cite examples of poems, stories or watching him. Collect these examples and make reference to them in the collection displayed and in future teaching sessions, e.g. in showing a video recommended by a child from his own website, his Youtube channel or CLPE's Poetryline:
 - <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline>
 - <http://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1A647BA0576977F2>
- The role on the wall can be revisited and added to in another colour at any point in the sequence as the children hear more of his poems – particularly those of an autobiographical nature – and watch him speak about poetry and writing on Poetryline.

Known works of Michael Rosen - Reading Aloud and Responding

- Prior to this session, have the children help you create a poetry corner in which to display the collected works of Michael Rosen, including his poetry collections, anthologies, stories with repeated and patterned language, and picture books. Compare the list that they compiled with the volume of works written by Michael Rosen. *What does this tell us about the author?*
- Allow time for the children to talk about and share their favourite Michael Rosen picture books, stories and poems with each other, referring to the displayed collection so that they can revisit recommendations afterwards.
- Introduce the A2 class poetry journal and explain that this will be a place to record their responses to Michael's stories and poems. Write the first heading: *Michael Rosen – stories and poems we already know* and record the children's responses.
- Ask the class for suggested headings for other pages for example:
 - *What we would like to ask Michael*
 - *What we like about Michael's poetry*
 - *Our favourite poems, patterns and themes in Michael's poems*
- These headings can be added to over time and as the children become more familiar with his work, motivations and thinking.
- Read aloud one or more of the children's favourite works by Michael Rosen.
- Provide plenty of opportunity for the children to share his works with each other and to hear them read aloud. Encourage children to revisit and perform his poems in small groups, allowing them to enjoy the patterns and sounds of the words and the language play for themselves.

Michael Rosen's early life – introducing the collection, *Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things* - reading aloud, sharing and discussing poems

- Browse through the book with the children, exploring their responses to the title and Michael's brief explanation for the book on the back cover: *'When I do my shows, I tell a story called "Michael's Big Book of Bad Things". I thought it would be good to write it down.'* You could explore the fact that he was the Children's Laureate between 2007 and 2009 and that this book was published the year after his work as a Laureate finished. Talk to the children about what a Children's Laureate does, who the previous and subsequent Laureates are and why Michael himself might have been chosen. *What was expected of him?*
- Explore the way in which the book is organised into three parts, reading aloud and responding to each of the three introductions. Ask the children what it tells them about Michael's childhood and revisit the role on the wall. If there is anything that the children would like to ask Michael, record their questions in the class journal under the appropriate heading.
- Invite children to choose a poem they think they would like to hear, based on its title from the contents pages at the front of the book or its first line, referring to the Index at the back of the book. It might be useful to enlarge these reference pages to enable the children to choose or you could provide multiple copies of the book so that the children can access and refer to it.
- Read aloud the chosen poems, inviting their responses. Encourage the children to talk a little about their first responses to any illustration, title and the poems themselves:
 - *Why did you choose this poem? Is it what you expected?*
 - *What did you like about this poem?*
 - *What did it make you think of? Does it remind you of anything in your own or other people's lives?*
 - *What does it tell us?*
 - *How did it make you feel?*
- Many of the poems can be related to your children's sense of humour, personal experiences or of their emerging knowledge and understanding of the world; enabling them to tap into the vocabulary, language and themes. Children may find an aspect of the poem particularly enjoyable, such as the imagery Michael creates, the play on words or sound or the use of a particular poetic device.
- Re-read and revisit the poems and have the children tune in to the print as well as hearing them read aloud. Discuss which themes, words or phrases are most memorable or affecting. Discuss what is special about these words or phrases; whether they are known or unfamiliar.
- Invite children to choose a favourite poem from the book each day to read aloud and pin up as the 'poem of the day.' Talk together about how it makes them feel and what in particular they like about it.
- Collect what the children say on prepared speech bubbles and pin these up alongside the poem. Encourage the children to start a conversation about the poems as their choices and preferences and responses begin to develop.

Michael Rosen's early life – exploring identity and culture – Reading Aloud and Responding: Book Talk and Visualising

Poetryline film (for teacher reference): [Poetry as a Carrier of Culture](#)

Suggested Poems: [Our Flat](#) (p.102), [Where do we come from?](#) (p.146), [My Dad](#) (p.106), [Staying Over](#) (pp.79-81), [The Homework Book](#) (pp.171-175)

- Refer back to the *Contents* and the *Index of First Lines* and ask the children to help you choose a poem that they think will provide autobiographical information about Michael Rosen. You could refer to the class journal and the questions that the children would like to ask or things they would like to find out more about and use these as the impetus for the choice of poem.
- Explore the children's reasoning for their choices and read aloud, re-read and revisit the title and the poems. Invite the children to share and engage in book talk to discuss their initial responses with one another:
 - *How does the poem make you feel?*
 - *What did you like about the poem? Is there anything you dislike? Why? Why not?*
 - *Does it remind you of anything in real life, poems or stories?*
 - *What is the poem saying? What is it about? Who is the voice in the poem?*
 - *Does anything puzzle you? Do you have any questions?*
 - *Were any words or phrases memorable or vivid? Why is that?*
- On first hearing a poem, the children could be asked to visualise then draw what they see in their mind's eye, annotating their artwork with their responses, questions, memorable imagery, words and phrases. The children could conduct a gallery walk, recording their responses to each other's artwork on post-its and discussing similarities and differences in the way in which they each visualised the poem.

