

## Poetry Pie by Roger McGough (Puffin)

Roger McGough's collection is an invitation to be excited about poetry and not be limited by the world: 'Let your imagination/Feed on the fantastic/Let it move like quicksilver/Stretch like elastic.' The poet plays with language, form and ideas – not just with poetry but with pineapples too – 'fearsome as a hand grenade'! As the title suggests, food is a subject often chewed upon throughout the collection whether it's the fate of a chip summed up in English and French, the difficulty of finding a rhyme for sausages or the delicious variety of ingredients that can be baked in a poetry pie.

This collection is shortlisted for the 2016 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 a single poet collection
- To understand that poems are written for different reasons
- To interpret poems for performance
- To gain and maintain the interest of the listener through effective performance of poems
- To be able to recognise different poetic forms, such as rhyming couplets, clerihews, riddles, concrete poems
- To recognise how a poet uses poetry as a voice to express their own feelings and views
- To draft, compose and write poems based on real and personal experiences using language with intent for effect on the reader

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 2, 3 or 4 class.

### 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. The teaching sequence is split into three sections. The first section looks at poems that Roger has written about poetry, the imagination and of being a poet. These sessions are designed to explore personal response and expression and to help children understand the different ways in which they can respond to poetry as well as understanding to capture ideas and viewpoint in poetry. The second section investigates poems in this collection which explore a range poetic forms and the sessions are designed to help children begin to develop their understanding of the different forms poetry can take and the effect these can have on the reader. The final section investigates Roger's poems where his

voice, views and opinions on matters that he is passionate about resonate with the reader and encourages children to use poetry as a vehicle to express their own feelings on matters that are meaningful to them. The sequence is designed so that the children's experience of this collection, and their understanding of one poet's voice and use of language, will support them to use similar techniques, poetic devices and wordplay in their own writing.

<p><b>Teaching Approaches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reading Aloud</li> <li>▪ Listening to the poet and responding</li> <li>▪ Visualising and drawing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poetry performance</li> <li>▪ Text marking</li> <li>▪ Drafting, redrafting and writing poetry in different poetic forms</li> </ul>
<p><b>Exploring Poetic Forms and Devices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poetic Forms Explored:</li> <li>▪ Clerihews</li> <li>▪ Riddles</li> <li>▪ Strict verse</li> <li>▪ Song</li> <li>▪ Ode</li> <li>▪ Concrete Poems</li> <li>▪ Free Verse</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities to develop and reinforce phonic knowledge and reading fluency.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rhythm and Rhyme</li> <li>▪ Onset and Rime</li> <li>▪ Different representations and pronunciations of vowel sounds</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal and performance of poetry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Poetic Devices Explored:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rhyming Couplets</li> <li>▪ Calligram</li> <li>▪ Alliteration</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Cross Curricular Links:</b></p> <p><b>Art and Design:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Session 2 involves looking at a range of paintings to inspire thinking for poetry. The National Gallery resources on how to read a painting may be useful to introduce some of the skills and techniques of art appreciation: <a href="https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/learning/teachers-and-schools/teaching-english-and-drama/how-to-read-a-painting">https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/learning/teachers-and-schools/teaching-english-and-drama/how-to-read-a-painting</a></li> <li>• Roger McGough illustrated the poems in this collection himself. Look at the poems he has chosen to illustrate and the way he has chosen to illustrate them. You may wish to use art sessions to allow children to illustrate their own collections at the end of the sequence.</li> </ul>	

**Science:**

- Children may choose scientific concepts and themes as an inspiration for their poetry such as animals and the natural world, space, different environments and habitats. Cross curricular research may help enlarge children's knowledge and stock of words for writing.

**Design Technology:**

- The paper technology involved in bookmaking at the end of the sequence could extend skills learnt in Design Technology.

**Links to other texts and resources:****Other Poetry Collections written by Roger McGough:**

*All the Best* illustrated by Lydia Monks. Puffin

*The Bee's Knees* illustrated by Helen Stephens. Puffin

*Lucky* Frances Lincoln

*Bad, Bad Cats* illustrated by Lydia Monks. Puffin

*An Imaginary Menagerie* Frances Lincoln

*Sky in the Pie* illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura. Puffin

*You Tell Me* (with Michael Rosen) illustrated by Korky Paul. Frances Lincoln

*Pillow Talk* illustrated by Steven Guarnaccia. Puffin

*Slapstick Poems* illustrated by Adam Stower. Puffin

*Good Enough to Eat* illustrated by Lydia Monks. Puffin

*Nailing the Shadow* illustrated by Markéta Prachatická. Puffin

**Collections edited by Roger McGough:**

*100 Best Poems for Children* illustrated by Sheila Moxley. Puffin

*Sensational!* illustrated by Sara Fanelli. Macmillan

Roger McGough's website can be found at: <http://www.uktouring.org.uk/rogermcgough/>

## Teaching Sessions:

### Part 1 – Such is the Power of Poets

The first part of this sequence introduces the children to the focus collection, Poetry Pie, and the author, Roger McGough. It is an opportunity to explore children's prior knowledge about poetry, what forms it can take and how to explore different voices, interests and fascinations through poetry.

