

On the Move by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Quentin Blake

Walker 9781406393705

Michael Rosen and Sir Quentin Blake join forces for a landmark new collection, focusing on migration and displacement. Michael's poems are divided into four sections: in the first section, he draws on his childhood as part of a first-generation Polish family living in London; in the second, on his perception of World War II as a young boy; in the third, on his "missing" relatives and the Holocaust; and in the fourth and final, on global experiences of migration. By turns charming, shocking and heartbreaking, this is an anthology with a story to tell and a powerful point to make: You can only do something now.

This collection was shortlisted for the 2021 CLPE Poetry Award.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence.

- To explore and understand the importance of poetry as a genre
- To know how to listen and respond to a wide range of poems from an anthology
- To interpret poems for performance
- To gain and maintain the interest of the listener through effective performance of poems
- To recognise how a poet uses poetry as a voice to express their own feelings and views
- To explore how poetry is presented on the page to enhance our understanding
- To explore how a poet selects, crafts and shapes language to convey meaning
- To draft, compose and write poems based on personal interests, experiences and emotions using language and form with intent for effect on the reader

This teaching sequence is designed for classes from Year 5 to Year 8.

The collection does not shy away from challenging themes and subject matter. Teachers are advised to read the entire text before introducing it to pupils in order to decide the suitability of poems and how best to mediate the content with their own classes.

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is designed to be delivered over 15 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.

This sequence provides the opportunity to reflect critically upon and respond to the ways in which language is used to express, convey, represent, symbolise and signify pertinent points, themes and messages. Reader response and group discussion prior to personal reflection on poems explored form an integral part of a number of the sessions detailed in this sequence.

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Pupils will have the opportunity to read poetry, listen to poems being read, offer personal responses to the poems, to prepare them for performance and to write their own. The whole sequence builds towards the chance for the class to write and perform their own poems on a subject of interest to them.

The pupils will have the opportunity to use the knowledge they have gained about poetic form, devices and structure throughout the sequence to decide how to present their poem on the page as well as consider how these could be performed to an audience. The poems can be published in a class anthology to be shared with the school community in a variety of ways.

Teaching Approaches	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watching a poet perform ▪ Reading Aloud ▪ Book Talk ▪ Looking at Language ▪ Visualisation ▪ Re-reading and Revisiting ▪ Performance Reading ▪ Learning about writing from published poets ▪ Free writing of poetry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poetry Journal with ideas and inspirations for writing ▪ Identification of poetic language and devices ▪ Performances of the poetry in the collection ▪ Evaluation of performances ▪ Own poems related to themes introduced in the collection

Exploring poetic forms and devices:

This collection of free verse and narrative poems gives an opportunity to explore the following poetic devices:

- Rhythm
- Rhyme
- Assonance
- Alliteration
- Enjambment
- Repetition
- Refrain
- Opposition

Cross Curricular Links:

History

- The book and sequence offer the opportunity to conduct a study of the Holocaust and World War II. It can also be extended to look at how racist and nationalistic ideas have affected ordinary people in the past and in modern times.

- There is an extensive bibliography of texts and websites at the back of the book – ‘*How to help & Further Reading*’ (pages 135-137) which we would recommend teachers refer to for supporting resources.
- A CLPE list of books focusing on identity, belonging, conflict, migrant and refugee experiences can be downloaded here:
<https://clpe.org.uk/system/files/Refugee%20Booklist%20updated.pdf>

Computing

- If children choose to create recordings of the poems that they write at the end of the sequence, they might need access to video editing software to add effects, voiceover, to layer in additional imagery or text or to add music.
- Word-processing software might be used by students to publish their finished poems, as well as access to digital platforms.

Music

- Music played a significant role in the lives of those affected by the Holocaust, you may want to investigate this depending on your children’s maturity. A useful resource for teacher subject knowledge support can be found here: <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-music/articles/music-and-the-holocaust>
- Children could create a class collection of songs that are special or significant to their own families. They might research the history and culture behind these songs.

PSHE, Developing Global and Political Consciousness

- Some of the themes and events explored may distress or disturb the children and they will need time to discuss and make sense not only of these events but on themes of genocide more broadly. Planning for additional PSHE sessions outside of the sequence would support this.
- Through exploration of this book and this era in history, children will be helped to develop their sense of social justice and moral responsibility and begin to understand that their own choices and behaviour can affect local, national or global issues.
- Using the UNICEF Toolkit - <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/refugee-crisis-europe/> as a starting point, you might choose to initiate working towards becoming a ‘Rights Respecting’ School.
- You could explore democracy in greater depth with visits to local council buildings and inviting in your local MP.

Links to other texts and resources:

Books by Michael Rosen

- *The Missing: The True Story of My Family in World War II* (Walker)
- *Michael Rosen’s Big Book of Bad Things* (Puffin)
- *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) illustrated by Korky Paul (Frances Lincoln)
- *Bananas in My Ears* illustrated by Quentin Blake (Walker)
- *Quick, Let's Get out of Here* illustrated by Quentin Blake (Puffin)

Books that focus on similar themes

- *The House by the Lake: The Story of a Home and a Hundred Years of History*, Thomas Harding, illustrated by Britta Teckentrup (Walker Studio)
- *The Journey*, Francesca Sanna (Flying Eye) (Power of Reading Teaching Sequence available)
- *The Day War Came*, Nicola Davies, illustrated by Rebecca Cobb (Walker)
- *Windrush Child*, Benjamin Zephaniah (Scholastic)
- *Mohinder's War*, Bali Rai (Bloomsbury)
- *Now or Never. A Dunkirk Story*, Bali Rai (Scholastic)
- *Ruby in the Ruins*, Shirley Hughes (Walker)
- *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Shirley Hughes (Red Fox)
- *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, John Boyne (Definitions)
- *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*, John Boyne (Corgi)
- *Rose Blanche*, Roberto Innocenti (Red Fox)
- *Carrie's War*, Nina Bawden (Puffin)
- *Blitzcat*, Robert Westall (Macmillan)
- *Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry (HarperCollins)
- *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, Judith Kerr (HarperCollins)
- *Hero on a Bicycle*, Shirley Hughes (Walker)
- *Whistling in the Dark*, Shirley Hughes (Walker)
- *Billy's Blitz*, Barbara Mitchelhill (Andersen Press)
- *The Emergency Zoo*, Miriam Halaahmy (Alma Books)
- *Rose in the Blitz*, Rebecca Stevens (Chicken House)
- *Time Train to the Blitz*, Sophie Mckenzie (Usborne)

Selected books previously shortlisted for CLiPPA:

- *Overheard in a Tower Block*, Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Kate Milner (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Everything All at Once*, Steven Camden aka PolarBear (Macmillan)
- *Rhythm and Poetry*, Karl Nova (Caboodle Books)
- *Booked*, Kwame Alexander (Andersen Press)

Weblinks:

- You can find out more about Michael Rosen on the following websites:
- <https://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/>
- <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets?search=michael>
- Access performances by a wide variety of poets on the CLPE website:
<https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/videos>

Teaching Sessions:

Section 1: Poetry as a Cultural Carrier – ‘Poetry is the Migrant: it travels’

