

Sensational! Poems inspired by the five senses, chosen by Roger McGough

This unit lasts 2 weeks

This unit focuses on *Sensational!*, a book of poems chosen by Roger McGough poems that are inspired by the brain and the five senses – sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. The focuses for the unit are: listening to poetry read aloud; responding to and understanding poetry; performing, presenting, and writing poetry. The sequence that follows describes five sessions but some sessions may require more time, depending on the experience of the class, time allocated for developing poetry writing, revision and presentation.

The unit involves a class journal for recording whole-class discussions and responses, and initial ideas for writing poems, and individual poetry journals for children to record their own thoughts and to work on their own poems.

The suggested sequence of work below focuses on a selection of the poems that have been chosen for the opportunities they provide for performance, discussion and children's own writing.

Alongside the unit, reading aloud and enjoying a broader range of poems from the anthology is recommended.

Phase 1

Phase 1 (Sessions 1–3) involves in-depth work around one poem, 'The Magic of the Brain' by Jenny Joseph, which focuses on all five senses. The children are asked to respond to and discuss the poem, and then to write their own poem, using a supportive structure.

The children create their own poetry journal in which to record their reflections and write their own poems. Publishing the poems in a Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation or other form will require additional time outside literacy sessions.

Phase 2

Phase 2 (Sessions 4 and 5) involves reading, discussing and performing poems connected to sound, with a range of potential extension activities such as recording children's performances and creating their own poems.

Phase 3

Phase 3 (Sessions 6–10) involves two poems linked to the senses of smell and taste. In the first, the children respond to an atmospheric poem, 'Prelude', by T.S. Eliot, with their responses supported through the use of images. The second activity is based on a poem by Benjamin Zephaniah, 'Vegan Delight'. The children are asked to write their own poems focusing on foods and using a similar rhyming structure.

Guided reading

Although the unit is designed for use with the whole class, teachers could also select aspects of it to use with guided reading groups. Alternatively, individual sessions could be followed up during guided reading sessions, with a closer look at particular sections of the text; looking, for example, at the language or what has been revealed about plot or character.

All children will benefit from regular opportunities for small-group reading, discussion and writing with a teacher or teaching assistant.

Related core learning objectives

The overarching core learning outcomes for the Key Stage are indicated in italics. Relevant objectives from Years 5 and 6 are indicated under the strands.

Understanding and interpreting texts

Deduce, infer and interpret information, events or ideas

Identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts

Explain and comment on writers' use of language, including vocabulary, grammatical and literary features.

Y5 Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas

Y5 Infer writers' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied

Y5 Explore how writers use language for effect

Engaging with and responding to texts

Respond imaginatively, using different strategies to engage with texts

Evaluate writers' purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text on the reader

Y5 Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media

Creating and shaping texts

Write independently and creatively for purpose, pleasure and learning

Use and adapt a range of forms, suited to different purposes and readers

Make stylistic choices, including vocabulary, literary features and viewpoints or voice

Y5 Reflect independently and critically on their own writing and edit and improve it

Y6 Integrate words, images and sounds imaginatively for different purposes

Speaking

Speak competently and creatively for different purposes and audiences, reflecting on impact and response

Teaching approaches

Reading aloud

Booktalk

Visualising, illustrating

Poetry performance

Shared, paired and individual writing

For a description of teaching approaches see resources.

Resources

- A Copy of the book
- A class poetry journal
- Individual poetry journals for the class – either exercise books or booklets made from folded, stapled sheets
- Materials for individual poetry anthologies

The teaching sequence

Phase 1

Session 1

Focus objectives

To talk about how the poet uses language to create images
To reflect on the poem through discussion and making notes