#### Session 1: An introduction to the poet and poetry

*The experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of children's knowledge of poetry, and is also going to be a major influence on how they write themselves. So it is important that it should be as rich, interesting and 'ear-catching' as it can be. It is important that voices other than the teacher's should be heard interpreting a poem. In this way, a range of accents, dialects and voices can be introduced into the reading. It can be particularly valuable for children to hear the poets themselves reading their own poems. This allows authentic voices to be heard.*

- Before beginning the session, set up a working wall with a photograph of Roger McGough and a copy of the front cover of the text *Poetry Pie* to focus on the work that will be completed throughout the sequence.
- Look at the front cover of the text – What sort of book do you think this might be? What do you think you'd find inside a poetry pie?
- Read aloud the poem 'Poetry Pie' to the children. Ask them for their initial responses to the poem. What do they like about it? Is there anything they dislike? Can they make connections with it? Do they have any questions about it? What makes it a poem? What does it tell you about poetry?
- Ask the children what they already know about poetry. This might cover what they think poetry is; which poems or poets they know already; whether they like poetry and whether they read poetry themselves. Write the names of any poets and poems mentioned on word cards or sentence strips and add to the working wall. After the session, source photographs of any poets mentioned to display alongside their names and copies of any of the poems mentioned to read and share at communal reading times.
- Show the children the poem on the page, ideally scanned to an IWB or under a visualiser. Does it look like a poem? Why? or Why not? Use this opportunity to review or introduce poetry specific language such as lines, verse etc.
- Look at the way the refrain is repeated in the poem and italicised. In the poem, the poet talks about raps, riddles and poems that can be sung. How do you think you would describe this poem?
- Share the following performance of the poem with the children:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Q6YS6QnL-g> What is different about this performance?  
How would you describe it now?
- Listen to the Poet, Roger McGough read the poem on the poetryline website:

<https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/mcgough-roger> Allow some time to discuss responses to Roger's performance. How do the children think it should be performed? Sung? Read? A mixture of the two?

- Divide the children into groups and give each group a large copy of the poem. Give time for them to read through and discuss how they think the poem should be performed and how they will organise this in their groups by marking up their ideas around the poem. Will they split the poem into parts? Will parts be said? Or sung? Or both? Will there be parts that they will perform together? In pairs? Individually? How will they use timbre, tempo and dynamics to create effects?
- After they have had time to discuss and rehearse, allow each group time to perform to the class as a whole. It would also be good to record the performances so that groups can see themselves back and think about their own performances. Evaluate the performances looking at the effect they had on the listeners. What did groups do that was similar? Different? What was effective about each performance? What might be done differently?
- End the session by considering the question; 'Can a song be a poem?' Post the question up on the wall and get children to add their thoughts and reasons around the question on post-it notes or on word cards.

## Session 2: Finding a Voice through Art:

*Art is a natural aspect of the curriculum to combine with poetry. After all, poetry deals with image and imagery and many poems are based on the sort of close observation of real life subjects which can also be the basis of work in art.*

- Start today's session by reading aloud the poems 'The Power of Poets' and 'The Red Carpet'. Discuss the poems, looking at the pictures they paint in our minds as we hear them. You may even want to get the children to sketch what they see.
- Gives copies of the two poems to the children in pairs to re-read. What is the poet, Roger McGough, saying to us in these poems about writing poetry? Do we always have to write from our own point of view? Why do you think he has chosen to be the settee and the red carpet? Which object in each scene presented would you have chosen to be? Why?
- Look at examples of some scenes depicted in paintings or photographs, such as:
  - Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Writing Lesson  
<http://www.barnesfoundation.org/collections/art-collection/object/6030/writing-lesson-la-leaon-dacriture>
  - Henry Ossawa Tanner: The Banjo Lesson <http://www.wikiart.org/en/henry-ossawa-tanner/the-banjo-lesson-1893>
  - David Hockney: My Parents <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hockney-my-parents-t03255>
- Looking at each painting, what in the painting interests you most? Why? What feeling does the painting encapsulate for you? Freedom? Excitement? Love?
- Read 'The Arrow's Song' on page 1. Look at the words sung by the arrow. What is it doing?

How does it feel?

- Have copies of the three paintings for the children to look at and reflect on. Modelling this for the children, pick a person or object from one of the paintings that inspires you. Annotate the painting with words, phrases, thought or speech bubbles and use these to help you compose the words that tell you what they might be doing or how they might be feeling, either in third person as an outside observer or in first person, as the object itself, as Roger McGough does in 'The Arrow's Song'. At this stage freeing the children from the constraint of rhyme might unlock greater emotion and a wider breadth of language in their writing, e.g.