Session 1: Introducing the collection

- Before beginning this session, create a display of and make accessible some of Michael Rosen’s many works of poetry and fiction as well as his non-fiction title *The Missing*.
- Explain to the children that you are going to be sharing a collection of poems by Michael Rosen but before that, you’d like to invite the children to share what they already know about him and his work. Perhaps the children remember picture books from their earlier childhood like *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* or *Little Rabbit Foo Foo*. They may even be able to recall parts of them by heart having become so familiar with them or having engaged in active performance readings. They might know poems like *Chocolate Cake* or seen Michael performing *Down Behind the Dustbin* and encouraging audience participation. They may be familiar with his website or YouTube channel on which he performs many of his poems.
- Draw on the book display to find poems mentioned, taking the opportunity to read aloud a few that connect to any already mentioned, such as poems of Michael’s childhood involving his family or friends, humorous poems, poems that tell stories, poems that express feelings, poems that express identity, poems that involve language play, or even poems about writing and poetry itself. Can the children begin to summarise the kinds of poems and topics that he writes about and how his poetry makes them feel? Are there any that they are drawn to in particular and what do they enjoy about them?
- Discuss with the children what they think they could say about Michael Rosen based on the works they have discussed and shared together. *What do his poems in particular reveal about him and his life?* They could create a Role on the Wall on which to record their ideas about him in which a large outline is drawn of him and on the outside they note any facts about his life such as ‘He is a writer.’ ‘He was a Children’s Laureate.’ And on the inside, what they infer about his inner characteristics, thoughts or personality, such as ‘funny’.
- Now introduce his book, *On the Move*, illustrated by Quentin Blake. Read aloud the title and discuss and make a note of what the children think Migration means based on their own experience, knowledge of the world and the clues in this cover title and illustration.
- Give the children opportunity to share their initial responses to the illustration spread as a whole, across both front and back cover, before looking at the details of the image or anything that catches their attention, such as the landscape, potential time of day, body position, spacing, directionality and gaze of the figures, what they carry, etc. Offer prompts to promote discussion and thinking, such as: *How does this make you feel? What or who does it make you think of? How do you think these people feel? What do you think they might be saying? Where and what do you think they are moving from? Where might they be going? For how long do you think they have been moving? How far do you think they are travelling? What kind of person would make this kind of journey?* Turn to the first endpaper illustration in which we see more people moving in to the book. *Do the children think these are the same people or different? What makes them think this?*
- Turn to page 10 and read aloud the ‘Note from the Author’, introducing the collection, Migrant Poetry. Pause initially to reflect on the three-line poem repeating ‘Poetry is...’. *What*

does this mean to the children? What do you think Michael Rosen means by this? What kinds of poems might we anticipate in this book on the theme of migration?

- Now read aloud until *'the story of your relatives' migration to where you live now* and give the children time to share their reflections so far. *What have we learned about what migration means now and in the past, here and elsewhere?* Help the children summarise the key message that Michael Rosen is trying to convey, reflecting on why he invites us to look at our own family history for stories of migration.
- Read on until *'I was determined to remember them'* on page 12. Invite the children's initial responses to what they have heard. *How does it make them feel? What does it tell us about Michael Rosen and his family?* Gather the children's existing knowledge of the Holocaust and World War II and how it relates to what they have heard.
- Read on to the end of the introduction on page 13. Explore some of the ideas and information he shares such as the way he views poetry. *Does anything about this appeal to the children?* Invite the children to share what poetry means to them. *Do they – or would they – like to use writing to ask questions without giving too-neat answers? Would they like to leave things hanging in the air when they write?*
- Look at the way in which he has structured the book into the four sections, making reference to the Contents pages, inviting the children to share what interests them about each of these sections. Turn to the 'Acknowledgements' at the back of the book in which he shares where the poems in this collection were first published. You might find some in the collections you have on display. *Why do you think Michael decided to create a special collection for them? What is the difference between reading them separately amongst poems about different things and reading them together in a themed collection on this subject?*
- Now discuss Michael's response to Quentin Blake's illustrations and how *'They're 'moving' in a different sort of way'*. *Does the way he describes them resonate with you? Were you moved by the illustrations you have seen so far?* Take the time now to flick through the book and find all the illustration spreads, inviting the children's responses and what they notice about them, individually and as a collection. You might draw attention to the fact that the directionality of migration changes between many of the spreads and discuss the effect of this on our understanding of migration across the world and over time. *What difference does it make to us if there are many figures or just a few? How does the time of day illustrated affect us as the reader? What is the impact of having no single poem illustrated but keeping the illustrations separate – why do you think they might have made this choice?*
- Finally look at the final couple of paragraphs and consider his belief that *'Home is where you find it'*. *Do the children agree with this assertion?* Depending on the views expressed, you may need to mediate the discussion carefully at this stage. End the discussion by reflecting on Michael's point that *'some people [...] seem to think that 'normal people would never find themselves at the wrong place at the wrong time, needing to find a safe place to be'*. Play the children the Save the Children film, *Still the Most Shocking Minute a Day*, in which a London girl is shown to experience the same plight as that suffered by a child in war-torn Syria, intended to increase empathy for the refugee experience in Syria at the time:
<https://youtu.be/nKDgFCojiT8> Discuss why the film is considered so powerful and the message it is trying to convey. Invite the children to share ideas about how they think refugees and

migrants are perceived by people and governments and how we might show understanding, fairness and respect for people's experiences.

- Allow the children time to reflect on what they have seen and heard so far. Is this a poetry collection they expected from Michael Rosen? What do you think his motivation for writing it was? What do you think he hopes to achieve by publishing this collection? Why do you think it is important for him personally? You could give copies of this introduction to the children and give them time to revisit and refer to it throughout their discussions. You or they could note their ideas around a copy of the front cover. You might also update the Role on the Wall with anything new you have found out in a different colour pen as you can throughout the exploration of the book.
- Return to Michael's ideas about poetry on page 12 and why it is important for him. Present the children with their own Poetry Journal in which they can explore and express ideas, observations, personal feelings and stories. Explain that the journal is intended to give them space to talk about the things that are personal to them and to be able to shape poetry as a way of thinking.
- Invite them to begin by sketching or writing anything that they have heard or seen that has been particularly memorable for them. It might be Michael's concept of poetry, or something with which they feel a strong connection in their own lives; an image they have been left with in their mind; a vivid phrase or simply an emotion that they are feeling. Model this yourself, alongside the children, in your own Poetry Journal.
- Return to the assertion that '*migration isn't just something that happens to "other people"*' on page 12 and Michael's invitation to look into our own family history. Ask the children to talk to their families to share stories with them about their own family history. You could write to families in advance, explaining the task and introducing them to the poetry collection being studied to help prepare for these conversations. *How have relatives moved about in the past? How has this led to where you live now?* Children can sketch, write, keep copies of photographs or other family memorabilia in their Poetry Journals to help them recall family stories that might trigger an idea for a poem later on.

Session 2: Poems that paint vivid pictures

- Read aloud the title from the poem 'Where Do We Come From?' (pages 18-19). Ask the children to share what this question brings to mind. *Have they ever been asked where they are from? How did it make them feel? What kind of things do they say?*
- Now read aloud the title again and the whole poem. You can also watch [Michael Rosen perform this poem](#). Give Invite the children to share their initial responses and make connections with what they have already heard and discussed. *What did the poem make them think about? What do they like or dislike about it? Did they feel the same throughout the poem or did their feelings change at different points? How or why do you think this is?*
- Ask the children to share if there was anything that stood out for them; any moment that had a strong impact on them as readers; any images that they were left with in their minds after listening to this poem. Explore what makes these particularly memorable for them; perhaps a connection to personal experience, a vivid description, an unusual or surprising scene that captured their imagination, something that evoked a strong emotion or perhaps changed the mood of the poem. You might draw attention to the way in which the poem sounds and any

change in rhythm, such as the impact of shorter lines like *'We had a candle'* or *'but there were none'* or *'for being Jews'*. You can make connections with the impact of the line breaks on the page and how they affect our reading and response, adding emphasis and meaning to the words. You could draw the children's attention to the fact that sometimes one line runs over to the next without any terminal punctuation, as in the latter two lines and *'to a never-ending cough'* and *'from camps in Poland...'*. This is known as enjambment. *Why do you think the poet uses this device here? What difference does it make? What affect does it have on us? How does it strengthen the imagery he creates for us?* Michael Rosen calls these kinds of devices the 'secret strings' of poetry (*What is Poetry?* Walker 2016). He talks about the importance of discovering how the poet might have used assonance, alliteration, imagery, rhythm and sound.