Michael Rosen, The Reader - Reading Aloud, Responding and Book Talk

Poetryline film: [Poems I remember from childhood](#)

- Refer to the Role on the Wall and the questions that the children have about Michael Rosen, recorded in the class journal.
- Explain that although Michael can't visit the class in person, you have a film in which he talks to children about the poetry he remembers as a child. As you watch the film, ask the children to listen out for any information relevant to their queries.
- The poems mentioned are: **The Listeners** by Walter de la Mare, **Adlestrop** by RS Thomas, **Autumn Fires** by RL Stevenson and **When you are Old** by W.B. Yeats (see attached resources)
- Take an enlarged copy of one of the poems and read it aloud to the children. Invite comments then read it again, asking the children to listen out for words or phrases they like or dislike, anything it reminds them of and for any patterns or queries, using prompts adapted by the *Tell Me* approach in Aidan Chambers' *Tell Me (Children, Reading and Talk with The Reading Environment)* (Thimble Press):

Tell me:

- What do you like about the poem? Is there anything you dislike? Why? Why not?
- How does the poem make you feel? Why?
- Who is the voice in the poem? Where do you see yourself as you listen to the poem? (consider physical and emotional perspective). Does your perspective stay the same or change?
- Are there any words or phrases that you think are memorable or that you like? Why?
- Do you have any questions? Does anything puzzle you?
- Does it remind you of anything in stories or real life?
- Mark up the poem with the children's responses by highlighting and annotating specific words or lines and adding children's responses on post-it notes. Display it on the wall and invite the class to add anything that occurs to them at a later date.
- Each subsequent week, pin up another of the poems for the children to annotate their responses.

Michael Rosen, *The Reader* - Reciting and Performance Reading Poetry

Poetryline film: [Poems I remember from childhood](#)

Poems: *The Listeners* by Walter de la Mare, *Adlestrop* by RS Thomas, *Autumn Fires* by RL Stevenson and *When you are Old* by W.B. Yeats.

- As the children become more familiar with each of these poems, make time to revisit them and read them together as a class. Provide audio recordings of the poems alongside printed copies so that the children can revisit them independently and tune in to the print of the increasingly familiar lines.
- Talk about the fact that one of the reasons for recalling these poems is that Michael Rosen learnt to recite classic poetry by heart. Ask the children to choose one of the poems that they too would like to recite and perform. Read aloud the first line and on an enlarged copy, demonstrate how to text mark it with the children's suggestions for an enhanced performance reading. Encourage considerations around expression and intonation, instrumental or vocal sound effects, visual effects and whether it could be read in a group, individually, echoed or in turn.
- Provide groups with enlarged copies of their chosen poems, either a few lines, a verse or the whole poem, and ask them to prepare and rehearse a performance reading. Ask the audience to feedback on each of the performances and encourage children to continue to refine their performances from the feedback and successful aspects of other groups' performances.

Michael Rosen, *The Writer* –Exploring personal experiences and Poetry Journals

Poetryline film and poem: [The Space on the Page](#) (p.18)

- Provide groups with enlarged copies of their chosen poems, either a few lines, a verse or the

whole poem, and ask them to prepare and rehearse a performance reading. Ask the audience to feedback on each of the performances and encourage children to continue to refine their performances from the feedback and successful aspects of other groups' performances.

- Watch the film *The Space on the Page* in which Michael explains how this poem came about, and then performs it.
- Replay the performance and read aloud several times, inviting the children to join in and respond using Aidan Chambers' Book Talk prompts. Record their responses in the class journal. The children might even draw what they visualise by way of response, annotating their artwork and conducting a gallery walk to discuss their ideas further.
- Ask the class to share with a partner how they feel when confronted with a blank piece of paper and are asked to write something. These comments can be added to the class journal, next to the poem.
- At this point, children could be presented with a personal poetry journal of their own in which they will be given opportunity to freely sketch ideas through drawings, observations and creative writing.
- Ask the children to turn to a blank page in their personal journals and suggest they 'doodle' draw or write anything they want, starting anywhere on the page with their own choice of pen or pencil.
- Provide children with plentiful opportunity to take Michael's advice and use their personal journals to collect ideas, to write about anything and everything and to refer back to it regularly. This is a personal, creative and free writing journal and therefore it is important that the only graphic marks made are those made by the child or that which they invite.

Michael Rosen, *The Word Wizard - Words are Ours*

Poetryline films and poem: [Words Are Ours](#) and [How I write poems](#).

- Remind the children of the stories and poems by Michael Rosen that you have shared, referring to his books on display in the poetry corner.

What do you like about his poems and stories? ...is there anything you dislike? Why? Why not?

Do they remind you of anything in real life or stories?

What are his poems and stories about? Where do you think he get his ideas?

Which do you remember most vividly? Why?

Are any words or phrases memorable? Why do you think you can remember them easily?

Does anything puzzle you about his stories or poems? Do you have any questions?

- Encourage the children to talk about what they think of his writing, using some of Aidan Chambers' book talk prompts.
- Scribe the children's responses in the class poetry journal, and then turn your attention to their ideas about memorable stories, poems, words or phrases. Share Michael Rosen's belief that words are everywhere and that they belong to all of us; that we use them for many reasons; that they can be played with and enjoyed.