### *The Banjo's Song*

*The Banjo sang as the boy strummed,  
 Sweet words that came from love,  
 Held gently by the boy and his grandfather,  
 He felt safe and warm.*

- Give the children time to pick their own person or object from one of the focus images and time to have a go at compiling a four line verse to tell the story of their object. Encourage the children to read their poems out loud to each other to test how the words flow off the page. Allow those that want to read theirs aloud the performance space to do so. Display the poems alongside the paintings.

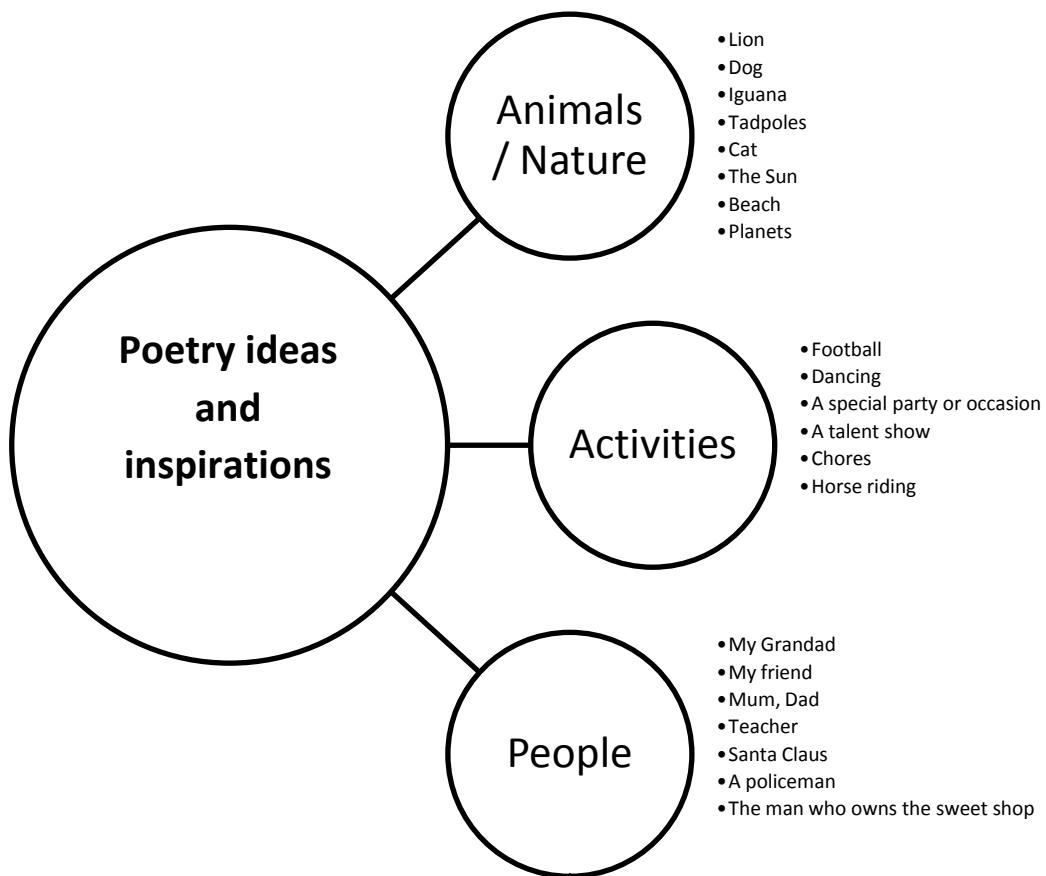
### **Session 3: Performing and Response to Poetry**

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

- Before this session ensure that individual poetry journals (small notebooks which could be handmade) are available for each child. Photocopy the final poem 'Your Poetry Notebook' for each child and stick this inside the front cover of each journal.
- Read aloud the poem 'Quicksilver'. What do you think the message of the poem is? What is the poet telling us about writing poetry? How do you feel when you read it? What makes you feel like this? What language has the poet used that makes an impact on you as a reader; that helps create atmosphere or evokes emotion?
- Give each group a copy of the poem and give time for the children to prepare it for performance to the rest of the class, as they did with 'Poetry Pie'. What did they learn about what makes an effective performance from those seen last time? How will they build this into their performances of 'Quicksilver'?
- Give each child their own blank poetry journal, and read the poem 'Your Poetry Notebook' that is inside the front cover.
- Explain to the children that this will be their own personal poetry notebook where they can

write their own poems throughout the sequence of work. Explain that these won't be marked, although they are welcome to share them with you. Explain that you will also be keeping your own poetry journal. It is important that you are writing alongside the children throughout the sequence, so that children experience how it is to write through a model by an experienced writer, facing the same challenges and successes as they will face.

