

In Hull City of Culture 2017 we created this kit to celebrate the power of poetry. As Absolutely Cultured we're revisiting this resource to share a range of ideas of how to engage with poetry in creative and fun ways.



Through poetry we get to read for meaning, to explore different ways in which words can work together, find out more about feelings and expressing feelings, and build empathy.

Celebrating poetry gives children the opportunity to explore their own connections with words and language, as well as providing new inspiration for imagination and creativity.

Poet Joseph Coelho says:

“ Poetry literally breaks reading and writing into bite-sized chunks. It is a fun, non-threatening way for children to become more literate. In poetry sessions, I've seen elective mutes stand up at the front of their class and read, been told by countless teachers that 'that student never normally puts pen to paper', watched children cry and laugh and think together. ”

This poetry kit contains:

1. Beowulf Sound Poems by Chris McCabe
2. Haikus & Jumping Frogs by Shazea Quraishi
3. Using Moreraps by Joseph Coelho
4. How To Play Oulipo by Sophie Herxheimer
5. One Word Poem by Kate Fox



Activities

Here are some ideas to choose from to enjoy poetry every day! Make sure you have lots of poetry books too, why not try Hull Libraries' online BorrowBox.

Things to talk about

WHAT IS POETRY? WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

Ask people what they think poetry is – how would they describe it? What does poetry mean to them? Is it something that rhymes; or that doesn't have to rhyme? Is it funny, beautiful, boring? Does it help you feel or understand things?

Make a list and see how many different things poetry can be to different people.

WHAT KINDS OF POETRY DO YOU KNOW?

Make a list of all the different kinds of poetry people know of – funny verse, limericks, rap, haikus, nursery rhymes, free verse, story poems. Put the list up on the wall for people to see, and add to it as they meet new kinds of poetry.

TALKING ABOUT A POEM

When you share a poem together read it through more than once, maybe a few times. Have copies of it for people to read; ask people if they would like to read it aloud.

Then talk about it – start by asking people...

'Why do you like – or not like – this poem?'

Make it clear that everyone is right – there is no right or wrong answer. Everyone will find their own meanings, likes and dislikes, and that makes for great arguments and discussion. Here are some more questions you could ask:

- ◆ **What do you think is the main thing being said in this poem?**
- ◆ **How does the poem make you feel? Why?**
- ◆ **Any bits/lines which you specially like?**

Things to do

CREATE A POEM FROM WORDS IN A NEWSPAPER

Cut out words and phrases that you like from newspapers and magazines. Spread them out to see what you've got, move them around and group them. What might you write a poem about? Arrange the cuttings to make a poem. Children can add their own words too if they like.

READING ALOUD

Enjoy reading aloud your favourite poems, and listening to each other reading theirs. As you read and listen you'll find yet more meaning and pleasure.

Look for story poems like *The Highwayman* (Alfred Noyes), *The Owl and the Pussycat* (Edward Lear) or *The Lady of Shalott* (Alfred Lord Tennyson).

How about picture books in rhyme, like *The Gruffalo* (Julia Donaldson) and *The Cat in the Hat* (Dr Seuss)?