- Ask groups of children to talk to each other about where they hear words, who uses them and what they sound like. Where do they find written or printed words, what they look like, how words help us, why we write words down and why we read them? They could record their ideas on a large sheet of paper and begin to make a list of places they see and hear words in the environment. Elicit from the children their ideas about the purpose of given examples of writing, who is meant to read it and why.
- Have the children explore their ideas further by taking them on a word hunt around the school and into the local area. They could bring their own poetry journals, digital cameras and voice recorders so that they can collect the printed and heard words visually and aurally.
- Begin to create a word collection display in the classroom comprising of photographs and sourced examples of the printed and heard word, e.g. train announcements, tickets, posters, advertising slogans, radio commentary, jingles, timetables, recipes, menus, Lego instruction cards, books of all kinds, comics, newspapers, road signs, street names, letters, cards, texts, food packaging, etc.
- Enable the children to explore the voice and rhythm in each form of writing by reading them aloud with expression.
- Embrace opportunities to savour the language that has been chosen and focus the children's attention to some of the devices used to grab the reader's attention and enable recall, e.g. alliteration (*Percy Pig sweets, Thomas the Tank Engine, Betty Botter* nursery rhyme, *She Sells Sea Shells* tongue twister), rhyme (*Curly Wurly bars, Humpty Dumpty*), coined or invented words and the art of conveying meaning through well-chosen nonsense words, famously used by Lewis Carroll and more recently Roald Dahl (*'He rolled and he wiggled, he fought and he figgled, he squirmed and he squiggled.'* *The BFG*).
- Engage families in the collection so that printed or heard words that have significance at home or home languages can be shared and explored. Children could keep a listening or reading record over a weekend to demonstrate the part words play in their lives. They might write, draw, voice record, take photographs or create a collage of their weekend experiences to share with the class.
- You could draw this project together by watching Michael Rosen talk about his play with words in the Poetryline film: ***How I write poems***. Invite the children to share their responses and think about how Michael's advice might relate to their feelings about their own poetry writing.
- Give pairs of children a sticky note or a small piece of card and ask them to write their favourite words on it. Do the same with their least favourite words. These can be anything: words they like/don't like the sound of, names of cartoon characters or words they have difficulty reading/spelling and drawing on their time spent hunting for and collecting words.
- Ask the children to share their words with another pair then the whole class. Discuss their choices and how different words appeal or don't appeal for a whole range of reasons. Invite the pairs to come out and stick their words in the class journal under the headings: *Words we like – Words we don't like*.

Reading aloud, book talk and performance reading

Poetryline film and poem: [Words Are Ours](#)

- Watch Michael Rosen perform his poem, **Words Are Ours** on Poetryline. Watch this performance and read it aloud several times for the children to pick up on more items that they recognise in his list.
- Share feedback, and listen once more, this time displaying an enlarged copy of the poem and inviting the children to join in.
- Highlight the parts of the text that the children have identified, adding explanatory comments in the margin.
- Organise the class into mixed ability groups and give each group one section of the poem (see below) one copy per child, to practise reading aloud for a performance.
- Reorganise the groups so that each newly formed group has someone practised in reading aloud each and every part of the whole poem. Less experienced readers can be paired up with more confident ones. Prepare group performances of the whole poem.
- Continue to create daily opportunities to watch Michael Rosen perform his stories and poems that the children will enjoy and that illustrate his repertoire, the devices he uses, his inspiration, and his belief that poems and words belong to all of us.

Extended Session: Composing poetry – list poem

Poetic form is often a big obstacle to children who are beginning to write poetry. This is because a lot of people's ideas of what a poem ought to look like are based on traditional poetry, with its regular verse forms and strict rhyme schemes. It is important that we encourage children to pay attention to the content of their writing rather than forming too rigid an attachment to form, particularly rhyme. You might like children to ignore form completely and have them focus completely on the experience they want to write about; the resulting poem taking its own shape. Another way still is to recognise the importance of pattern in poetry by introducing children to certain forms which are less technically demanding in rhyme and regular metre, but which can be used to shape experience and may even provide an extra stimulus for writing. This collection of poems will support a teacher's repertoire of poetic forms, including talking poems and lists.

Poetryline film and poem: [Words Are Ours](#)

- Take up his invitation to create further verses by compiling a class list that brings together the children's prior word investigation.
- Children can go on to create their own poems as individuals and in groups, taking the opportunity to explore, discuss preferences and play with words, their sound and spelling patterns, their use and their origins.

Part 2: Words Are Ours - Responding to Poetry

Reading aloud, Book Talk and wider reading

Poetryline film: [Poetry leaves us gaps to fill in](#)

Suggested poems: *We're Walking* (p.45) and *Where Do We Come From?* (pp.146-147)

- *Prior to this session, ensure that you are aware of the children's direct or recent experience of any of the issues dealt with in these poems and the response work around them. Children manage these experiences and personal trauma in different ways thereby requiring the utmost sensitivity. You will need to exercise judgement.*
- Read aloud the title of the poem and ask the children to offer suggestions as to what they think the poem will be about. Note these predictions down in the class journal. The children could use their personal poetry journals to note their own ideas as they think them and as they begin to delve more deeply into the poem.
- Read aloud the poem to the children and ask the children to share first impressions with a partner around what they think the poem is about and how it made them feel. What did each of them see in their mind's eye? It is important for the children to know that these early intuitions are valued and that, as Michael says in the film, "there are no wrong answers, only right in different ways."
- Children may wish to record their first impressions in their personal journals
- Read it aloud again, then read it aloud with the poem enlarged for the children to track whilst you read and revisit as you engage them in book talk:
 - *What do you like about the poem? Is there anything you dislike? Why? Why not?*
 - *How does the poem make you feel? Why?*
 - *How does the poem sound? Is there a rhythm? What patterns can you hear and see on the page? Why do you think the poet has repeated the same phrase like this?*
 - *Are there any words, phrases or passages that you think are memorable or affecting? Why?*
 - *Who is the voice in the poem? What would you like to ask them?*
 - *Where do you see yourself as you listen to the poem? Does your perspective stay the same or change?*
 - *Do you have any questions about this poem? Does anything puzzle you?*
 - *Does it remind you of anything in stories or real life?*
- Children's responses can be recorded on post-its in the class journal. You could provide smaller groups with a copy of the poem so that they can read and revisit it together, text marking it with their responses and ideas and queries.
- In being driven to fill in the gaps left by the poem, there is opportunity to explore both historical and current perspectives on the refugee experience and it may be beneficial to engage the children in reading more widely around this issue. Michael Rosen is making reference to events and experiences of his Jewish grandparents and great grandparents who were immigrants from Poland, Russia and Romania. You can help the children fill in some of the gaps around his family's experience by reading aloud the poem *Where Do We Come From?* (pp.146-147)