- The poems that will be written by the children over the next sessions should link to things that interest and inspire them. Reflecting on yesterday's session, think about where else we might get our ideas from for writing poetry. Ask the children what sorts of things they might be inspired to write about? What are they really interested in? Activities? Nature? Experiences? People?
- Record your own initial responses about what you would be interested to write about, and things that might inspire you on a concept map to organise the information, e.g.



- On the first page of their journals, encourage the children to record their own ideas of things they might be inspired to write about as the sequence progresses.
- Watch the video of Roger McGough on poetryline, talking about how he writes his poems. Allow time to reflect on his experiences; what could the children learn from this when they write their own poetry?

## Part 2 – Exploring Poetic Form

Poetic form is often a big obstacle to children who are beginning to write poetry. This is because most ideas of what a poem ought to look like are based on traditional poetry, on its regular verse form and strict rhyme schemes. It is important therefore that children experience a wide repertoire of poetic forms that they can explore and experiment with in their own writing.

### Session 4: Exploring Rhyme – Rhyming Couplets

A couplet is a pair of lines in a poem which have both the same rhythm (meter) and that rhyme. The lines can be independent sentences (closed form) or can run on from each other (open form).

- Before the session, it would be good to have ready photographs or images of the following objects to aid comprehension: wasp, knees, a Scottish terrier, a camel, a vampire and the sound of a violin.
- Display ‘The Game of Rhymes’ as a scan on the IWB or under a visualiser for the children to see clearly. Explain to the children that they are going to try and work out the words missing from the end of each rhyming couplet; a pair of lines from a poem where the final words of each line rhyme and complete a thought. Here, it is also important to point out that rhyming words are words that sound the same when spoken; they don’t necessarily have to be spelt the same.
- Read aloud the first couplet:

*Steeples are too steep and bells are too ringy,  
Bees are too busy and wasps are too\_\_\_\_\_.*

- Encourage the children to chime in with the missing word. How do we know it is right? Does it rhyme? And does it make sense to complete the idea?
- Continue with the rest of the poem. Some of the language in the poem may be new and unfamiliar to the children so it will be important to build up their contextual understanding with picture cues and further clarification, if, for example, they are unfamiliar with a Scottish Terrier, or ‘Scottie’.
- Pause at the last couplet. Can the children think of a word that fits? Reveal the answers on page 104 of the text. Why do you think the poet chose to break the rhyme? What do you think about the explanation he gives?
- Read aloud ‘The Lost Lost-Property Office’ and ‘The Brush Baby’; other examples of poems where there are rhyming couplets. Investigate the use and spelling of the rhyming words used.
- Think about one of the things in your ideas and inspirations map that you might be inspired to write about in rhyming couplets. Think of words and phrases that come to mind as you think of this thing; how it makes you feel or what it’s like.  
*e.g. Frogs: webbed feet, jump, big eyes, slimy skin, scary, lily pad, pond, eats flies, big eyes*

- Investigate ways to draft these ideas into rhyming couplets and then how to arrange these ideas together to form a poem, editing as you go for coherence and cohesion. You may want to have a rhyming dictionary nearby to refer to as you go and look at which words are and aren't easy to rhyme. It is important also to model where challenges arise with finding words that rhyme and keep to one idea, and to model when to put aside an idea that might not be working with the rhyme. An example might look like this:

*Little green frogs I despise,  
With huge, round staring bulgy eyes.*

*Two great long legs that jump up high  
And tongues that flick to catch a fly.*

*With big webbed feet and skin so slimy,  
I'm sure to scream if one jumps by me!*

- When you have read aloud for sense, meaning and flow, think of a title that reflects the subject, emotion or sentiment of your poem, e.g. Little Green Nightmares!
- Encourage the children to choose something from their ideas and inspirations chart and follow the same process, first brainstorming words and phrases, then, using some of these to form some couplets which could be worked into a poem and titled. Encourage the children to read their ideas aloud to see how they work off the page, and whether lines flow and maintain a rhythm before thinking of a title.
- Give time for the children to perform, present and illustrate their poems for display or to include in a class anthology.

### Session 5: Odes

*Odes are formal poems written in honour of a person, thing or place. They tend to be formal in tone and are addressed to the subject they are written about.*

- Read the poem 'Take a Bow, Cow' on p.13 Allow time for the children to discuss the poem. What they like/dislike, the language, patterns and rhymes on the page and to raise any questions they have.
- Ask the children why they think the poem has been written. Tell the children that this is a special poem, called an ode, written in celebration of a person, thing or place. Why do you think Roger McGough has chosen to celebrate a cow? What is special about cows for him? Talk about the words and phrases that are particularly celebratory or that show why the poet has chosen a cow as his subject.
- Reveal a photograph of a cow on the IWB or as a large scale image on a flipchart. How do you think the poem should be performed? An ode talks directly to its subject, so give groups of

children a copy of the poem and time to mark up with performance notes, rehearse and perform as if speaking to the cow.

