

Cosmic Disco Poems by Grace Nichols

Described as a, ‘sparkling galaxy of new poems’, this wonderful collection explores a range of themes vividly and beautifully expressed to create images and stir emotions that stay with the reader long after the book has been put down. This collection was shortlisted for the CLPE Poetry award in 2014.

Overall learning aims of this teaching sequence.

- To use art as a stimulus for writing
- To use poetry as a stimulus for art
- To explore how language and structural devices are used in poetry to create powerful responses.
- To explore ways in which we can use our voices, facial expressions and body language to perform poetry.

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

Overview of this teaching sequence

This teaching sequence is approximately 3 weeks long if spread out over 15 sessions and is divided into three parts focusing on different poems. The anthology supports teachers to engage children in enjoying different poems by exploring the vivid imagery and lyricism that flows through the pages and encouraging them to respond creatively. The themes and style of such poetry offer inspiration to young budding poets and serve as a model for the development of their own poetry writing.

National Curriculum objectives covered by this sequence

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading: (Word reading / Comprehension) ▪ Read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks. ▪ Identify and discuss themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing. ▪ Learn a wider range of poetry by heart. ▪ Prepare poems and plays to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing: (Transcription / Composition) ▪ Identify the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own. ▪ Select appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning. ▪ Evaluate and edit by assessing the effectiveness of their own and others’ writing. |
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draw inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence. ▪ Discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate and edit proposing changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to enhance effects and clarify meaning. ▪ Perform their own compositions, using appropriate intonation, volume, and movement so that meaning is clear.
<p>Speaking and Listening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate actively performance, discussion and debate; ▪ Use spoken language to develop understanding through imagining and exploring ideas in role play drama and dance; ▪ Select and use appropriate registers for effective communication. 	
<p>Cross Curricular Links:</p>	
<p>Art and Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through the inspiration of the poetry children will be encouraged to respond through art and producing, 'creative work that explores their ideas and records their experiences as stipulated by the aims of the National Curriculum. 	
<p>Teaching Approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reading aloud and rereading ▪ Writing in role ▪ Visualising ▪ Shared writing 	<p>Writing Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poems inspired by the collection ▪ Note taking

Teaching Sessions

PART 1 – Study of a long poem

Poem Focus: When Colours Spoke

Session 1

- Read poem and discuss what the colours mean to them
- Individually do a visualization where can they see that colour in life.

- Paint their image/s

Session 2

- Write a verse/ poem to accompany image modelled using the structure of poem e.g. example of orange.

Session 3

- Show the video clip in the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTvD6ldMDfI>
- Invite the children to discuss which images they liked most/ least and which they found most powerful and why?
- Scribe their responses.
- Read the poem up to the last stanza.
- Explain to the children that we don't know what choice the painter will make and so we need to consider other arguments.
- Divide them into groups and give each group a colour and using framework below ask them to brainstorm reasons why they think painter should choose their colour. Ask each group to present to the class their arguments as to why their colour should be chosen.

List things that are this colour?	What makes this colour special?	Why should this colour be chosen?

- Ask them to use this as basis to write their own poem, using inspiration of suggestions and their own ideas.
- Read the whole poem again this time including the end stanza.
- Ask them to consider the ending and whether they would end it differently.

Session 4

- Each child should be provided with an A3 sheet of cartridge paper and black wedge tipped felt tip pen.
- In preparation for this session you will need a selection of instruments. Explain that using the poem from the last session as the basis you are going to use sound, onomatopoeia and colour to inspire some artwork.

- Show them examples of the type of artwork from Kadinsky, Mondrian and Miro. Discuss how they used shape and colour and how you want to use the session to explore shape and colour in this way.
- Make a sound with an instrument and ask children to volunteer what word they would use to describe the sound. Ask the children to each draw a line or make a shape on their paper to represent the sound. If children hesitate or find this challenging model examples on flipchart paper.
- List every word that is used to describe each sound.
- Ask the children to look at their sheet and select 2 or 3 of their favourite shapes/lines and repeat these anywhere they wish to on their sheet.
- Explain to the children that you are going to go through the list of scribed onomatopoeiac words and use the instruments to repeat the sounds and this time you want them to paint the colour they feel represents the sound and paint this anywhere on their paper.