- However, the poem could speak for many people around the world, both now and in the past and it is worth considering Michael's intention in keeping the poem open to interpretation of the reader.
- Francesca Sanna's picture book, **The Journey**, provides powerful insight into a family fleeing a war torn country and being forced to leave behind those that have been taken. Encourage children to make the links between the illustrations and text in this book and the poem.
- The children will have questions that they would like to ask the person or people in the poem in order to fill in the gaps. They can engage in supposition based on what else they have read or know about, each bringing personal perspective to the discussion, but they may well benefit from hearing from people that have lived through a refugee's journey. There may be members of the school community who are willing and able to speak to the children about being driven to leave an unsafe home to make another elsewhere and answer the children's questions.
- You might want to draw this learning together by creating a working wall that demonstrates the children's growing understanding and ideas about the poem from first hearing it read aloud and responding intuitively to reading and researching more deeply their hypotheses and questions.
- You might like to explore other poems in the collection that provide much opportunity for children to ask and explore the bigger philosophical questions, such as: **Fox** (p.20) and **Tabby and Grey and Tortoiseshell** (p.39)

Responding to illustration

Children will need time and opportunity to enjoy and respond to illustration and to talk together about what they contribute to their understanding of the text. As the sequence unfolds, there could be opportunities for children to develop their responses by drawing or illustrating favourite poems with charcoal or pen and ink wash, in a similar style to that of Joe Berger.

Suggested Poem: The Raft (pp.133-136)

- Show the children an enlarged copy of the double page spread illustration (p.134-135) without revealing the title of the poem and with the text concealed. The children could also have copy to share their ideas with a partner or smaller groups.
- Ask the children to think about what they notice in the image, comparing ideas and observations.
- Encourage the children to offer suggestions around who the tent and raft belong to. Discuss with the children their experiences of camping and raft building.
 - *Where is this? What makes you think that?*
 - *What do you think is happening in this moment? What do we think has just been happening? What might be about to happen? What makes you think that?*
 - *Would you like to board the raft? Why? Why not?*
 - *Does this remind you of anything in stories or real life?*
 - *Does anything puzzle you about this scene? Do you have any questions?*
- Note the children's ideas and responses around a copy of the illustration in the class poetry

journal.

- Have the children work together to construct a narrative around the image, perhaps drawing pictures – in their personal journals or collaboratively on enlarged rolls of paper – that illustrate an imagined sequence of events.
- Ask the children to tell their stories to each other, comparing their interpretations.
- Read the poem aloud to the children and ask them if it was what they expected? How similar or different are the events related in the poem to those in the children’s stories?

Reading aloud and drama – Freeze-Frame and Thought Tracking

Freeze-frames are still images or a tableau. They can be used to enable groups of children to examine a key event or situation from a story and decide in detail how it could be represented. When presenting the freeze-frame, one of the group could act as a commentator to talk through what is happening in their version of the scene, or individual characters could be asked to speak their thoughts out loud.

Suggested poem: **The Raft** (pp.133-136)

- Re-read and revisit **The Raft** several times as a class as well as providing opportunity for the children to hear it and read it independently. Engage the children in a book talk discussion:
 - *What did you like about the poem? Is there anything you dislike? Why? Why not?*
 - *Were there any patterns in the rhythm or language choices that you heard or can see on the printed page?*
 - *What are your favourite words, phrases or passages? Why have you chosen them? How do they sound? What do they look like on the page?*
 - *Which parts of the poem stay in your mind most vividly? Why? How do they make you feel?*
 - *How were the children in the poem feeling as the events unfolded? What tells you that?*
- Ask the children to revisit and read a copy of the poem in groups of three, pausing and highlighting the parts that they think are particularly memorable or dramatic in their view. They could take the parts of Mart, the friend (possibly Michael), Tony. They might share their ideas with another pair, collaborating to choose a moment in the drama that they think they could re-enact as a larger group to include working in role as the parents or even imagined onlooker. One or more children could read aloud the chosen part of the poem as the group re-enacts it in role.
- Give the children time to look at the descriptive language in the chosen section of the poem and consider how it helps them to decide what is happening to each of the characters in the scene, how they might be feeling and how they can show this through facial expression and body position.
- On a given signal, have the children freeze their scene. Engage them in a thought tracking activity whereby when you tap each on the shoulder, ask them to voice their thought in role. This will enable the children to empathise more easily with their character and once they have heard the thoughts of the other people in the scene they might be encouraged to further develop their train of thought.