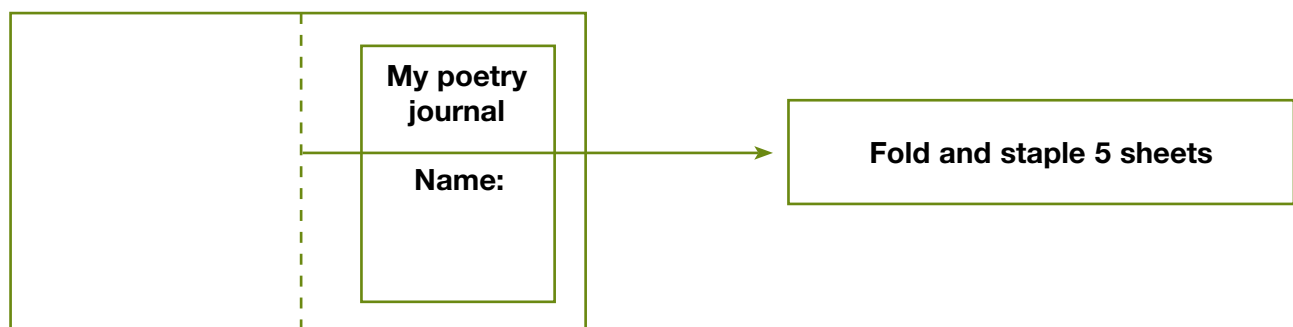
Teaching approaches

Reading aloud and rereading
Discussion
Making notes

Introducing the anthology

Explain to the children that you will be sharing a range of poems from one collection over several days and that they will be listening to, reading, talking about, performing, writing and presenting poems and choosing their favourites.

As part of their work, they will be asked to keep their own 'poetry journal'. This can take the form of a separate exercise book or stapled sheets (approximately 5 sheets of A4 paper stapled together produces a 20-page booklet, folded in half). The children could decorate the cover of the journal.



Reading aloud and discussion: 'The Magic of the Brain'

'The Magic of the Brain' is the first poem in the collection and discusses all of the senses.

Without disclosing the title or displaying the text, read the poem aloud, asking the children to close their eyes and visualise the poem as you read. You might suggest that they try to run what they hear into a film in their heads.

Ask the children to work with a talk partner and discuss their initial responses to the poem, for example: a part that they particularly remember or liked about the poem, or the kinds of pictures they saw in their heads.

Discussion and rereading

Record the feedback from the discussion by making notes on a large sheet of paper or in a class poetry journal, made from several large sheets of paper and stapled or sewn together.

Starting with the words 'Tell me...', ask the children to describe any pictures that they saw in their heads. Ensure that your questions are asked in an open way – there is no 'right' answer. The children need to feel confident that their contributions are valued.

Then read the poem again, this time displaying the text, and ask the children to join in with you. Ask them to notice in detail as they read any words or phrases they think are particularly striking. During the discussion, record two or three points in the class reading journal. Then give out copies of the poem and ask the children to work with a partner to note in their own poetry journals any words or phrases that they identify.

Record feedback by making notes in the class poetry journal or on a large sheet of paper. The children may identify phrases such as 'It cleared my head as water refreshes the skin' or 'Smooth-on-tongue soup'.

Alternative titles

The poem is called 'The Magic of the Brain'. Ask the children whether they can think of an alternative title.

Ask the children to work in pairs, then in groups of four, to compare their titles. Share some of their titles at the end of the lesson.

Sessions 2 and 3: Poetry writing using the structure of a poem

Focus objectives

To think about how poets use pattern to structure a poem

To use the structure of a poem to write their own verses, thinking about language choices

To reflect on own writing, edit and improve it

Key teaching approaches

Discussion

Planning using a spider diagram

Shared and individual writing

Revising and editing

It is likely that this work will require an additional session for revising, editing and presenting the poems.

Explain to the class at the beginning of the session that they are going to reread the poem, look at how the poet has created the poem, and then begin to work on their own poems.

Put a copy of the poem 'The Magic of the Brain' on an OHP, an interactive whiteboard (IWB) or flip chart and reread the poem with the class. Ask the children if they notice any patterns in the poem. Then ask the children, working in pairs with a copy of the poem, to reread it and highlight any patterns that they can spot.

They may notice that:

- the first and last line of each verse is similar within each verse and throughout the poem
- the poet not only describes the object that she sees, hears, smells, feels and tastes, but also how it makes her feel.