PART 2 – Talking about Features of Nature – description

Session 5 – Poem Focus: Winter Tress (p.54)

- Show range of interesting images of plants. Ask the children to consider if the plant could talk what might it tell us.
- Read the poem and discuss the following:
- What do the words, ‘gnarled hands’ mean? What part of the tree does it represent? (Provide image of gnarled hands and discuss similarities).
 - Why has the poet chosen to use this word to describe the trees?
 - Why does the poet believe the tree might be praying?
- Show range of images of human characteristics and movement, e.g. a crooked back, broken smile or milky eye.
- Ask them to think about words they would use to describe them and/or play emotive music and encourage them to walk about thinking about the shapes their body makes.
- Invite them to look at the images of plant and trees shown at the beginning of the session and select one to base their own poem on.
- Using the format below along with a selected image model writing a poem and then encourage the children to do the same with their image. Format:
 - Line 1 – Two words to describe human characteristic
 - Line 2 – Describe what he characteristic is doing, e.g. lying down, crying ...
 - Line 3 – Explain why it’s doing what is described in line three.
- Once drafted ask the children to write their poem onto the image.

Session 6 – Poem Focus: Hummingbird

- Watch David Attenborough clip of Hummingbirds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SF2dqIVSRBI> .
- Reflect on the language chosen to describe the bird.
- Perform descriptions through medium of movement
- Divide class into groups to share different movements and prepare poetry performance.
- Evaluate.

Session 7 – Poem Focus: Aurora Borealis (p.34)

- Ask the children to close their eyes and listen to your recital of the poem.
- Discuss what images the poem inspired in their minds. Scribe responses.
- Put the poem on the IWB and read it again.
- Discuss what further images came to mind. Scribe responses.
- Show footage of Northern lights: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izYiDDt6d8s>
- Discuss with the pupils' descriptions of what they observed. Scribe responses.
- Using black paper and coloured pastels or chalk invite the children to respond to the poem through art.

Session 8 – Poem Focus: Sky Artist (p.12)

- Ask the children to close their eyes and listen to your recital of the poem.
- Discuss what images the poem inspired in their minds. Scribe responses.
- Put the poem on the IWB and read it again.
- Discuss what further images came to mind. Scribe responses.
- Either show footage of clouds in sky or if the weather is appropriate take the children to the playground and encourage them to lie on their backs and watch the clouds float by.
- Discuss with the pupils' descriptions of what they observed. Scribe responses.
- Using blue sugar paper and white chalk invite the children to respond to the poem through art.

PART 3 – Personification, Class Anthology and Performance

Session 9 – Poem Focus: Leaf Man

- Show the children the following painting by the same name: <http://www.thefineartcompany.co.uk/limited-edition-prints/Lewes-Art-Gallery.jpg>.
- Using the 'Tell Me' Grid link invite children to contribute their thoughts on the painting.
- Read the poem aloud.

- Encourage the children to think about what leaves do, how they move, where they might go. Show footage of leaves.
- Encourage the children to write a line that describes their response to the footage, e.g. 'The rustling yellowy, amber carpet shuffled under foot.'
- Collate all of the statements drafted and as a group share these and agree how they should be arranged to form a class poem.

Session 10 and 11 – Poem Focus: Miss Spring/ Sir Autumn/ Lady Winters Rap

- Share all three poems
- Divide the class into six groups.
- Assign one poem to each group and encourage them to consider how ways in which they could perform the poem and give them time to rehearse.
- After sufficient rehearsal time invite the children to perform their poems to the class.

Session 12 – Poem Focus: The Romance of Sir October and Lady October

- Read the poem aloud.
- Discuss with the children how each character might represent themselves.
- Placing the poem on the IWB conduct an analysis with the children and text mark the poem using the contributions from the class. Encourage the children to discuss what we know about the two characters, how the language is used to describe the characters and which words tell us things about each character.
- Ask the children to reflect on how the characters might stand, move and how we can use our bodies and facial expressions to represent this.
- Arrange the children in pairs.
- Encourage each pair to adopt one of the roles and referring to the notes scribed and the class discussion rehearse how they would perform the poem.
- Allow time for children to perform their poems.
- In preparation for the next session prepare a power point showing images of different seasons, plants, animals and forces of nature or source a short video clip incorporating these to inspire their own poems.

Session 13-15

- Provide the children with the opportunity to write their own poems based on inspiration from the unit, focussing for example on colour, personification or seasons. Reference the work done and either the power point images or video clip.

- Use session 13 to provide children with the time to draft the poems.
- Use session 14 to provide children with the time to edit their poems.
- Use session 15 to provide children with the time to write the final version and illustrate it to be incorporated into the class anthology.