- The characters' views could be recorded on thought bubbles and displayed around a photograph of the group in freeze-frame and the highlighted part of the poem.
- Children could freeze-frame their chosen scene and ask others to guess which part of the poem it represents, asking the audience to talk about how they were able to relate the drama to the words of the poem chosen by Michael Rosen.
- Other poems that can be re-enacted might include: [The Book](#) (pp.25-26), also performed by Michael on Poetryline

Shared reading and performing poetry – The Poetry Show

Poetryline film and Poem: [How to inspire young poets – performing](#) (teacher guidance) and [Rhythm of Life](#)

- Watch the film of ***The Rhythm of Life*** thinking about what Michael says about how the poem came about, then display the text and play it a second time, inviting the children to join in, as a shared reading activity.
- Using the *Tell Me* approach, take feedback from the class and record the children's responses in the class journal.
- Organise the class into two groups and perform the poem, asking group A to read the first line of each couplet and group B the second line. Change over.
- In mixed ability groups, give each child a copy of the poem and ask them to decide how they would like to perform it, for example: which lines will be louder, softer, repeated, echoed or read in unison, pairs, or by individual voices. Give the groups time to rehearse before performing to the class and taking feedback.
- You might like to include an enlarged copy of this poem in your class journal and ask the children to draw and cut out small illustrations to stick around the text to create a border.
- In the film ***How to inspire young poets – performing***, Michael encourages teachers to provide lots of opportunity for children to possess language by performing. You could make accessible a range of poems from which the children can select and prepare a performance for a class Poetry Show.
- The children can begin to select poems that they think will work well when lifted from page to stage, discussing opportunities to breathe life into memorable words and phrases and sharing their reasoning and ideas with each other. Some suggestions through which you could model these kind of discussions and engage in performance reading might be: ***The Draught*** (p.49), ***Take the Things into Your Hands*** (pp.65-68) or [The Seagulls](#) (p.82 and performed on Poetryline)
- The children will soon pick up the patterns of sound in the poetic language and enjoy moving their bodies to the rhythm of the poems and express a steady beat or create sound effects through body percussion. Provide tuned and percussion instruments so that the children can explore performing alongside the poem read aloud, creating sounds, movement and gestures resonant of the phonemes in the words.

Reading aloud, and looking at language

Poetryline film and Poem: [Helping children to possess language](#) and [The Jellyfish](#) (p.70)

Suggested poems: *The Lift* (p.60), *The Jellyfish* (p.70), *The Corner of the Sheet* (pp.96-97), *Cosmo Caff* (pp.140-144)

- Build in regular opportunities for the children to hear poetry read aloud, lifting not only the meaning but also the enjoyment in the spoken sounds off the page and revel in the language play. When reading aloud, bring alive the rhythm and the meaning for the children.
- Engage the children in responding to the poetry:
 - *Tell me...was there anything you liked about this poem? Why?*
 - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked...? Why?*
 - *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
 - *Were there any words or phrases that you liked the sound of? Why is that?*
 - *Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed in the words...the rhythm or rhyme?*
- Re-read and revisit the poems with the children and give them plenty of opportunity to share the poems with each other.
- As children join in or talk about words or phrases that they like the sound of, ask them to consider how the words actually *feel* as they mouth them, such as the word *sklewshy* in *The Corner of the Sheet* (pp.96-97) or *budda budda budda* in *Cosmo Caff* (pp.140-144).
- Nonsense words might be chosen by poets for a range of reasons, one being to develop pleasure in saying them in poetry and hearing the way they sound in relation to other chosen words. Taking pleasure in the feel and sound of real and imagined words enables all children to access poetry and engenders in children an enjoyment of language that will stay with them in all their literary endeavours. Children can talk about how, for instance, nonsense words can be chosen for pure pleasure, can convey meaning through association with known words and language structures, and poetic devices can be used to make words memorable. There is ample opportunity for the children to perform the poems and revisit them in a range of ways, allowing them to experience poetry as ‘*memorable speech*’ (W.H. Auden).

Reading aloud and looking at language – word collections

‘It’s full of noises. Noises are very hard to spell. When you read it, perhaps you can make up the noises you think will best match my spelling.

In a way, for people reading poetry, poems are like that: thinking up the sounds to match what’s been written. That’s the way poems come alive.’ Michael Rosen, Michael Rosen’s Big Book of Bad Things

Suggested poems: *The Balloon* (pp.46-48), *What’s in Your Bag?* (pp.61-63),

- Providing children with opportunities to explore rhyme and analogy will enable them to develop analytic methods of contextualising phonics and therefore increase their accuracy in decoding and spelling within the complexities of the English language. Once the poems have been heard and read for enjoyment, they can help support children to develop an appreciation of the spelling patterns in words by introducing them to ‘onset and rime’, i.e. the

comparable spelling patterns visible in printed words from the first vowel onwards, e.g. *bad/sad, stays/days, night/light, dropping/topping, budging/nudging* in the poem, **The Balloon** (pp.46-48). The children could listen to this or other poems read aloud that demonstrate a rhyming pattern, identifying the rhyming words and then tuning in to the way in which they are represented in print. It is interesting for the children to explore and analyse the rhyming couplets; those that have the same rime (as above) and those that rhyme and yet have a different spelling pattern, e.g. *before/floor/soar, slow/go, lie/spy*. It is also interesting for the children to find the half rhymes like *down* and *ground* and look at how assonance is used by a range of poets, including Michael Rosen.

- You could show Michael Rosen performing his poem, **Down Behind the Dustbin**, in which he pauses to invite the audience to participate and join in with the last rhyming word with hilarious results:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eL6VB56RxPM>
- Provide regular opportunity to play around with rhyming couplets, asking the children to invent increasingly silly rhymes.
- You could extend this session by reading aloud **What Is a Window** (pp.31-33) in which Michael explores spelling patterns. Have the children respond to this poem and what the poet is trying to say about words and their origins. This is a good opportunity to stimulate an exploration of words, their etymology and morphology. Ask the children to ask questions about words they find interesting in their journals. Have them create collections, discuss and sort words according to their chosen criteria.
- Children can explore onomatopoeia for themselves and decide how they might spell sounds, thinking about why Michael considers them hard to spell. *Is there a correct spelling for any given sound? Why? Why not?*

Reading aloud, visualising and artwork and shared reading

Suggested Poem and film on Poetryline: [The Seagulls](#) (p.82)

- Read aloud the poem without showing the printed page and ask the children to draw what they see in their mind's eye. Allow time for the children to work on the detail and energy in their artwork as you re-read it as many times as they need, building their understanding as they tune in to the description of the seagulls and their behaviour. Chalk pastels are a supportive medium for the children to use given the non-permanent nature of the marks they can make on the page, allowing opportunity to layer ideas.
- Ask children to annotate the drawing with descriptive words and phrases that spring to mind as they draw or any that they hear in the poem that they particularly enjoy or find memorable.
- Have children display their work and conduct a gallery walk in which they can respond to each other's artwork and interpretations orally or on post-its.
- Shared read an enlarged version of the poem and ask the children to pick out words and phrases that they think best describes the seagulls and helped them visualise most vividly their setting, appearance or behaviour.