- *Do they have any questions or does anything puzzle them?* The children may want to ask about specific place names mentioned and be shown where they are, where Michael grew up, or to clarify language or concepts which they may be unfamiliar with, such as 'Harvest Festival', 'Mosley's Men' or 'Yiddish'. They may have wider questions relating to some of the memories or stories he shares. Re-read and revisit the poem and discuss these with the children to help them gain an overall sense of where – and whom - Michael Rosen believes he comes from.
- Provide the children with drawing materials and explain that we are going to build a picture of Michael Rosen from the pictures he has painted with his poem. Invite them to draw what they see in their mind's eye as you read and re-read the poem aloud several times. Encourage them to consider what their viewpoint is – *where they are placed as the reader and how they can convey that in their drawings. What details are they told and in which order and how does that affect their compositions? What gaps are left to be filled in by their imaginations?* The children may want to use different pieces of paper for each different story or strong image evoked or they may want to combine them on one piece; leave the choice to them.
- Pin the children's artwork around the room and conduct a gallery walk, encouraging the children to comment on their own and each other's ideas and the imagery created by the poem. Give the children time with the poem for themselves, looking at how they were affected by the poem and the poet's intent in the choices he has made in the language, structure and layout of the poem and the visual imagery he has created.
- Come back together to discuss the children's responses, supporting them to link the poet's choices with the meaning conveyed; the heart of the poem. The children might have noticed and commented on:
 - The continuous sentences from the start of the poem 'I come from...' to line 14, 'turned it inside out', interrupted by dialogue in which Michael asks his dad for detail, then continuing from 'My mother...' on line 18 all the way to line 32 – perhaps suggesting a stream of consciousness or evoking the movement of his relatives but also of the lives being lived and stories told.
 - The way in which many of the stories end with a line break or enjambment that adds an important detail or conclusion but often leaves us asking questions – What effect does leaving gaps in the stories have on us? What questions and narratives do we start to build in our own minds?

- The way in which movement and momentum is created in individual lines or phrases with the use of rhythm, syllabification, alliteration and punctuation – ‘living, walking, just-talking toddler...but I was here, made from all this, all this, it goes on, it hasn’t stopped...’
 - The repetition in the latter line and that of the final two lines ‘And now I can say it too. And now I can say it too’ – emphasising that all that went before is part of him and perhaps the importance of this is what makes him human.
- Consider some of the stories that Michael considered important to share and the inferences we can make about his and his parents’ childhoods as well as how he feels about his Jewish heritage. *What is Michael trying to show you about where he comes from? What does it confirm about what we already know or think we know about him? What have we found out about him that we didn’t know before?* Update the Role on the Wall with further information and inferences.
 - In the poem Michael asks his dad to clarify who turned the lights out in his bedroom shared with his brother Sam. The children may well have questions of their own that they want to find out about too. Note these down to be revisited as you continue to read the poetry collection. You could explore this further alongside this sequence of work, reading Michael Rosen’s book *The Missing* or other enlightening poetry collections like *Michael Rosen’s Big Book of Bad Things* or watching him talk about much of what is included in *On the Move* in his film about *The Missing* for Historyworks: <https://vimeo.com/504195479>
 - Come back to the title ‘Where Do We Come From?’. *What impact does this title have? How would this have changed if he had titled the poem, ‘Where Do I Come From?’ instead?* The children may refer to his family members forming the collective ‘we’ but equally it could refer to all of us. Refer back to the Note from the Author in which he expresses the ‘*hope [that] this book shows how we can reach out to each other, and share what makes us human*’.
 - Invite the children to write ‘Where Do We Come From?’ in their Poetry Journals and begin to jot down people, places, memories, languages, cultures or times in history that they feel are special to them and their identity. Engage in this period of ideation alongside the children. *How did we get to where we are now? Where did our relatives live a few generations back? Where are our relatives now? What stories do our parents or grandparents tell that we could share? What were their childhoods like? What is gone and what still remains in our family that makes it ours, maybe songs, language, food, attitude to life?* This may lead to some further conversations the children may wish to have with their families in finding answers to their questions and in sharing their ideas about where they came from as a family.
 - To inspire the children to make a record of and keep safe their family stories, you could read aloud the poem, ‘The Absentees’ on page 66, discussing the children’s response to this, giving them copies to read on the page as well as aloud.
 - Encourage the children to continue this family research throughout the coming weeks so that they might be able to create their own poems about where they come from. They might begin to shape lines from ideas that stand out for them. Model how they might do this with your own ideas, crafting small but vivid stories and drawing on the devices used in ‘Where Do We Come From’ to create specific effects for their reader.
 - Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at other poems that paint vivid stories of people, places and moments in time that make a life,

with words, such as: 'My Father Says' (pages 26-27), 'My friend Ken' (page 32), 'Don't Tell Your Mother' (pages 38-39), 'Leosia' (pages 96-99) and 'My Dad' (page 119) and 'Bubbe and Zeyde' (pages 33-35). In reading and responding to the last poem, ensure you turn the page to reveal the illustration spread of two figures. Encourage the children to speculate on who these figures are, where this is and what they are doing.

Session 3: Bringing language alive through poetry and performance

- Read aloud 'Two Languages' to the children, taking note of the direction at the footer for pronouncing "chup" and emphasising the sing-song rhythm and cadence in the final stanzas when Michael sings it all back to his mum. You could watch a performance of Michael reading the poem himself on Michael's poet page on CLPE's website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/michael-rosen> or his own which will support you with pronouncing the Yiddish words.
- Gather the children's initial responses. *What do they like about the poem? Does it remind them of anything they know in real life in stories? Do they have any questions? What does this say about Michael's family life as much as it says about his mum's ability to speak two languages? Even if you don't speak more than one language, how has he made this relatable for children and families?*
- Show the poem on the page and read it aloud a few times, encouraging the children to chime in at any point until they feel fairly confident in singing back at least the last stanza. *How does the structure of the poem support them to do this?*
- Give small groups of children a copy of the poem so that they might prepare a performance reading of it. Encourage them to play around with, rehearse and refine different ideas that get to the heart of the poem and emphasise its rhythm and repetition, such as performing sections in chorus or as individuals, using actions and facial expressions to enhance meaning.
- Once they are satisfied and have polished their performance, have each group share it with the class, commenting on each other's performances; what they have in common and why that might be, what is unique about them, what was particularly effective. Before 11th February 2022, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Afterwards, invite the children to reflect on language that their own family uses in different ways. If the children are monolingual, this could be family nicknames or particular words or phrases used in given situations. Perhaps a relative uses a language the children don't speak themselves when conversing with someone specific or even unconsciously to think, when counting for example. Perhaps they use words from a dialect used in a different part of the country where they are from. *What do these words or phrases sound like? What do they feel like to vocalise?* They could start to make a collection of these in their Poetry Journals, along with some notes on who uses them and when in particular they are used.
- You might give the children copies of the following poems from the collections so that they can prepare performance readings of them, using what they have learned from this one: 'The Songs My Father Sings' (pages 22-23), 'A Word' (pages 24-25). You can [watch Michael Rosen perform 'The Songs My Father Sings'](#)
- Give time for the children to work up their chosen poem for performance, encouraging them to get to the heart of the poem, what makes it unique, through reader response first to

support their performance ideas and ensure they convey meaning as the poet intends. Have the children explore how the poet has affected this kind of reader response with the ‘secret strings’ he used, such as a specific rhyming pattern, syllabic rhythm and consonant echoes in ‘The Songs My Father Sings’. *Would it be best performed individually, in pairs or as a group? How will you pace the performance?* You may find this [advice for a successful performance](#) useful to share. They will need to read and re-read their given lines over and over to find the lyrical flow and rhythm needed for the performance. Encouraging the children to move around rhythmically while they practise will help them to find and secure the rhythm and use the repetition to help them remember the words. *Will you use your voice(s) to help share a clear picture of this moment? Will you use any movement or action? Will you emphasise the rhythm in the words? How will you most effectively communicate meaning and your emotional connection to the poem?* Give time for the pupils to build up their poems, text marking with performance notes and ideas, practising, editing and polishing to a finished performance.