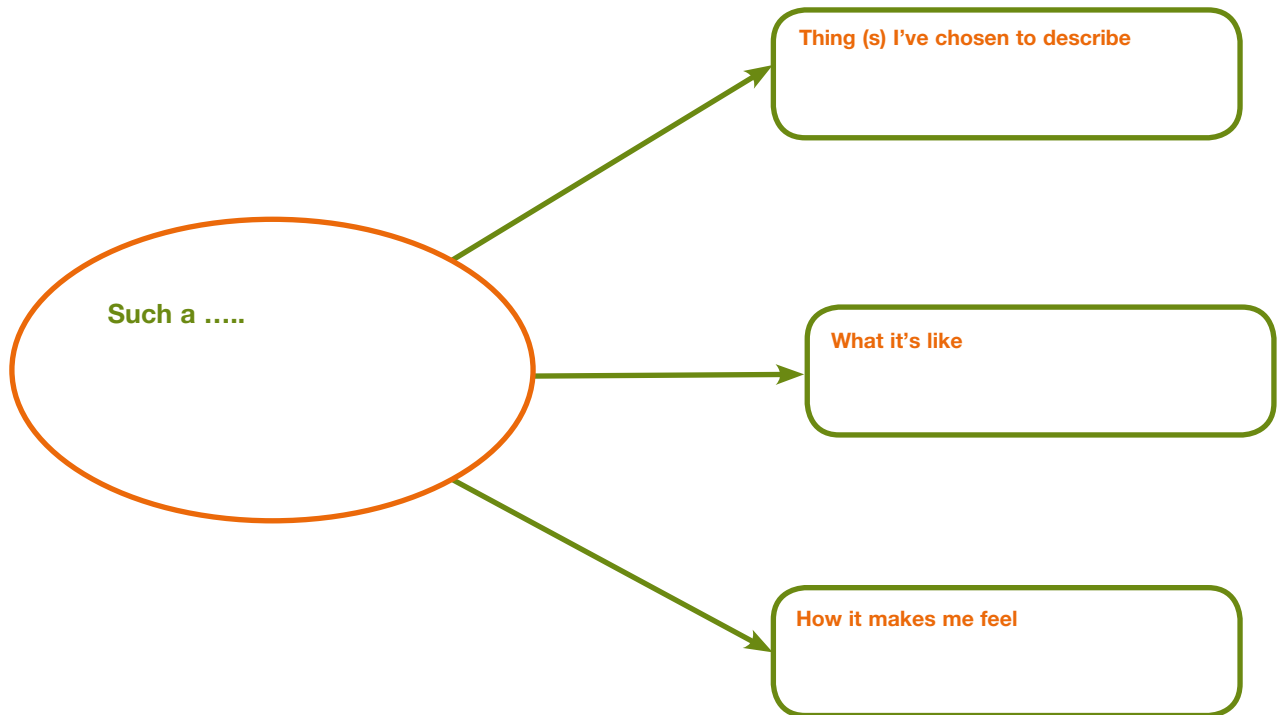
Highlight the first and last lines of each verse and explain to the class that they are going to write their own verses, using a similar pattern.

Planning the poem

Create a spider diagram on a flip chart, IWB or OHP and choose one of the senses, for example, taste.

Ask the children to discuss with a partner which sense and sensation they are going to write about, and then use the framework below to think about how they might describe it and how it makes them feel.

Working with the whole class, choose one of the senses and fill in the spider diagram below.



See resources for a spider diagram planning sheet

Then ask children to work with a partner in their poetry journals and draw a spider diagram of their ideas, focusing on one of the senses.

Once the children have done this, gather the class back together and model the process of writing the poem, by taking the opening and closing lines of one of the verses, for example 'Such a sight I saw'.

Work with the class, using the ideas you collected earlier when you began the spider diagram.

The following example uses the sight of a tree blowing in the wind:

Use the opening line of the verse:

'Such a sight I saw'

Take suggestions from the class for what you might have seen and create a line, for example:

'I saw a tree blowing in the wind'

Take suggestions from the class for what it looked like, for example:

'It was bending and its leaves were dancing'

Take suggestions from the class about how it made you feel, for example:

'It made me feel like running and spinning around'

Then finish with:

'Such a sight I saw'

Next, encourage the children to work individually in their poetry journals to write a first draft of their verse. Some children could work in a small group with additional support from an adult on individual verses or a shared verse.