- Look back at your ideas and inspirations page. Is there a person, place or thing on there that is special to you that deserves to be celebrated in an ode?
- Pick one thing from your list and think about the words, phrases and emotions that come to mind as you picture it. Write these down. It may help to draw or get an image of the thing you want to write about first to stimulate your thoughts and ideas.
- Model doing this with one of your own for the children to see:
- e.g. Moon: craters, bright, orb, night sky, reflecting the sun, orbit, spacecraft landing, phases, crescent, full moon
- Investigate ways to draft these ideas into a verse. Decide, following up on yesterday's session, whether you want parts of your verse to rhyme. Most odes do, but they don't have to; freeing the children from the constraint of rhyme might unlock greater emotion and a wider breadth of language in their writing. If you do decide to make your ode rhyme, think about how you want to format the rhyme scheme of this poem. You can make every two lines or every other line rhyme. You may want to have a rhyming dictionary nearby to refer to as you go and look at which words are and aren't easy to rhyme. It is important also to model where challenges arise with finding words that rhyme and to model when to put aside an idea that might not be working with the rhyme. Show the children how to refine ideas, editing as you go for coherence and cohesion. An example might look like this:

*Oh beautiful moon!*

*A bright, white wonder in the night sky.*

*Looking down on the Earth,*

*From way up high.*

*Without you the night sky*

*would be so bare,*

*It's a comfort to look up*

*and see you there.*

- When you have read aloud for sense, meaning and flow, think of a title that reflects the subject, emotion or sentiment of your poem, e.g. Lunar Love or something simpler like Ode to the Moon, if the children are struggling with ideas.

- Encourage the children to choose something from their ideas and inspirations chart and follow the same process, first brainstorming words and phrases, then, using some of these to form some phrases which could then be worked into an ode and titled. Encourage the children to read their ideas aloud to see how they work off the page, and whether lines flow before thinking of a title.
- Give time for the children to perform, present and illustrate their odes for display.

### Session 6: Riddles

A riddle is a type of word puzzle where ambiguous clues to an object or person's identity are offered requiring the reader to puzzle over what the subject is and thereby find the answer. They can be presented as a verse, which usually rhymes.

- Display the poem 'Easy Pickings?' and read aloud. Do the children know the answer to the question 'What am I?' at the end? How did they work it out? Text mark the words and phrases that were the hidden clues. Ask the children if they have seen a poem like this before? Do they know what it is called? If not, introduce the term riddle – a poem that is a type of word puzzle where the reader has to guess the identity of an object or person through a series of clues hidden in the verse.
- Illustrate this further by reading aloud 'A Bouncer' and 'My First is in Apple' and discussing the children's responses and the clues hidden in the text that allowed them to solve the riddle.
- Explain to the children that today they are going to write their own riddles, based on one of their ideas or interests from their poetry journal.
- Model this first using one of your own ideas. Think of the object or person you'd like to write your riddle about, and brainstorm words and phrases about it that could inspire ideas for the clues in your riddle. It might help to have an image of it to stimulate your thinking; e.g. Water: liquid, essential for life, found in rivers, seas, falls from the sky as rain, drink it, water cycle, splashes, drips, drops, some people don't have enough, plants need it to grow, boil it and it turns to steam, freeze it and it turns to ice.
- Look at how to work the ideas into phrases that give clues and put these together to form a verse. Roger McGough follows a rhyme pattern for his riddles, but they don't have to, for example:

*I've travelled through valleys in rivers and streams,*

*And back up to the sky after reaching the sea.*

*From the tap, in a bottle or drawn from a well,*

*I fall from the sky as the clouds grey and swell.*

*I am precious and I flow free,*

*People, animals and plants can't live without me.*

*What am I?*

- When you have read aloud for sense, meaning and flow, think of a title that draws the reader in, e.g. Nature's Gift?
- Encourage the children to choose something from their ideas and inspirations chart and follow the same process, first brainstorming words and phrases, then, using some of these to form some clue phrases which could then be worked into a riddle and titled. Encourage the children to read their ideas aloud to see how they work off the page, and whether lines flow before thinking of a title.
- Give time for the children to perform and present their riddles for display. This could be done on folded cards, where the riddle is displayed on the outside and the answer is revealed inside.
- To finish, show a scan of the poem 'A Good Listener' on page 32 on the IWB or under a visualiser. What is different about this riddle from the ones you read and wrote? What gives you the extra clue to solve the riddle? Whose ear do you think this is? How can you tell? (You may need to draw the children's attention to the photograph of Roger McGough on the working wall.) Explain that as well as being a riddle, this is also a concrete poem; written in the shape of the subject of the poem. Tell the children that the next session will focus on more of these.