- To further support the children in accessing the vocabulary and language in the poem, and enable the children to lift the words off the page, you could engage them in a performance reading. Demonstrate how to text mark an enlarged copy with ideas for how key parts could be read and performed, attending to and sharing ideas around vocal expression, dynamics, choral or individual parts, actions and the use of sound effects.
- Allow time and space for small groups to negotiate, rehearse and perform their reading asking the audience to give feedback on effective aspects of the performance readings and allowing further time to refine performances.
- Children could take a clean copy of the poem and illustrate it for the class poetry journal.

Reading aloud and looking at language – visualising and artwork

Poetryline film (for teacher reference): [Poetry as a Carrier of Culture](#)

Suggested poem: *They Said; I Say* (pp.113-114)

- Read the poem to the children without showing them the printed poem or the accompanying illustration in the book. Ask them to close their eyes and picture the poem in their minds as you read it aloud.
- Elicit the children’s responses to the poem:
 - *What happens in the poem? What is the story?*
 - *Are there any words or phrases that you like? Why is that?*
 - *Is there anything special about this poem?*
 - *Does it remind you of anything?*
- Provide the children with a range of art materials and large scale paper upon which the children can draw anything vivid that they see in their mind’s eye as you re-read aloud. Read aloud as many times as they need so that they can add detail and descriptive annotations, even lift expressions directly from the poem.
- Have everyone pin up their artwork and conduct a gallery walk in which the children can make comments orally and on post-its, comparing and discussing similarities and differences in their own ideas with others, observing which expressions have been most widely illustrated.
- Read the poem aloud again, asking the children to listen out for the commonly illustrated expressions they identified in the gallery walk. Write these out on the flip chart, e.g. *‘Take the bagels out of your socks.’* Or *‘There is a green hill far away without a city wall.’* Or *‘great Scott! You’re for the high jump!’* Elicit from the children why they think these expressions are easily visualised and whether they have heard them before? Do they remind them of anything they have heard in stories or real life? Look at Joe Berger’s illustration and ask them to guess which expression it matches. How does this support our understanding of the idiom’s meaning; the purpose behind Michael’s mother using it. *Why has she asked about the whereabouts of her hat when leaving the house? Why does Michael say it years later to his young daughter?*
- Explore *‘There is a green hill far away without a city wall.’* and where the children think this line originates. You may need to dedicate some time to this line and in providing learning opportunities out of this session for the children to engage more deeply in religious and

cultural studies and develop a greater appreciation for people's religious beliefs and practices.

- Play them the hymn by William Horsley being performed by Kings College, Cambridge:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0ybUpuLn8M>
- Allow the children time to respond to the music and the words which could be revisited in print through shared reading. Talk about the Christian message in the hymn and why songs such as this might be an important part of worship for people of religion. Discuss the children's interpretations of the line so memorable to Michael from his school days and what William Horsley was trying to convey.
- Ask children to share idioms and expressions that are used by the children's family members and indeed more broadly. This would be an ideal opportunity to engage parents and grandparents in family learning: thinking about expressions that they use that have been passed down from generation to generation, that may have personal or cultural significance and provide families with a sense of shared identity.
- As the class collect and share their family expressions, they will begin to explore any that have shared meaning or that are common to a number of them. They can explore the meanings and purpose behind these and other metaphorical expressions and engage in wider reading around idioms and proverbs. If you have children for whom English is an additional language, this poem provides the perfect platform from which to explore explicitly formulaic phrases, idioms, proverbs and any other use of language that is significant to the culture and society in which the children identify and live.
- Create a handmade book in which to house the expressions significant to and shared by the children, their families and communities. The children may wish to make simple origami books in which to collect those pertinent to their own families; an artefact that could be treasured for generations to come.

Drawing the learning together

- To draw together all the work done in this unit, hold a discussion about the collection as a whole.
 - *What are your most memorable poems? Why?*
 - *What have you learnt about poetry that you didn't know before?*
 - *Would you like to read more poetry after reading **Michael Rosen's Big Book of Bad Things**? Why? Why not?*
- If you were to write a letter to the poet, what would you say about the collection? What questions would you ask him?
- You might like to find out more about Michael Rosen's other work, even invite him in to visit the children.

Part 3: Space on the Page – Advice for Composing Poetry

'Keep Writing and keep reading'

Poetryline film: [How to become a poet.](#)

- "If you feel like writing and you like writing...the two best things to do is to start writing and to start reading...The moment you start putting things down you are actually writing with the words and phrases and sentences and things that you've read; you might be changing them round. So the more you've read, the more interesting ways of writing that you'll come up with." Michael Rosen
- Ensure that children have dedicated time to explore, browse and self-select from a well-stocked, inviting and accessible reading environment. Encourage an ethos of peer recommendation and evaluation and know books that enthuse children and encourage avid reading. Ensure that the children are able to see themselves in the texts they read as well as providing a window into a world they have not yet experienced for themselves.
- Demonstrate being a reader yourself as well as making links with bookshops and libraries that can further children's engagement in books.
- Provide a rich reading programme which includes reading aloud and sustained independent reading time, as well as encouraging social and collaborative aspects of reading when sharing books with peers for both recreation and information.