- After the children have had sufficient time to rehearse, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Then, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding and interpretation of the poem. *What did each interpretation add to their understanding of the poem? Do they feel they could connect with the poems shared? What could they relate to in the subject matter, the characters presented, the language used? Were there any common themes or ideas expressed across the range of poem performed?*
- Before 11th February 2022, this could be filmed and submitted for the [CLIPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Reflect on how it felt to be performing with a group, often in chorus. *Why do the children think songs are important part of what makes us human? How do they connect us with where we come from?*
- With your support, the children could go on to make a collection of songs from their own childhood and families that they might want to share with the group or create a poem about. *Who sings or has sung these songs in their family? How do they live on in current family life? Which new songs are meaningful to the children and why?*

Session 4: Making impossible connections with poetry

- Read aloud ‘Ships’ (pages 30-31) to the children. Invite their initial responses. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What connections do they make in their own lives or those of other people? Does anything puzzle them? Do they have any questions?*
- Share the poem on the page and read it aloud again, allowing time to consider how the poet has managed to evoke some of these responses. You might draw attention to:
 - The imagery and connections being created by and between ‘a ship in a bottle’ and ‘a ship in a photo’ and ‘Ships they talk and talk about’. When Michael Rosen talks about this poem he talks of using one object to take you to another real experience.
 - The viewpoint from whom we are reading the poem and how he is feeling. How do we know – what is the impact of the series of questions, not only about the ship in the bottle on the mantelpiece but of his relatives that did or didn’t sail on the ships? What

impression does it give us? To whom is he addressing his questions? What is the impact of beginning or ending a stanza with a question; what about the question on its own – what is the effect of this?

- The repetition of *'Ships they talk and talk about'* in every stanza throughout the poem. *Why has he chosen to do this?*
- The rhythm and shape of the poem on the page – how does it add to the experiences being conveyed in the poem?
- Now give the children copies of *'Newcomers'* (pages 28-29) to read. Invite them to read it aloud first as well as reading it on the page and to share their initial impressions with each other before drawing on some of the 'secret strings' discussed in *'Ships'* to support their deeper response. Consider how Michael felt about that jacket and what in the poem tells you this.
- The children may want to discuss questions like whether they think he continued to wear this *'hulky bulky jacket'* from when it arrived *'one day in spring'* through summer when it might have been too hot; or if he continued wearing it anyway. *What evidence in the poem is there to support their argument? How do you think Michael feels about having questions still unanswered about the man he would have called "Grandad"? Why do you think this jacket was so important to him?*
- Children could choose to prepare either of these poems for performance, drawing on their experience of this and their responses to what makes their poem unique.
- Think about the questions Michael has about his grandad in *'Ships'* and those he has in *'Newcomers'*, like *'Why did he stay behind?'* You might watch with the children a clip from the historyworks produced film on *The Missing* in which Michael Rosen explains a little more about it: <https://vimeo.com/504195479> [14:42 - 16:17]. *How does he feel connected to his grandad through this jacket? What do you think he feels and thinks about his grandad as he wore it and wore it and wore it? what questions would he have for him?* Children could create their own poem, centring on this jacket and the connection it creates between Michael and the grandad he never met.
- Following this, invite the children to reflect on objects that are significant to their family, their heritage and history, such as an ornament, a photograph or piece of clothing in the two poems studied. Children could annotate drawings or photographs of them in their Poetry Journals with memories they evoke, stories they know about them. They might even think of real experiences that they connect to, as the model ship was connected to the real ship journeys taken by Michael Rosen's families.
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at *'My Friends' Eyes'* (pages 40-41) in which Michael is anxiously aware of how family objects are perceived by others and *'My Friend Robert'* (pages 42-43) in which Mr and Mrs Liebenthal are pleased at how their special family food is received by Michael. This could provoke interesting discussion about othering as well as a celebration of what makes us all unique and what we have in common in regards to the kinds of things that matter to families and make them human.

Section 2: The War – ‘Poetry is the witness: it listens’

Session 5: Poems that help you step inside a memory

- Turn to the title page of the book’s next section ‘The War’ and invite the children’s to share what kinds of poems they will be reading and what they will be about in particular. Establish what the children already know about World War II and return to the ‘Note from the Author’ to reflect on the impact of this war on Michael Rosen’s family.
- Now read aloud the poem ‘The War’ (pages 48-50). *Is this what they expected of a poem entitled ‘The War’? What do the children learn about the war from Michael’s mum? How is it different from history lessons they have had about World War II or any other kind of war? What is the impact of hearing it from the perspective of an ordinary person?*
- Show the poem on the page and invite the children to read it for themselves, looking for the devices the poet has used to achieve these affective responses. The children might notice:
 - The repetition of the two-line stanza ‘*in the evening, after we’ve eaten, Mum tells us about the war*’ before a story and then left hanging at the end of the poem – why has the poet chosen to do this? *What does it tell us about family life? How is this similar or different to our own?* You could tell the children that Michael was born in 1946, exactly nine months after the end of the war as alluded to in the first two lines of ‘Where Do We Come From’ so stories of the war would probably be quite common then. *What stories in living memory are told in their family?*
 - The rhythm and pace of each of his mum’s stories which add to our understanding of the atmosphere around her or other people she talks of; *how does it create tension in the moment or evoke specific emotional responses from us as readers. How does the near-rhyming patterns and assonance (says/came, stopped/drop, cover/gutter) used help to serve the pace of the storytelling?*
 - The opposition created by ordinary people’s personae, often visceral, experiences alongside the unfolding catastrophic or world-stage events, such as the impending explosion and people lying in a gutter; the horrific scenes at the Siege of Leningrad and scenes of families crowding round radios in sitting rooms.
 - The repetition of the notion that the gutter was the safest option when under fire. *What might this tell us about how she really felt about having to lie down in the gutter? How does the incredulous response by her son add to this understanding that this was a significant part of the memory for her in this near-death event?*
 - The effect of the sudden shift from moving jugs and plates to describe the jubilant winning of the war to the next stanza in which she stops and reflects sombrely on the millions and millions of people that died. *How do the line breaks and the way in which this stanza is structured support us to share in her reflection?*
- The children could take key scenes and re-enact them to fully appreciate the perspective of ordinary people like Michael Rosen’s mum and those who experienced the Siege of Leningrad or how people listened to radios all over the world waiting for news that the war was ended.
- They could follow this by preparing for a performance of the poem, drawing on their experience and working in small groups to bring to life the family scene in which mum tells the stories as well as the stories themselves.
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at the poems ‘Skeletons’ (page 51), ‘Bratwurst’ (pages 53-54), ‘My Friend Mart’ (pages 55-56),

'France' (pages 57-58), 'Utah Beach' (page 59) and the illustration on page 60. Support the children to consider the impact these poems have on them and how the poet has achieved this. *From whose viewpoint are they hearing about this aspect of the war? What difference does it make? What effect has it had on them and how does this make us feel? What do they learn about the war that they didn't know or hadn't considered before? How do each of these poems compare to the poem 'The War' and to each other?* Encourage children to talk about which had a particular impact on them and why. Children might want to create artwork or performances of these poems in response to reading them.