### Session 7: Concrete Poems

*A concrete poem is written in the shape of its subject. As form is the highest consideration here sometimes the poems consist of single words describing their subject rather than complete lines.*

*Concrete poems shouldn't be confused with calligrams, where individual words take on a shape that reveals their meaning.*

- Show the children the poem 'Eyebrows' on page 87 by giving out copies or showing on the IWB or under a visualiser. Before reading aloud, ask the children how they know what the poem will be about. Read aloud and allow time for the children to discuss the poem. What is the feeling behind the poem? Discuss the use of the word *superior*; what could this imply for a performance of this poem? Could you use your facial expression – especially your eyebrows – and body language to enhance the meaning of this poem? Have a go, individually or in groups at preparing this poem to perform back. Invite those who would like to, to share their performances to the class audience. Evaluate the impact of the performances on the listener.
- Like 'A Good Listener' from yesterday's session this is another concrete poem, written in the shape of its subject.
- Explain to the children that they will be writing their own concrete poems during this session,

based on something they would like to write about.

- Model this first, using one of your own ideas. Think of something you would like to write about, then start to think of words and phrases that could inspire ideas for your concrete poem
  - e.g. Yo-yo: comes back, on a string, round your finger, round, spirals, toy, plaything, used by children, spins round, tricks – walk the dog, around the world.
  - Then start to think about how this could work as a poem, laid out on the page to reflect the subject. The ICT program, Texter <http://tholman.com/texter/> would be a useful tool to help with this. The children will need to prepare their text beforehand , type into the program and then they can draw with the words on the page e.g.



- Encourage the children to read their ideas aloud to see how they work off the page, and whether lines flow before thinking of a title.
  - Give time for the children to print and share their ideas, before adding these to a display or class anthology.

## Session 8: Calligrams

A calligram is a poem in which the calligraphy, the formation of the letters or the font selected, represents an aspect of the poem's subject, as in: thin (written in a very thin font), ancient (looking crumbling and old) or growth (with each letter written in a progressively larger font size). A poem about fear might be written in shaky letters to represent trembling. This font choice supports the reading of the poem by emphasising the meaning of particular words.

- Show the children the poem ‘Fruity’ on page 23 by giving out copies or showing on the IWB or under a visualiser. Before reading aloud, ask the children what stands out for them on the page. Read aloud and allow time for the children to discuss the poem. What is the feeling behind the poem? Is it what you thought it would be when you first saw it? Alongside this, read the poem ‘Pineapple’ on page 27. What insights do the poems, behind their humour, tell you about the poet’s feelings towards pineapples? Look at the use of simile in the poem; why might he have described them as being ‘*as fearsome as a hand grenade?*’ Does this reflect why he chose the word SCARY to appear as a calligram? What does this add to our interpretation?
- Give out the poems ‘Eye to Eye, O is for...’ and ‘The Town Crier’ to different groups of children. Have them read the poems and think, as in ‘Fruity’, how Roger McGough has used calligraphy, font or formation of letters to reflect what the poem is about.
- Afterwards, give time for the children to prepare their poem for performance. How might the way the words are written affect how you will perform? Do they give clues?
- Explain to the children that they will be writing their own poems using calligrams during this session, based on something they would like to write about.
- Model this first, using one of your own ideas. Think of something you would like to write about, then start to think of words and phrases that could inspire ideas for your poem.
- e.g. The Beach: warm sun, sand in my toes, waves rolling in, reading a book, relaxing, calm
- Model how to work up these words into a verse, reading your ideas aloud to see how they work off the page, and whether lines flow before thinking of a title.
- Think about which words you want to emphasise when the poem is presented on the page and how to do this using handwriting or by exploring and experimenting with fonts on a word processor, e.g.

Warm sun, shining above me,  
Not a care in the world.

Gentle sound of the waves *rolling* in,  
Sand tickling my toes.

There's no better place to just lie back and  
**r e l a x**

- Give time for the children to print and share their ideas, before adding these to a display or class anthology.