Ingredients for poems

Poetryline film: [How to become a poet.](#)

- "Scribble down something that you think sounds interesting and keep it, perhaps in your notebook." Michael Rosen
- Explain that so far the children have been reading, responding to and performing poetry and now they are going to compose it. But first Michael Rosen is going to share some tips as to how to go about it.
- Watch the film and discuss with the children how they might collect these poetic snippets.
- Ask if they have any examples such as things they hear people saying or lines from adverts or a film.
- Provide writing tools and a range of paper in the reading area for the children to scribble down words, phrases or sentences that they find interesting or affecting in any way. Develop an ethos in which children keep personal, creative journals in which they can collect ideas from their own experiences, from popular culture and from books.
- You might suggest that they collect these examples in the back of their poetry journals. Provide regular and meaningful opportunities for the children to share their collections and poetry journals with the class. Model keeping a creative journal as a teacher in which you could draw, scribble and write anything that inspires you or that peaks interest, even taking on a scrapbook feel to include artefacts or photographs of what you have read or seen in books or in the environment.
- Children might be supported to keep a digital journal or blog that are collections of snippets

from their reading that can be used to inspire writing poetry, either recorded in print, in audio or visual format.

You can find further guidance in creating a positive reading and writing culture by downloading the free **CLPE Reading and Writing Scales** on our website: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/aboutus/news/have-you-downloaded-free-clpe-reading-and-writing-scales>

‘First construct a poem orally.’

Poetryline film: [First construct a poem orally](#)

- Watch the film and use Michael’s suggestions to support an oral poetry session whereby you take a subject, linked to topic or the children’s interests.
- Start by finding a chorus for half the class to repeat quietly and create a bed that forms the rhythm foundation upon which the poem can be layered.
- The children can create rhythmic actions, bringing the poem alive for themselves and an audience.

‘Changing your mind.’

Poetryline film: [I wish I didn’t have Chicken Pox](#) by Aniq Hussain (read by Michael Rosen)

- In this film, Michael Rosen reads aloud ‘ I wish I didn’t have Chicken Pox’ by a Southwark school child, Aniq Hussain, to illustrate the idea that you can start with one opinion but by the end of the poem you can demonstrate that you have changed your mind.

I wish I didn’t have Chicken Pox

I wish I had Chicken Pox.

That totally rocks.

You don’t have to go to school.

That’s totally cool.

You can lay in bed or watch TV

Or have a smoothie.

I wish I had Chicken Pox.

I’ve got Chicken Pox!

Wee hee!

I don’t have to go to school.

Woo hoo!

I’ve got Chicken Pox.

Now it’s itchy,

Now its scratchy,

Now it’s red all over.

I wish I didn’t have Chicken Pox.

by **Aniqa Hussain** (from 'Young Voices', A Poetry Anthology by Southwark school children)

- Read the title and ask the children to offer initial ideas around why she might change her mind about catching chicken pox. Have any of the children had chicken pox? How did it feel? Why would you want chicken pox in the first place? What would be good about having chicken pox? Scribe the children's ideas in the class journal.
- Play the film and ask the children to compare Aniqa's views with their initial responses.
- Create a chart to record the pros and cons of catching chicken pox and play the film again, using the arguments cited in the poem and the children's own ideas.
- Refer back to the children's collection of idioms and proverbs and talk about the expression, '*Be careful what you wish for.*' How could this saying relate to Aniqa's poem? Ask the children to reflect on what they have ever wished for but then changed their minds when faced with the reality. What might they be careful what they wish for? An example could be growing older. Take care to support the children's wellbeing during these discussions as they may draw on more serious changes in their lives.
- Create a list of ideas in the class journal then take one to show how it can be expanded upon with its own Pros and Cons chart.
- Use the chart to shared write a changing your mind kind of poem, using the structure in Aniqa's poem to demonstrate a yearning then celebration until grim realisation leads to a change of mind. Explicitly model the thinking behind the writing process and demonstrate how the children's ideas can be used and refined effectively in shaping the poem. The poem doesn't have to rhyme like Aniqa's but the children may enjoy the rhyming couplet pattern.
- Read the poem aloud continuously during the drafting process so that the children get a sense of the reader experience and can make adjustments accordingly, e.g. *How does the shift in rhythm or word choice impact on meaning for the reader?*
- Take the premise of changing your mind as a starting point and ask the children to work in small groups to reflect on and record the pros and cons of a chosen idea.
- From this, groups can draft a poem, redrafting and finally publishing their poem with illustration, perhaps in a bound class anthology like that in Southwark. They can perform their poems to other groups and spend time reading and revisiting the published versions in the reading area.

'Start with something that hasn't happened.'

Poetryline film: [How I write poems – starting with something that has never happened.](#)

- Ask the children to look around the classroom and chose an inanimate object, for example the carpet. What kind of a conversation might they have with it? What would the carpet say if asked how it feels? For example: *I'm fed up with being jumped on with muddy shoes and yesterday someone spilled orange juice on me.*
- Ask the class to note down these ideas in their personal poetry journals. They could start with drawing the object and adding speech bubbles.
- Take one example and, as a class, share writing a poem using the imagined speech as stimulus,

explicitly modelling the drafting and editing process and reading aloud or performing for enjoyment.

- Children can go on to collaborate to draft a poem along the same lines, sharing and using their ideas as starting points.
- You could have the children create a poetry show featuring performances of their composed poems and publish the written or printed poems in a bound class anthology, complete with illustrations.