- Talk to the children about recent world-stage events in their own living memory that they could create a poem about to share what it was like for ordinary people, such as the global pandemic which started in 2020. Make sure you are aware of and sensitive to the children's personal experiences of any of the events discussed before embarking on a group discussion. Children may only want to share experiences with their trusted peers or by expressing it in their Poetry Journal or they may not want to share it at all.
- The children could collate a timeline of historical events in their parents' living memory and ask them to share their memories around them, noting these stories in their journals. They could then use the stories to craft a poem in which they bring these stories to life using what they have learned from Michael Rosen's poem, 'The War'. *How will they set the scene for the stories to be told? How will they create atmosphere and tension for the reader? How will they pace different parts of the poem to allow for stories to unfold and periods of reflection?*

Session 6: Poetry can give voice to the unsayable

- Turn to the third section in the book 'The Migrants in Me' and ask the children to anticipate what or who they are going to hear about in this part of the collection. Again, you might want to make links with Michael Rosen's book *The Missing*, perhaps introducing the children to his quest to find his missing relatives. You could watch the introduction he gives to *The Missing* in this short video made for Walker Books: <https://youtu.be/eI4KatU49L0>
- In order for the children to appreciate the power of the poems in this section of the book, they will need to have a basic understanding of the Holocaust and how the lives of millions of ordinary people were lost. BBC Newsround has a useful page in which you and the children can explore a number of historical sources at an age-appropriate level: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/16690175> Nevertheless, learning about the Holocaust can be highly distressing. It is vitally important to be aware of and sensitive to the needs of the children if they need breaks or to talk it through. Make sure you are aware of any children who have experienced similar situations themselves or have relatives that were involved in the Holocaust or any other kind of genocide. You may also want to read stories such as those listed at the start of the sequence to give the children a sense of the time and place they will visit in the poems to come.
- Begin by giving the children copies of the first four poems for them to read which will give them a sense of Michael Rosen's journey to find out about his missing relatives and how he felt about the gaps as well as the scraps of information he gleaned on occasion; in particular, how it seemed impossible for surviving relatives to speak of their lost ones or to share stories as we experienced in the last session. Children could talk about why they think this would be, drawing on their own knowledge of the Holocaust.

- Give children ample time to explore the poems and respond to them in ways already experienced, sharing their initial responses before engaging in deeper reader response or analysis. Have the children come together to share what they have found out and how the poems affected them as readers.
- Now read aloud the poem ‘Dear Oscar and Rachel’. Give the children time to absorb the contents of the poem and share their initial responses. *How does this poem leave you feeling? What happened to Oscar and Rachel? Is this the ending you expected for them? Why? Why not? What makes this story particularly heartbreaking?*
- Give the children time to read the poem for themselves, exploring the way in which the story – this pivotal moment in Oscar and Rachel’s lives – has been told. *What are the big shapes of the narrative, can the children summarise the main events? How does the poet build the story? What is the effect of the whole poem being in the form of a letter? Why write a letter that will never be read? What effect does Michael’s reflection at the end have on you? What sentiment is he expressing?*
- Once the children have an appreciation for the overall shape and structure of the poem, invite them to look at and text mark other poetic choices that have been made, such as the words used that convey mood such as desperation, hope or despair; repetition, line breaks, enjambment, the tone and voice employed.
- Now read aloud the next poem ‘Dear Oscar’, allowing the children to absorb the meaning and share their responses as before. *How is this similar to the previous letter? How does it differ? What is the effect of the poet imagining what Oscar was thinking or feeling during the journey to Auschwitz? How would it be different if the journey were reported or observed? From where does it place us as the reader? How does it strengthen our connection to the real human experience?*
- Give the children copies either of ‘Compassion’ (pages 78-79) or ‘Martin Rozen, My Father’s Uncle’ (pages 80-81) to read and discuss together. Choosing either Oscar Handschuh or Martin Rozen, ask the children to compose a letter poem addressed to him. *What will they want to say? Will it be a letter that tells their story like ‘Dear Oscar and Rachel’ or one that imagines his thoughts and feelings as the events described in their poems unfolded?* Encourage the children to jot down and play around with initial ideas in their Poetry Journal, making annotations to the original poems if helpful. Show them how they can take an idea and shape it in to a line of the poem, crafting their poem from these ideas organically and refining as they write. Encourage them to read the lines aloud and think about how they would like them to sound and look on the page, where the line breaks and punctuation would need to go to create this effect. Once they have drafted their poems, model how to refine language, structure and ideas, or use poetic devices to achieve specific effects, until they have a polished poem.
- Publish the children’s letter poems alongside illustrations that they could create in the style of Quentin Blake using pen and ink or monochrome watercolours.
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at the poems ‘Whose Fault’ (pages 82-84), ‘Late at Night’ (pages 85-86) and ‘Yours Hopefully’ (page 89) as well as exploring the illustration spread on pages 90-91.

Session 7: Stepping into someone else’s shoes through poetry

- Read aloud the poem 'Cousin Michael' (pages 90-95). You can also watch [Michael Rosen perform this poem](#). Give the children space and time to absorb what they have heard and reflect on what it makes them feel and think about. *What does this poem make them think about? How does it make them feel? What makes them feel this way? Are there any parts of the poem that are particularly memorable for them? Why is this? What connections do you make with the other poems in the collection or anything else you know? Do you have any questions?*
- Give the children copies of the poem to read and discuss together, also allowing them time for quiet personal response and to look at the poem in more depth.
- Ask the children to reflect on how the poet has helped us empathise with Michael's experience and the feelings he is left holding. *What do they notice about the structure of the poem and the impact this has, starting by setting the scene with being at a childhood wedding where his aunt explained the story of his namesake uncle? From whose viewpoint are we reading the poem? What impact does the shift in viewpoint have? Why has the poet chosen to imagine the experience as if it happened to him rather than continue with his aunt's narrative?*
- Ask the children to comment on how else has the poet strengthened our understanding of Michael's experience of having to leave his parents during the war and knowing that they probably died in the camps. They might notice or you could draw attention to the poet's language choices or use of poetic devices, such as:
 - The tense change from past tense at the wedding to the continuous when imagining being Cousin Michael – *what effect does this have?*
 - The multiple use of repetition such as the refrain 'go, don't stay' or 'never knowing' or 'we hug and we kiss' – *why is this important in this particular poem? How does it set the tone, create the mood? What emotions does it evoke? How does it relate to imagining what it must be like to be cousin Michael? What is the poet trying to convey?*
- Now read aloud 'Arriving' (pages 100-101) and invite the children to share their immediate responses to what they have heard. *What does it make them think about? How does it make them feel? What connections do they make to this poem? Do they have any questions?*
- Share the poem on the page and read it aloud again, asking the children to comment on anything in the poem that stands out for them and why. *Maybe it is a vivid word or memorable line or maybe the content or structure of a particular stanza affects them?*
- Draw attention to how the poem sounds, its rhythmic patterns, word repetitions, mirrored language. *What is the effect of the first four lines - and then others throughout the poem - being complete sentences? Why has the poet chosen to do this rather than use enjambment as he has when relating memories or stories? What is the impact? How does it relate to this moment in time; for the world and for Michael?* Encourage children to re-read and read it aloud so they can experience the syllabic beat in the emphatic sentences and the directions they are being given by line punctuation and line breaks. *what purpose does the line 'What now?' – the only question – serve in the poem for us as readers?*
- Explore the role of the line breaks in the poem in giving us time to reflect on what we have heard or to anticipate before moving on to the next stanza. *Are there any other gaps that the poet has left for us in the poem? What do we know about cousin Michael now and what is left*

unsaid here? What happened between him arriving ‘one day’ and ‘some time after the guns had stopped’? Where was he and what was he doing then?