Editing and revising

Choose two or three examples from verses written by the children – read them aloud to the class and choose one to write up on the flip chart or IWB. Discuss with the class what they like about the verse, for example the things the child has chosen to describe, or the use of particular words or phrases.

Ask the children whether they can think of ways of improving their verses – this may involve omitting or adding words, or choosing alternative words. Then ask them to work with a partner to read their verse aloud and discuss ways of improving it. The children can then work individually on a final draft of their poem.

One of the outcomes of this unit could be an illustrated Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation of the children's poems, choosing or creating illustrations, background colours and other features. They could record a reading of their poems, using the 'record' facility in the Microsoft PowerPoint® programme.

Alternatively, the children could carefully write up or type their verses and choose photographs to illustrate their poems or, in an art session, create their own illustrations. These could be collated to make a class anthology.

Extension activities

Some children may wish to create verses for each sense. Poetry journals can be taken home for work on the poems.

Phase 2

Session 4 and 5: Reading and performing

Focus objectives

To explore the meanings of poems through performance

To explore how poets use rhythm and rhyme

To discuss ways that different poets present poems on a similar theme

Key teaching approaches

Reading and rereading

Discussion

Poetry performance

Shared writing

Reading and rereading

Prepare the text of 'Ears Hear' (Lucia M., and James L. Humes Jr) and 'Louder than a clap of thunder' (Jack Prelutsky) on an OHP, IWB or flipchart – try to present the poems side by side. Have copies available for children to work in pairs, and with the poems presented side by side.

Read the poems to the class. Then ask the children to join in with rereading them. Discuss with the children what the poems tell us about sounds.

Class and group performances

Introduce the class to two ways of performing the two poems.

A simple way for the whole class to perform 'Ears Hear' initially is to divide the class into three groups, with each group reading one verse, but the whole class reading the last line.

A simple way to perform 'Louder than a clap of thunder' would be to divide the class into eight groups, with group 1 reading the first line and then adding a group with each line (second line groups 1 and 2, third line groups 1, 2, and 3, fourth line groups 1, 2, 3 and 4, and so on).

Repeat this with the second verse. Ask the children to try to start each verse quietly and increase the volume.

Discuss with the class if they have any ideas for ways of performing the poems – for example, using different numbers of people, or varying the volume to enhance the meaning.

Divide the class into groups of four. Ask the children to prepare their own performance of 'Ears Hear' or 'Louder than a clap of thunder', taking decisions about ways of performing the poem to reflect meanings.

Groups can then take it in turn to perform the poem to the class.

Discussion

Ask children to reflect on the two poems in groups of four.

Ask them to discuss which poem they think works best – and why they think this is.

Children may refer to:

- the rhythm
- the poets' use of rhyme
- humour.

Record some points of the discussion in the class poetry journal, and then ask the children to record some of their thoughts in their poetry journals.

Extension activities

Performances by different groups can be recorded using a digital video camera or webcam. The video can be included in the Microsoft PowerPoint® anthology.

At the end of the session, ask the children to write their own verse in the style of 'Ears Hear' for homework. Ask for suggestions for things that make noises and write a verse together. One

approach would be to ask the children to listen for noises that they hear in the classroom and beyond, for example:

Children shuffle
Teachers talk
Shoes tap
People walk

Phase 3

Sessions 6 and 7: Responding to a visual image, reading and responding to a poem

Focus objectives

To explore how figurative language is used to create images and atmosphere
To use evidence from the poem to discuss events and ideas
To explore the poet's perspective from what is written and from what is implied
To explore how the poet uses language for effect

Key teaching approaches

Responding to a visual image
Reading aloud
Discussion

This session focuses on 'Preludes' (T.S. Eliot). The text of the poem should be available on a flipchart, IWB or OHP.

Responding to a visual image

If you have an IWB, introduce the session with an image that evokes the atmosphere of the poem.

If you don't have an IWB, you could print an image and use several enlarged copies, which can be shared between groups of children.

Ask the children to look at the selected image and to talk to a partner about what they can see – record their responses on a flipchart or in the class poetry journal around a copy of the image. Alternatively, the children could write their responses on a sticky note and stick them around the image.