‘Start with a daydream or memory.’

Poetryline film: [How I write poems – starting with a daydream or memory](#)

- Remind the class of the film: How I write poems – playing about with words.
- Discuss what is meant by the word daydream, then watch the film: How I write poems – starting with a daydream. Ask the children to close their eyes for a few minutes and think of a memory.
- Invite the children to sketch their own daydream in their individual poetry journals. Some children might like to create a storymap of the narrative that unfolds in their daydream.
- Have the children share their memories with a partner, inviting them to ask questions of each other to create a more detailed picture of the setting, the mood or the people involved in the memory. Exercise sensitivity when exploring children’s memories.
- Invite somebody to share their memory or share your own. Ask the children to close their eyes, imagine the daydream is a bubble and, as they listen, imagine going into the middle of the bubble, the memory.
- Discuss with the children where they think the middle is and how they would describe it. Imagine being there like it is happening right now, in the present. You could invite the children to create a Freeze-Frame of the moment they have in mind which might support their understanding of being immersed at the heart of the scene.
- Remind them it could be as simple as *‘I share my bedroom with my brother.’* Emphasise the fact that ‘share’ is in the present tense as Michael went straight back into the middle of his memory, as if he were a child again.
- Partners can support each other to identify the middle of the ‘bubble’ through drama, drawing and talk then start with a line that describe that moment.
- Support the children through shared writing with constructing and drafting a narrative around the memory then organising it on the page so that it reads aloud the way they intended.
- The children may find it beneficial if you revisited and read aloud a number of poems in the collection that draw on a memory, such as: ***The Alley*** (pp.104-105), ***Chazze Bupke*** (p.130), ***The Hole in the Wall*** (p.165)

Play with and possess the English language

Poetryline film and Poem: [Helping children to possess language](#) (for teacher guidance)

- In the film, Michael talks about how young children are less inhibited to play with language but how enabling it is for all children to continue to be playful.
- You could use his example of creating a collection of poems that are written from the point of view of objects as a starting point to stimulate ideas, perhaps *'The Song of the _____'* as Michael has with *The Song of the Nose*.
- Children could generate ideas around a drawing or photograph of an object in their journals and collaborate to create a similar poem.
- You could draw on this and other Michael Rosen books and collections to see how he plays with language to suit to meaning and sound he wishes to create. Model in shared writing how to adopt a similar approaches. Support them in identifying and playing with poetic devices, such as: alliteration, assonance, simile and metaphor. Further guidance can be found on Poetryline.

'A description.'

Poetryline film and poem: [Jellyfish \(p.70\)](#)

- Watch Michael Rosen perform 'The Jellyfish' on Poetryline (<http://www.poetryline.org.uk/poems/jellyfish-58>) then share reading the printed poem. Discuss the way in which he has described its appearance and movement underwater, compared to being beached, picking out words and phrases such as *'dances'* and *'waves its frilly underwear'*; writing these around the image of the pink jellyfish from the book. Discuss the use of poetic devices such as metaphor and simile to create powerful images in our minds.
- Tell the children that we are going to write our own poetry about the pink jellyfish in the book, adding to Michael Rosen's description of their underwater dance.
- Watch footage of jellyfish (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJUuotjE3u8>), eliciting descriptive words and phrases that come to mind:
 - *What do they look like?*
 - *How do they move?*
 - *They remind Michael Rosen of polythene bags or that they could be waving frilly underwear. What do they remind you of?*
- As they watch again, ask the children to use coloured chalk or watercolour paints to express the movement of jellyfish floating and dancing in the sea.
- Either play the footage again or a piece of appropriate music, this time providing pairs with sheer fabric that they can use to choreograph a single jellyfish dance. This would be most effective rehearsed in a large space. Each pair could perform their dance with several other pairs, the rest of the class enjoying the layered effect of several jellyfish moving simultaneously. This could be filmed and music later composed and recorded by the children.
- Children watch other groups carefully, and evaluate and compare performances, commenting on particularly successful elements in the performances as well as considering new ideas. Elicit further descriptive words and phrases, scribing around the image of the pink jellyfish.

- Ask the children to consider a word or phrase they could use to describe the jellyfish underwater and to write it on a strip of paper. In small groups, put the strips together to form a poem, rearranging and refining as it is composed and re-read; encouraging the children to listen out for the way the lines sound and redrafting in the light of their responses.
- Rehearse and recite the poems for the class, perhaps including an element of expressive movement in the group performance.
- The poems could be edited, illustrated and published neatly in handmade books or together in a class anthology.
- This session could be adapted to work with any of the other underwater sea creatures the Beast encounters:
 - Turtles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nC-r3ylepk>
 - Octopus: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CINSh3YEUw>
 - Giant Clam: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mO44qj7evA4>
 - Whale: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8xdz92lj60>
- The children could make a class anthology of underwater creature poetry to be displayed and enjoyed in the reading area.

Composing poetry

- Invite the children to look at the notes in their personal poetry journals and chose a topic they would like to write about.
- Model this process with the whole class, referring to ideas in the class poetry journal and the children's journals. For examples you could take: things people say and set these out on the page as a poem. As you scribe, read and re-read to hear how the poem sounds, discuss the impact and sequence of the lines, and move them around accordingly, adding or removing words, thereby demonstrating the poetry drafting process.
- Would you like to share some of your poems with other visitors to **Poetryline**?

Adlestrop

Yes, I remember Adlestrop --
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop -- only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

Edward Thomas

Autumn Fires

In the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flowers,
The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

Robert Louis Stevenson

The Listeners

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grass
Of the forest's ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;

"Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:--
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Walter de la Mare

When You Are Old

WHEN you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look

Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;
How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim Soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;
And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

William Butler Yeats