- Tell the children that you want them to imagine being cousin Michael standing on Sylvia’s doorstep in this moment in time. They could work as pairs in role as the two relatives to support their understanding. Invite them to freeze in position as Sylvia opens the door to find Michael there and vocalise what they think either was thinking or feeling in that moment. Support the children with gentle prompts should they need support articulating this, drawing them back to what they have learned about his experience. Ask the children to note their own and other’s ideas in their Poetry Journal.
- Read Aloud the final poem of this section, ‘Today: One Day’ (pages 102-103). *How does this make the children feel? How does it relate to cousin Michael and others like him? What do the children notice about the poem and the way it works as a whole piece? What is the same and what is different about each part of the poem? Why has the poet chosen to use the same word ‘died’ in relation to each of the things but a range of verbs for the second part? What might this show?* Michael Rosen talks about how this poem is an example of playing with ‘impossible ideas’ because shoes can really laugh, for example. The children could write different lines on behalf of Michael or other survivors of World War II or any other war. *What kinds of impossible ideas could they choose to convey both despair and hope?* Children could publish their poem in a class anthology.
- Look back on poems like ‘Leosia’ (pages 96-99) in which we can see how impossible it might have been for survivors to talk about or relive the events of World War II and the Holocaust and suggest that the children might want to help tell cousin Michael’s story. Invite them to use the ideas in their journals, as well as revisiting the two poems in which he features, to help him share his story with Sylvie. They might choose to do this in the form of a letter to her, a poem or even create an imagined dialogue in role as cousin Michael.
- Display these as part of an exhibition that you could create as a class so that stories like this one are never forgotten.

Session 8: Poetry to remember

- Pause to reflect on what the children have heard and experienced in reading the poems so far about the war, its impact on Michael Rosen’s family and others like them. *Is there anything that stands out in your mind; an image, a fact, an event, a person?*
- Now read the poem ‘Counting’ (pages 62-63) from the section ‘The War’ inviting the children’s initial responses. *What does it make them think about? How does it make them feel? What has the poet done to achieve this? What do you think the poet is feeling as he writes this? What is his central message? What do you think he wants you to feel or think about after you have read this poem?*
- Give the children a copy of the poem for them to explore the patterns on the page as well as how it sounds when they re-read it for themselves. *How is this different from many of the other poems that we have read in the collection? What is its tone?*
- Allow ample time for the children to work up this poem for performance, encouraging them to get to the heart of the poem, what makes it unique, through reader response first to support their performance ideas and ensure they convey meaning as the poet intends. You may find this [advice for a successful performance](#) useful to share. They will need to read and re-read

their given lines over and over to find the lyrical flow and rhythm needed for the performance. Encouraging the children to move around rhythmically while they practise will help them to find and secure the rhythm and use the repetition to help them remember the words. *How will you use your voice(s) to help convey the energy of this poem? How will you use any movement or action? What will you emphasise? How will you work with the rhythmic patterning? How will you most effectively communicate meaning and your emotional connection to the poem?* Give time for the pupils to build up their poems, text marking with performance notes and ideas, practising, editing and polishing to a finished performance.

- After the children have had sufficient time to rehearse, allow space for them to perform their poems for the rest of the class. Then, ask the children to feed back on the interpretations of different groups, evaluating the effectiveness of different techniques and styles and what these brought to their understanding and interpretation of the poem. *What did each interpretation add to their understanding of the poem? Do they feel they could connect with the poem? Were there any common themes or ideas expressed across the range of performances?*
- Before 11th February 2022, these performances could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Afterwards reflect on what this poem – and those they have explored on World War II – makes them want to say or do. What should we learn from this war in which millions lost their lives and not just on the battlefields? *What promise could we make to the people that lost their lives and families to this war?* You could share with the children the peace treaty that was created and other promises that were made by governments following the end of the war.
- Ask the children to create a simple promise to share with the world. Encourage the children to draft and refine their ideas in their journals, exploring their effectiveness and drawing on the suggestions of a response partner to craft their writing, displaying their final composition alongside their learning around this collection.

Section 3: Poetry for Social Change – ‘Poetry is the survivor – it lasts’

Session 9: Expressing empathy through poetry

- Turn to the final section of the collection, ‘On the Move Again’ (page 105) and remind the children what Michael Rosen said in his ‘Note from the Author’ earlier in the book.
- Read aloud ‘Never Again’ (pages 106-107) and invite the children’s initial responses. *What does it make you think about? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way? Does it remind you of other poems in the collection, in structure or in theme? Do you have any questions about it?*
- Explore how the children feel to be hearing about people who are ‘on the move’ again. Throughout the poems there has often been reference to ‘they’ or ‘we’ without necessarily revealing who ‘they’ or ‘we’ is. It is implied. *Who might the ‘We’ be in this poem that says, “Never again.”? What are they saying never again to? Make connections with the children’s own promises and those they have learned about that others make.*

- Share the poem on the page and read it aloud again, giving the children time to revisit and re-read the poem for themselves and explore the ‘secret strings’ in the poem and why the poet has chosen to use them. The children may note and consider the impact of the patterned language and repeated refrains, the rhythm and its disruption, syllabic repetition line after line in parts, the position of the line breaks, enjambment in some parts and one line per complete sentence in others.
- Now show the children the illustration spread of the people on the boat (pages 110-111). Invite the children’s immediate responses to this image. *How does it make them feel? What is happening here? Does it remind them of anything they have seen in stories or in real life? How is this similar to or different from the other illustrations in the book and the people in them? Where have these people come from? Where are they going and why? What might happen when they get there?*
- You might want to make copies of the illustration spreads so that the children can see them together or flick through them so they can view them in succession at this stage. Children will note the different mode of being ‘on the move’ but may notice parallels in directionality shown in the image, towards or against the page turn; the discomfort of the people; the significance of the challenging setting to their experience, in this case the choppy sea not rough terrain and hills; the colour palette and atmosphere being created.
- Ask the children to consider what they think any one of these people might be thinking or feeling in this moment. *How might they feel? What or who might they be thinking of?* Reflect on the poems in the collection in which Michael Rosen imagined how some of his relatives were feeling when faced with dangerous or hopeless situations. Give the children time to record their thinking in thought-bubble templates and pin them around a copy of the illustration.
- Now give the children copies of the poems, ‘Don’t Drown’ (page 108) and ‘Water’ (page 109) and ‘On the Move Again’ (pages 130-131). Allow time for the children to read them aloud as well as looking at them on the page, and share their responses with each other, drawing on their experience of this throughout the collection. *How are they similar and how are they different? How do they connect to the illustration we have just explored? What do you think made Michael Rosen want to write a poem about these things?*
- Ask them to choose any of the four poems explored in this session to prepare as a performance reading. Support them to think very carefully about how they will plan their performance so that it doesn’t belittle the experience of the people on the boat and others in their situation. *What kind of decisions do they need to make to ensure they remain true to the poet’s intent? What do they hope to gain from their performances, individually and as a whole?*
- Give the children ample time and support to develop and refine their performances until they are ready to share it with the wider group. Decide as a class on the order you would like to perform the poems; as the poet has curated them in the collection or in a different order?
- Invite the children to evaluate their own and other’s performances and refine them, potentially to film and submit to the CLiPPA shadowing scheme 2021.
- The children may feel strongly that they want to write about the refugee experience as Michael Rosen has. You might take an illustration such as the ones on pages 120-121, pages 132-133 and pages 138-139 or it could be in response to reading one of the books