You could extend the discussion by asking what the image tells the children about the place, time, season, etc. Also, ask if they can imagine what smells might be associated with the images. Again, record responses on the flipchart or in the class poetry journal.

Reading and discussing the poem

Then introduce the poem 'Preludes' (T.S. Eliot). You could tell the children that just, as the artist or photographer communicates using the tools of painting or photography, this time they are going to hear a picture painted in words.

Read the poem and then reread it with the class. Ask the children to discuss with a partner and to note in their poetry journals any words or phrases that they particularly like. After these have been discussed in the whole-class group, ask the children to discuss with their partner what they know about the place, time and season, etc.

Ask children to speculate about the 'story' behind the poem and to make some notes in their poetry journals.

Finding images

Ask the children to find or create an image to illustrate all or part of the poem – these can form a display around the text of the poem.

Sessions 8, 9 and 10: Writing poetry

Focus objectives

To explore how the poets use language for effect

To infer the poets' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied

To reflect independently and critically on own writing and edit and improve it

To integrate words, images and sounds imaginatively

Key teaching approaches

Reading and rereading

Discussion

Shared, paired and individual writing

Revising and editing

Prepare the text of 'Vegan Delight' (Benjamin Zephaniah) and 'An Everything Pizza' (Linda J. Knaus) on an OHP, IWB or flipchart.

Reading and discussion

Read aloud 'Vegan Delight'. Ask the children what they like about the poem and note their responses in the class poetry journal. Ask the children if they can explain the word 'vegan' and also what they know about any of the foods mentioned in the poem. Further discussion can explore: why the children think that the poem is titled 'Vegan Delight' and what they think we can deduce about the poet from the poem. For example, they may observe that the foods in the poem are vegetarian, many from the Caribbean or Asia.

A simple performance of the poem could be practised by the children reading one line each around the class – establish a clapped beat and practise reading the poem several times. You could record this on a tape or with a digital recorder or on computer, using a drum beat.

The poem 'An Everything Pizza' (Linda J. Knaus) could be used in a similar way.

Writing poetry

With a copy of the poem 'Vegan Delight' displayed on a flip chart, IWB or OHP, ask children why they think the poem was good for performance – they might suggest the rhythm, the short lines or the rhymes.

Ask the children if they noticed how the poet has created the poem. They should have noticed that the poem is constructed of a lists of foods. Ask them to work with a partner to underline the rhymes in the poem – some of these are full rhymes, for example, curd and word; others are half rhymes such as nan and uttapam.

You could then begin to create a class poem on a flip chart or IWB. Decide with the class what kind of food they are going to create the poem about, for example, fruit and vegetables, their favourite foods, healthy foods, unhealthy foods, etc. This may lead to broader discussion about foods. It may be useful to consult a rhyming dictionary – an online version can be found on <http://www.rhymer.com/> Use of this dictionary tells us, for example, that possible rhymes for apple could be 'cereal', 'caramel', 'crumble', 'lentil', 'trifle'.

Encourage the children to work individually in their poetry journals to write a first draft of their poem. Some children may work in a small group with additional support from an adult on individual verses or a shared verse.

Editing and revising

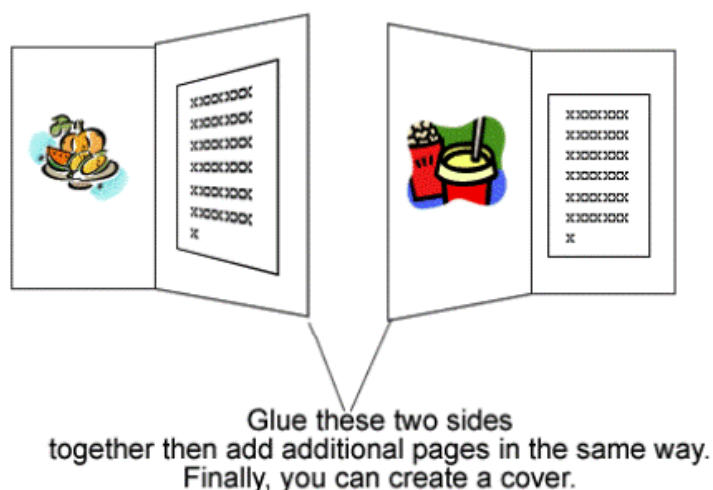
Choose two or three examples from verses written by the children – read these aloud to the class and choose one to write up on the flip chart or IWB. Discuss with the class what they like about the verse, for example, the use of particular words or phrases or rhymes used.