### Session 9: Clerihews

*Named after its inventor E. Clerihew Bentley who died in 1956, a clerihew is a four line comic verse with two rhyming pairs of lines with the rhyme scheme AABB. This forced rhyme scheme often leads to forced or slightly nonsensical rhymes. The first line of the poem is the name of the person about whom the rhyme verse is written.*

- Share with the children the two pages of **Clerihews** on pages 44 and 45.
- Read the first verse aloud, and share the text with the children. Do any of them know what a clerihew is?
- Read the next example about ‘Mr Merryhew’ and look at the poem on the page. What do you notice about the verse? Is there a rhyme structure? How many lines does it have?
- Read the final two clerihews on page 45. What do all three examples have in common? What happens in the first line of each poem?
- Explore and experiment with names of different characters and rhyming words to build a rhyming story around the character. Show the children how to work this through. You might want to start by having part of a humorous story in mind, like a gardener who gets stung by a wasp while he is working. Show the children how to add detail and explore how to play with rhyme to tell their story. E.g. How did he get stung? Whilst he was smelling his flowers. That might mean he got stung on his nose. He could have got stung by smelling a rose, or his name could be Mr Rose, yes, a gardener called Mr Rose, got stung by a wasp upon his nose. Now, what would happen if he got stung? He might go crazy because it hurt so much ... Crazy, rhymes with daisy – maybe it happened while he smelt a daisy. Work these ideas into a verse following the AABB rhyme pattern required by a clerihew as you go. Roger McGough rhymes all the lines in some of his – the children could also do this.

*A gardener called Mr Rose,  
Got stung by a wasp upon his nose.  
It happened while he smelt a daisy,  
Now the pain will drive him crazy!*

- Encourage the children to choose a character they could write about and follow the same process, first brainstorming words and phrases, then, using some of these to form some couplets which could be worked into a poem and titled. Encourage the children to read their ideas aloud to see how they work off the page, and whether lines flow and maintain a rhythm before thinking of a title.
- Give time for the children to perform their own poems to each other.

### Part 3: Messages

After becoming familiar with a range of forms and subject matter, the next session focuses on a greater level of engagement with poetry as a reader and as a writer. The session focuses on

expressing emotion, experiences, thoughts and feelings through poetry from Roger McGough and then in the children's own poems.

### Session 10: Using Poetry to Express Emotion

*Personal experiences and memories can provide a powerful stimulus for children's poetry writing.*

*Episodes from family life and childhood are often particularly rich and vivid sources of experiences which can be recalled and explored.*

- Play the children 'The Last Post' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-Pz5KsyfNQ> What sort of music do you think this is? What does it make you think of? How does it make you feel?
- Explain that Roger McGough refers to this piece of music in his poem, 'Defeat'. What sort of emotions do you think he might be trying to evoke by talking about it?
- Read the poem out loud. Discuss the children's likes, dislikes, puzzles and connections with it. Have they ever been defeated at or by something? How did it make them feel? Does this poem evoke the right emotions? What figurative language helps to create this?
- Give the poem out to groups of children to work up for performance. How will they use their voices, facial expressions and body language to convey the emotion behind the poem?
- Watch performances to see how different groups responded to the poem. What had a good effect on you as a listener?
- Think of a time that you connected strongly with a feeling, like in this poem. It might be the resignation of defeat, or anger, happiness, excitement. How will you relay the experience to a reader?
- Although Roger's poem is written with a rhyme scheme, writing in free verse at this point might help the children to convey their emotions more effectively than if bound by the constraints of rhyme.
- It is important that children understand that poetry allows us to reflect a range of feelings and expressions, not always good or humorous ones. Model writing a poem based on a memorable experience for you as a teacher during a shared writing session, talking through the choices that you are making as a writer to bring the experience alive for the reader.
- Allow time for children to draft their own poems around the theme of school then allow them to read aloud to a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed, before redrafting and presenting for publication on a display or in a class collection.

### Session 11: The Power of Nature

*Many of the cross-curricular themes and topics that act as a focus for learning and teaching in the primary classroom are capable of being illustrated through poetry. A focus on 'nature' for example is a good example of children writing a collection of poems around a particular theme. Poems offer a special way of thinking. They can allow children to express some of the more intuitive, affective aspects of their perceptions.*

- Share the poem 'First Blossoms' with the children by reading aloud. How do you think the

poet feels about spring? Ask the class to respond to the poem, expressing likes and dislikes, asking questions, including clarifying unknown vocabulary and connecting with real life experiences. Can anyone recall what happens in spring? What do you see? Smell? How do you feel in spring? Describe the experiences using all the senses.

- Give time for children to re-read and annotate the poem with their own observations, questions, comments and to highlight examples of effective language use that draws in the reader and makes them feel what Spring is like. How does the way the poem is presented on the page add to the mood?
- Give the children time to visualise and draw, with a quick medium like pastel, a picture of what they see when the poem is presented. Display these around the classroom and give time for the children to ‘gallery walk’ each other’s work, looking at the similarities and differences between their portrayals.
- Allow time for the children to explore themes of nature that are of particular interest to them. This might be related to a specific season, as in ‘First Blossoms’, or might be a natural object, environment, animal or plant. Allow time for children to find images or objects that inspire them, to draft and write focussing on figurative language to evoke emotion as they identified in the last poems they have studied. They could choose any of the forms previously studied to present the poem in.
- Extra sessions to read aloud, refine, redraft and to publish, illustrate and perform these will allow the children to see the complete writing process. Display the children’s work prominently, either bound in a nature anthology or as a whole school display to give audience to the work created.