recommended in this sequence or watching the news. Then invite the children to respond to it as before, using their responses to help them shape ideas for the poem in their journal that they feel reflects their experience in this moment. They might begin with sketches, words and phrases and then choose one idea to shape into a line of the poem. Then they – and you writing alongside – can draft and refine their poem, drawing on their experience of this collection to support their writing choices. *What voice and viewpoint will they adopt in their poem – what effect will either have and which do they prefer to use here? How will they structure or shape their poem so it conveys the meaning they want? How do they want their reader to feel and how can this be achieved by using language or poetic devices to best effect?* Encourage the children to read their poems aloud regularly so they hear them as well as see them on the page, inviting response from a partner throughout.

- Once the poems are polished, they can publish them along with this and their own illustrations in a class anthology to be displayed and read with *On the Move*.
- Outside of the session, in reading aloud or group reading time, you may also wish to look at the poems ‘Homesickness’ (pages 112-116), ‘Gone’ (page 117), ‘Overheard in a Classroom’ (page 118) and ‘My Dad’ (page 119) as well as exploring the illustration spread on pages 121-122.

Session 10: Poetry can question

- Reflect on the last session and how the children feel about the fact that people are forced to flee their homes still today. Think together about what they think the people who make a journey like this need most when they find safety somewhere else. How would they need to be treated? What kinds of things might we do to make them feel safe now? Scribe the children’s ideas on the board.
- Now read aloud ‘Where?’ (page 122). You can also watch [Michael Rosen perform this poem](#). Invite the children’s initial responses. *What does it make you think about? How does it make you feel? What connections do you make with the other poems in the collection or anything else you know in stories or real life? Do you have any questions? Does anything puzzle you? What does Michael Rosen think about this person – how do you know? What would you like to ask or say to this person? Why?*
- Share two other poems from the collection, ‘My Friend Roger’ (page 44) and ‘The New School’ (page 45) and give the children ample time to read and respond to them themselves. *How do these poems make you feel? What connections do you make between them and and to the poem ‘Where?’ Are there any parts of any of these poems that had a particular effect on you as you read them or afterwards, on reflection?* Invite the children to read aloud their chosen stanza, line or even word and encourage them to talk about why they chose it. Take the opportunity to discuss anything that the children don’t feel they understand or want to discuss in more depth.
- Explain to the children that the poems ‘My Friend Roger’ and ‘The New School’ featured in the first part of the collection ‘Family and Friends’ in which Michael Rosen shares very personal experiences, in this case from his childhood. *Does this surprise you? Why? Why not?* Invite the children to read them again with this in mind. *Does this change anything for you? Does it make you feel differently?* This new knowledge might help explain some of the things children may have been less sure about. *Why, for example, the poet ended the poem, ‘The New School’ with*

the line 'Everyone said he was brilliant at history'. Explain to the children the anti-Semitic stereotype that the two boys were using to mock and bully the new child. Reflect with the children what they know about the Jewish experience of the Holocaust which was in living memory at the time this poem was set, during Michael's post-war childhood. *If this boy was brilliant at history and knew what they knew, why would he act like this? If the other boy was smiley, why did he not smile at everyone the same way?* You might compare this to the racist in 'Where' who talks of going to Spain without seeing the irony in this statement.

- Explore the themes of prejudice and racism common to each of the poems. You could show the children a timeline from the poems set in post-war London to the poem 'Where' set in contemporary London. How does it make the children feel to see the same kinds of racist views and behaviour being present so many years apart? *What makes people act like this? How do the children think they should behave towards other people? How would they want to be treated?*
- Invite the children to formulate what they would like to say to any of these people or others who hold these kind of views. They may want to begin to prepare an argument for why migrants and refugees deserve to be treated fairly and with respect. They may want to share their opinions about why all kinds of racism are wrong and why.
- You could explore the book *Who are Refugees and Migrants? What makes People Leave their Homes? And Other Big Questions* written by Michael Rosen and Annemarie Young (Wayland) as well as other texts and websites he lists in the 'Acknowledgements and How you Can Help' section of *On the Move*. You might spend some time researching and reading texts like *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps that Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics* by Tim Marshall (Elliott & Thompson) or *Black and British A Short Essential History* by David Olusoga (Macmillan) and stories from the *Voices* series, such as *Now or Never. A Dunkirk Story* by Bali Rai (Scholastic), with the children to build up their understanding of the contribution made by migrants to Britain.
- You might also read the poem 'English Literature' in which Michael Rosen draws attention to the multi-heritage nature of texts widely considered to be or held up as 'English'. This could generate discussions around the curriculum and whether the children feel it is reflective of and inclusive of their own realities and those of others and how this could improve.

Session 11: Using poetry to share a voice or opinion

As children grow with poetry, they learn that it can be a vehicle for communicating a message or opinion. Children may choose to write about issues and topics of personal interest or about bigger, wider world issues. Sharing examples of poems where a poet expresses an opinion or gives voice to a subject is a good way to explore how to do this effectively to engage a reader.

- Consider the research that the children are conducting to support their arguments and give them time to share what they are finding out.
- Now give the children copies of either 'The Migrants in Me' (pages 126-127) and 'Everyone Comes From Somewhere' (pages 128-129), providing time for them to read and respond to the poems individually and with their group; first their immediate responses then looking more closely at how the poet has created specific effects on them as readers. You can also [watch Michael Rosen perform 'The Migrants in Me'](#). Give

- Invite each group to share what their poem is about to the other, encouraging them to get to the heart of the poem, what makes it unique. They could draw on elements of each poem to help them discuss it and afterwards comment on the connection the poems share as well as those they share with other poems in the collection and the research and thinking the children are doing around the way we should treat migrants and refugees.
- Invite the children to prepare a performance of their poem, drawing on their experiences throughout the sequence in reaching their audience as they think the poet intended. Again, if this is before 11th February 2022, their polished performances could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Read the poem ‘Today’ again and tell the children that they can do something today that might make a difference. *Now that they have read and explored the poems in the collection more fully, what power do they think poetry has to be an agent of change? When you think about racism and prejudice, how does that make you feel? What words or phrases could you use to communicate your feeling and your point of view in a poem?*
- Invite the children to draw together everything they have learned from reading and responding to the poems in this collection, their research and their personal experiences to begin to craft their poem. Model in your own Poetry Journal how they can collect ideas from everything they have learned, feel and think together before choosing one as the central theme of their poem. From this show them how they might shape a line of a poem, gradually crafting and refining their poem. Encourage them to explore different viewpoints, language choices and poetic devices to help them shape their poem and to read it aloud to a response partner to help them refine and polish it. Once they are satisfied with it, they could prepare a performance reading of it, testing it out on a warm audience before publishing it in a class anthology or on a secure and appropriate digital platform, such as the school website.

