

Workshop 1 – Poetry and lyrics

The activities in this workshop are designed to get your class thinking about words, and build their confidence in forming these into poems and lyrics for their songs, with the aim that by the end of the session they will be able to create a poem about an earth-related subject of their choice without using a framework.

Activity 1 – A River of Words

A river of words is a word bank that you can use in some of the following exercises. In our workshops we created rivers of words inspired by the seasons.

Think of a word that you associate with a particular season, e.g. “grow” for spring. Then, for the following word, write down one you associate with “grow”. Continue until you have a bank of 12-15 words.

Spring River of Words

Grow
Appear
Life
Warm
Sunshine
Dawn
Bright
Fresh
Flowers
Vase
Glass
Sharp
Soft

You can use this technique to create a word bank for any subject you might like to write about.

Activity 2 – It was so quiet....

This is an easy way to start writing poems, using words from your river.

Use the title “It was so quiet,” and then write five or six bullet points below. Using some words from your river to get you started, work them into your poem.

It was so quiet...

- I could hear the sun appear over the horizon
- I could hear a snowdrop growing up through the soft earth

- I could hear birds flying through the bright dawn sky
- I could hear a lamb bounce its way across the field
- I could hear snow melting into a stream

You can also add in locations to make your point even more clearly, e.g. "It was so quiet I could hear the sun appear over the horizon in Hawaii."

When reading out the poems, you can mix up whether or not you say "It was so quiet..." to begin the lines, which alters the pacing of your poem.

Activity 3 – In case of...

This is another fun framework to use. The idea is that the poem comes full circle after a few lines.

In case of emergency, call the **fire brigade**,
 In case of the **fire brigade**, turn on the **sirens**,
 In case of **sirens**, cover your **ears**,
 In case of **ears**, wear **ear muffs**
 In case of **ear muffs**, **keep out the cold**,
 In case of **cold**, start a **fire**,
 In case of **fire**, it's an **emergency**,
 In case of **emergency**, call the fire brigade!

Activity 4 – I want to be...

Start by asking the class to write down one word for each of the following categories:

- a part of the body
- a food
- a colour
- an animal
- a place
- a shape

When they have their list, they should take each item in turn and, adding, *I want to be the...* before it, imagine what they would like to do or be. For example:

I want to be...

the hand that joins in friendship with others
 the chocolates that cheer up a sad friend
 the beautiful indigo sky at sunset
 etc...

Activity 5 – What am I...?

This process is about writing a riddle. The statements in the poem should not be too obvious or too difficult for people to guess!

Write about an object, an emotion, a dream, a situation, anything you can think of, using the following ingredients:

- What does it do – what is its function?
- What shape and/or colour is it?
- What sound does it make?
- What is it used for?
- How is it seen?

The riddle should be no more than six lines long, and does not need to rhyme.

For example:

I beat,
And work like a pump
I'm on cards and worn on sleeves
Always hidden in a chest.

Answer: A heart

Activity 6 – Conversations

This activity will encourage children to use their imaginations, conjuring up conversations or inner dialogues features of the earth might have if they could talk! By this stage the children should be confident enough to be able to use the title as a starting point and develop their ideas from there. Lines do not need to rhyme.

For example:

- What are the leaves saying as they argue?
- What is the wind whispering about?
- What does the morning dew say to the plants?
- Why are the families of rocks on the mountainside so lonely?
- What is the river babbling on about as it rushes past?
- What do the trees speak of when they huddle up at night?
- Why is the volcano so angry?
- What does the glacier say as he swallows all the rocks on his slow journey down the mountainside?