### Session 12: Expressing thoughts through poetry

*Children should see that poetry matters; first to the writer and then to the reader. It can matter in many different ways, because it deals with important things for that person. Sharing issues that are important through poetry is an important way of giving voice through writing and a freedom to express personal opinions.*

- Listen to Roger McGough reading the poem ‘Alternative Santa’ on poetryline <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/mcgough-roger>
- Ask the class to respond to the poem, expressing likes and dislikes, asking questions, including clarifying unknown vocabulary and connecting with real life experiences.
- Give time for the children to look at how the poem is presented on the page while you re-read it. Pay particular attention to the handwritten verse at the end of the story. What do you think the poet is really saying about Christmas in the poem? Explore the sense of irony that could be read in the use of calligram for **Happy Holiday** and the way he refers to buying everything on Amazon and e-bay, encapsulated by the thought:

‘Oh why bother

delivering presents by hand  
 When it could all be done online?  
 Busy parents will understand'

- What reflections can you see about the poet's opinion on life in the digital age? Text mark examples on a shared copy of the poem scanned onto the IWB or enlarged for all to see.
- Give the children copies of the two poems, 'Handwriting' and 'Famous'. Give time for the children to read these poems and infer what the poet might really be saying through them. Is there anything that you can draw together across all three poems about the poet's views?
- Think about issues that might be particularly important to you or the class. You may wish to focus on something you have explored through another curriculum area, such as conservation.
- Allow time for the children to draft and write focussing on conveying serious opinions in a poem. This could be direct or through a more humorous approach, as is taken by the poet.
- Extra sessions to read aloud, refine, redraft and to publish, illustrate and perform these will allow the children to see the complete writing process. The children may want to think about mixing typed text and handwriting to show their own feelings, as in 'Alternative Santa' and 'Handwriting'.
- Display the children's work prominently, either bound in a nature anthology or as a whole school display to give audience to the work created.

### Sessions 13 and 14: Poems that talk

*Talking poems offer a very supportive framework for children's writing. Children will pick up the tune of this kind of poem without direct imitation. After all, they are based on normal speech rhythms. They might enjoy discussing and writing about some of the typical conversations and confrontations between parents and children on topics like bedtime, eating, helping in the house, clothes, pocket money, and so on. Poems can be written as monologues (or interior monologues your hidden thoughts) or presented in dialogue form.*

- Read the poem 'Tomorrow Has Your Name' on It aloud to the children or watch Roger McGough perform the poem himself on CLPE's poetryline website:  
<https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets/mcgough-roger>
- Who do you think the poet has written the poem for? Why? What messages is he giving?
- How does the poem make you feel when you hear it?
- Look at copies of the poem in pairs or groups. Are there parts of the poem which resonate with you or that you can make personal connections with already?
- Think about an important event that might be coming up for a younger person or group of people that the class know; perhaps at the end of the school year when a Reception class are moving up to Key Stage 1 or a Year 2 class are moving up to Key Stage 2.
- Think back to your own memories of being a small child. Looking back, what lessons have you learned from life that you would want to pass on as a message to someone younger to help them look to the future?

- Collect responses around the class on strips of paper. Discuss these around the class and individually, or in groups, draft ideas for these in a verse. At first, don't worry about the verse having to follow the ABCB rhyme structure of the original poem.
- When you have a clear idea of what you'd like to say, have a go at redrafting the poem to follow an ABCB rhyme structure. You may find that having copies of rhyming dictionaries would be useful at this point.
- Collect the verses together and decide how they might fit together as a whole poem. You might look at how to make small edits to help with cohesion.
- Perform the poem to the younger children and/or write it up and illustrate it to present to them.

### Session 15: Making Your Own Collection

*After listening to poetry, children may want to write their own poems. These, too, can be recorded with music or sound-effects, and kept together with a class anthology in the listening corner. Alternatively, individual collections of poems can be built up by each child and presented both in book form and performed or recorded; collections of this kind can show the range of subjects and forms explored.*

- 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?
- Now focus 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?
- Have each child make their own origami book and choose their favourite poems they have written to work up and present. Will you handwrite or type and stick in? Will you illustrate some?
- Give time for the children to compile and present the poems they would like to share. Talk about the other features of a published book; what will they title their collection? What will their front cover look like? What will they write on the back to entice a reader to read it? They could also look at smaller publishing details like a bar code, or design a name and logo for their own or a class publishing house.
- Following this hold a poetry fest for children to do readings from their collections to parents or other classes in the school. What did they learn from listening to the poems being read aloud and performed that they will need to remember when reading their own poems?
- Display the children's collections prominently in the reading corner, library or a shared area so they can be read by a wider audience.