Part 4 – Writing Poetry

Session 12: Reflecting on the Collection

- Revisit the poems that have been explored throughout the sequence. 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 be encouraged to read more poetry after studying this collection? Why? Why not?*
- Discuss the overarching theme of Migration that inspired *On the Move*. Do you think the poet will achieve what he hopes, to inspire others to help find fair and decent ways for migrants and refugees to be treated? Do you feel inspired to do something? Look at the way Michael Rosen has chosen to curate the poems into the four sections. Do they have a preference for any of the sections or any particular theme explored in any of the poems? Why might that be?
- Return to the Role on the Wall for the final time and discuss what the children have found out about Michael Rosen that they didn’t know before. They might want to re-read and revisit other poems they know well and see if knowing these things about him changes the way they now respond.
- Read aloud the last poem in the anthology: ‘Today’ (page 134). Allow the children to share their immediate responses; how they feel about this poem, their personal preferences,

connections they are making and anything that puzzles them. *What do the children think of this poem? What does it suggest or expect of us?*

- *Why do the children think this has been chosen as the closing poem? What do they want to do now?* With the children, take the opportunity to reflect quietly on the impact that the collection has had on them, what they have learned and how it might affect the way they see the world. Encourage the children to record their thoughts and feelings in any way they like in their Poetry Journals, through sketches or jotting down words and phrases.
- Ask the children to shape their reflections and responses in to a poem dedicated to Michael Rosen. It might be in the form of a letter like those written before. *What would they like to say to him? Is there anything they would like to ask? How do they want him to feel?*
- Give the children time to create their poems and work with a response partner to edit and polish it, reflecting on language choices and the overall effect of the poem on a reader. Encourage children to read their poems aloud and – when they are satisfied with their finished piece – publish it with illustration to form part of a class anthology alongside a copy of *On the Move*. You could even send Michael the poems with a covering note or letter thanking him for sharing this personal collection of poems with them, if not by post then by tagging him into a school Tweet.

Session 13: Ideation

- Start a discussion with the children about what they like or don't like about writing. What do they think is the hardest thing about being a writer?
- Often, when people talk to writers about their work, one of the most commonly asked questions is where they get their ideas from. Ask children to talk in pairs or small groups to list as many places as they can think of where a person can get ideas to help their writing.
- After a couple of minutes, get children to report back and create a class list. *Where can we get ideas from?* Children might mention: things that we see/notice as experienced in the last session, something heard, memories, other books or poems that we've read, a song that we heard, dreams, imagination, daydreaming, playing, films, family stories or events, opinions and arguments, etc.
- Visit the Poet Interviews section of the Poetryline website – there are videos available with a range of poets talking about how they go about writing their poetry, how they work on their poems, what inspires them as a poet and what advice they would give to aspiring poets. On the Poet Interviews page, you can filter interview videos to look at [poetry inspirations](#), [writing poetry](#) and [working on poems](#). Consider first what might inspire poetry. *After watching a few videos of poets talking about their inspirations, have we got any other ideas for where ideas or inspiration can come from?* Add to the class list.
- Give the children some time either to begin to write down ideas or to sit and think about what they might write later. Some children may choose to start by drawing, doodling or sketching ideas initially. Refer back to Quentin Blake's illustrations in the text. His paintings have been inspired by the words that the poet has written and the themes explored, but artwork can often inspire the words too. They might start by jotting down favourite words or phrases. *Will they write down things that their family says in a morning? Will they write down lists of words that they enjoy? Could they write down their craziest daydreams? Could they write down their earliest / silliest / scariest / happiest memories?*

- Remind the children that these journals are only for them – there’s not a particular amount of writing you expect them to do and you won’t be marking them.
- Remind them that they don’t have to start writing a poem straight away, they might just begin by collecting words, phrases, ideas and images that can be used later. However, if they have an idea that they want to start exploring immediately in a poetic form that is also fine.
- Keep notes and observations yourself during this time and model how you might come up with ideas for poems. Show the children how you as a writer come up with ideas, insights and poetic language inspired by experiences you have had, things around you or your own imagination.

Session 14: Writing Own Poems, Gaining a Response

It is important to develop children as reflective writers by giving ample opportunity throughout the writing process to talk about themselves as writers, enable them to voice their views, listen to others and develop new knowledge and understanding.

Children’s writing can be improved if they, a partner or their teacher reads it aloud at an early stage, giving it life and breath and helping the young poet see the patterns and tunes they have created. Just as an author would work with an editor, children should be given opportunities to help each other by reading their writing aloud and responding as readers. This allows them to support each other as they compose and structure their ideas. Writers can tell response partners what they are pleased with in their writing, particular devices or parts of the poem they may be struggling with and gaining a picture from the reader of how their writing impacts on them. Response partners should be encouraged to reflect on the impact of the poem on them as a reader. Children can then redraft parts of their work, based on these conversations.

- Demonstrate how you use your notes and ideas to create drafts of a poem, making additions, changes and improvements as you write.
- Read aloud your work to the children, giving time and space for them to respond to your ideas, and support them in having discussions to support you in reflecting on your work, making changes or additions and redrafting if necessary. The children may also be inspired by hearing advice from professional poets, e.g., Joseph Coelho: How do you work on your poems? — <https://vimeo.com/130341918>.
- Allow further time for children to select ideas and drafts of poems from their Poetry Journals or notebooks and to continue to work these up into poems.
- Once the children have an initial draft or drafts, allow them to read aloud their poetry to a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed.
- Give time for response partners to ask the writers questions, discuss parts they aren’t sure are working or make suggestions to improve the writing. For example, writers can tell response partners what they are pleased with in their writing, particular devices or parts of the poem they may be struggling with and gaining a picture from the reader of how their writing impacts on them.
- Response partners should be encouraged to reflect on the impact of the poem on them as a reader. Children can then redraft parts of their work, based on these conversations.

Session 15: Editing and Publishing Own Poems

At the final stage of the writing process, it is important that children are given time to support each other with transcription, proof reading, looking at spelling, punctuation and grammar and consider the quality of the writing as a whole, prior to publication.

- Give further time for children to redraft any parts of their poems that they discussed with their response partner in the previous session, or to work on their poems further if they need time to do this.
- When they have a poem that they have read aloud to a partner, discussed and explored changes so that they are happy to present to a wider audience, start to think about how that poem could be best presented. *How will it look on the page? What form will it take? How will you use line breaks, spacing on the page to enhance the meaning or emotions behind your poem? Will you hand write it? Will you publish using ICT? What script or font will you choose? Will you make any specific decisions about the way certain words look or are placed on the page? Will you illustrate the poem? If so, how will the words and illustration sit and work together?*
- Allow plenty of time and space for the children to make a final draft and then publish their work accordingly.
- When they are happy with the way their poems look on the page, think about how this could be lifted off the page and be performed to an audience. Give each child a photocopy of their finished poem and allow them to mark this up with performance ideas. *Will you perform on your own? Do you need others to support you? How will you use voice, body movements and facial expression to enhance the listener's engagement and understanding?*
- Ensure time is given to try out ideas and rehearse performances of children's own poems.
- Spend some time now reflecting on the poems that the children have written. What kinds of poems were your favourite to write? What did you find it easiest to write about?
- Following this, you might hold a poetry festival for children to do readings from their collections to parents or other classes in the school or display their work as part of an exhibition, including the published poems and accompanying illustrations. For the children performing at the event, ask them to consider what they learnt from listening to the poems being read aloud and performed by other poets as well as trying out ideas in their performances of the poems in this anthology that they will need to remember when reading their own poems.
- Display the children's own poems prominently in the library or a shared area so they can be read by a wider audience.
- Ensure you obtain each child's consent before publishing their work. This might lead on to wider explorations around the concept of copyright. You may wish to draw on the resources CLPE produced in partnership with the ALCS to explore this in more depth:
<https://clpe.org.uk/teaching-resources/ALCS-resources-on-copyright>.