Ask the children whether they can think of any ways of improving their own poem – this may involve omitting or adding words, reordering or choosing alternative words. Ask them to work with a partner to read their verse aloud and discuss if there are any ways their poem can be improved. They can then work on a final draft of their poem.

Some or all of the poems could be added to the illustrated Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation or class anthology. Children could illustrate their poems with appropriate images of foods, or create their own images through drawing, painting or collages.

You could ask the children to:

- record a reading of their poem, using the ‘record’ facility in the Microsoft Powerpoint® program
- type up their verse and choose an image to illustrate their poems
- create their own illustrations in an art session.



These can be joined together to make a class anthology. A simple way of creating a book is to ask children to present the poems and images on one side of a folded A4 sheet. These can then be stuck together.

Opportunities for assessment in this unit

Sensational! is a poetry anthology and therefore offers many opportunities for enjoying words, word play, rhyme and imagery, and for discussing how poets use language in a range of ways.

As the focus of this unit is on poetry, the main emphases are on response, meanings and the ways that the poets use language. There are ample opportunities to read, perform and write poems to give children the opportunity to engage with the poems in more depth. They are asked on frequent occasions to search the text to locate evidence, to read the text closely for implicit meanings and to support their opinions by referring to the text.

Some discussions take place in whole-class contexts, others take place in pairs and groups. Teachers or TAs can listen in and make discreet notes on the discussions. Children are also frequently asked to make notes in their reading journals – these offer further opportunities for assessment.

Ongoing assessment opportunities

Class and group discussions

During the frequent opportunities for class discussions within the unit, the teacher could make brief notes after the session or a TA, if present, could make notes during a session.

Teachers or TAs could set up guided reading or writing activities, using some of the activities in the unit, to make more closely focused assessments with particular children who are working towards Level 4.

Notes can also be made, for example using the following framework, during group discussions and partner work.

See resources for a framework that supports the monitoring of children who are moving from Level 3 to Level 4.

Written work

Children's understanding can also be noted from their ongoing written work: their recording of responses and meanings, or references to particular parts of a poem in their poetry journals.

Assessment opportunities

With a particular focus on children moving from Level 3 to Level 4

- To be able to read the poems closely to discuss and interpret meanings
- To be able to read the poems closely and to refer to the text when explaining ideas
- To discuss ways in which the poets use language to make meanings, with particular reference to rhyme, rhythm, word choices
- To comment on how poems are structured and patterned

Phase 2

Session 5

Children are asked to discuss two poems in groups of four, in particular which poem they enjoyed most and which poem they think describes sound best – and why they think that is.

Children's understanding of features of language such as word choices, rhythm and rhyme, as well as humour, can be assessed through their talk and written notes in their poetry journals.

- To make inferences
- To discuss the effects of particular language choices
- To talk about the poet's purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader, e.g. overarching themes

Phase 3

Session 6

After reading and discussing 'Preludes' (T.S. Eliot), children are asked to discuss aspects of the poem with a partner and to note in their poetry journals any words or phrases that they particularly like.

Children are also asked to discuss with a partner what they know about the place, time and season, etc and to speculate about the 'story' behind the poem.

They are asked to make some notes in their poetry journals.

Sources: NC level descriptions

QCA's SATs analysis at the end of Key Stage 2, published in *Implications for Teaching and Learning* (QCA 2004, 2005, 2006), show key pointers in helping children to move from Level 3–Level 4 in reading.

National Curriculum Level descriptions

Level 3

Pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately. They read independently, using strategies appropriately to establish meaning. In responding to fiction and non-fiction they show understanding of the main points and express preferences. They use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate books and find information.

Level 4

In responding to a range of texts, pupils show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters, beginning to use inference and deduction. They refer to the text when explaining their views. They locate and use ideas and information.