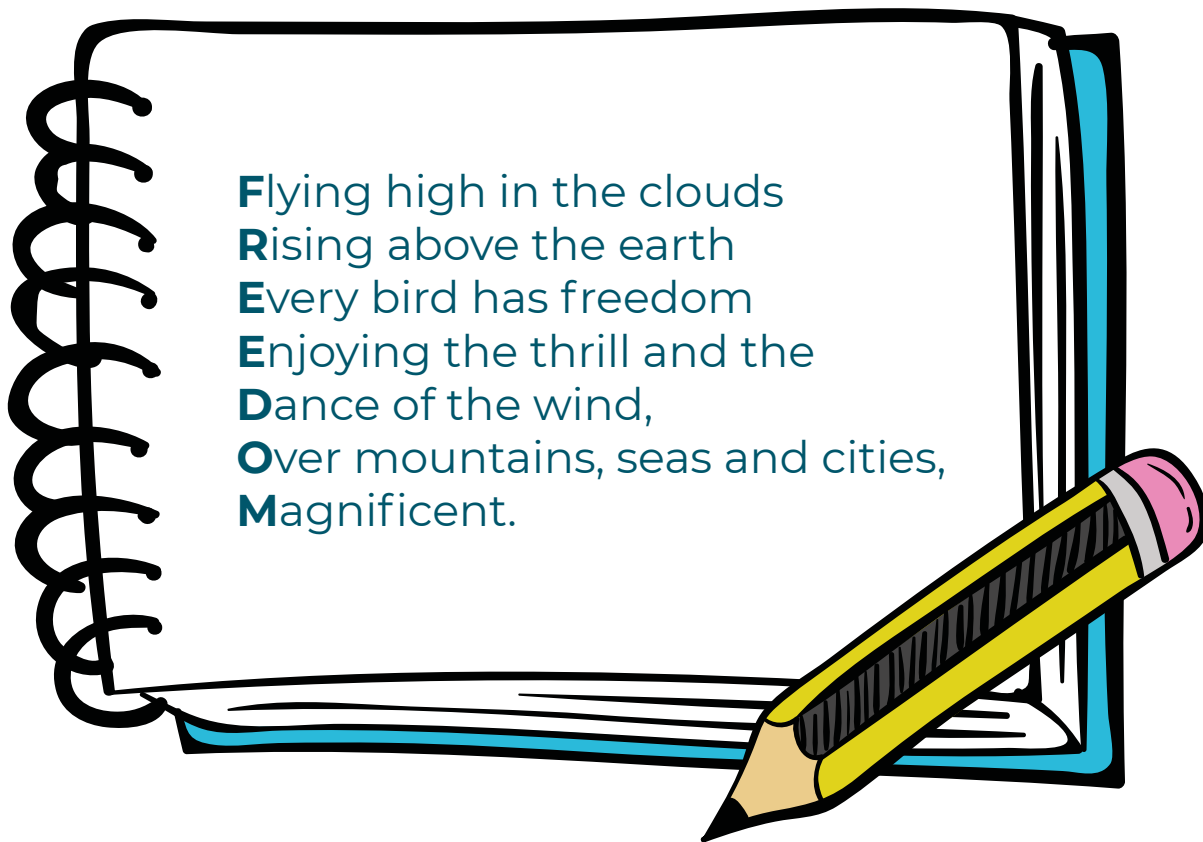
LEARNING POETRY OFF BY HEART

Learning to say or perform a poem aloud can be a great confidence builder and great fun! And it can indeed be 'by heart' – getting pleasure from the poetry, and a deeper understanding of the words - and being able to share that pleasure with others.

A good way to learn by heart is in a group: put a poem up on a whiteboard (choose one with strong metre and rhyme, much easier to learn than free verse); to read it aloud a couple of times, then cover it up and see how much you can remember, a line at a time.

ACROSTIC

This is a poem where, if you read down the first letters of the lines of the poem, you get a word which is the subject of the poem. Here's an example using the word and theme of freedom:



Flying high in the clouds
Rising above the earth
Every bird has freedom
Enjoying the thrill and the
Dance of the wind,
Over mountains, seas and cities,
Magnificent.

WATCH POETS 'LIVE'

Watch poets reading and talking about their work on CD, video and the internet. Find and listen to your favourites, and get to know new ones.

FUN WITH WORDS – ALLITERATION

Choosing words starting with the same letter gives wonderful sounds to poems.

Look at this description of a fox...

His fur was freaked.
His foxy face was frantic as he flew. A few feathers
fluttered out of his mouth...
(F for Fox/Carol Ann Duffy)

Have a go!

FUN WITH WORDS – ONOMATAPOEIA

Balloons pop. Water drips. Fierce dogs growl.
Thunder roars.

Think of some more phrases like this where the verb sounds like the thing it is describing – just as the word ‘pop’ sounds like the sound of a balloon bursting.

‘LIST’ POEMS

Making a list of things can turn into a poem.

In Michael Rosen’s poem *The Greatest*, each verse is a list of people and the things they are greatest at:

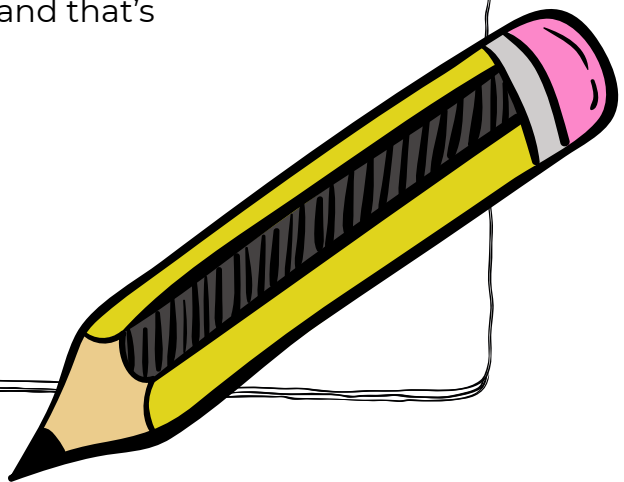
I’m the world’s greatest at sport....
...I’m the world’s greatest inventor

Children at Alderman Cogan CE Primary School in Hull wrote this poem:

No Word Of A Lie

I’m the first person on earth and that’s no word of a lie
Both my eyes are the colours of the rainbow and that’s
no word of a lie
I wrote the Collins English Dictionary and that’s
no word of a lie
It concluded:
Alright, alright, you know we are lying
We’re the biggest liars in our school
And that’s no word of a lie!

What lies could your children tell?



INSPIRATION WITH A WELL-KNOWN POEM

Here is a way of further enjoying a favourite poem or getting to know a new one, and then being inspired to write your own.

Choose a poem, and spend time reading it together and talking about it, including the context in which it was written. Hide the title – and ask people what title they would give it. When you feel you're getting to know the poem, have a go at giving it a new first or last line.

Or take the first line and then follow on by writing your own poem. This can be a powerful way of being inspired by the feelings of the original to write about your own feelings.

POETRY ALOUD: POETRY SLAM

A poetry slam is a poetry competition where poems are judged by the audience who give each poem a mark.

- ◆ **With friends of family, read your favourite poems – or poems which you have written**
- ◆ **Take turns in reading out the poems**
- ◆ **After each poem the audience holds up score cards (1-5) or gives a show of hands at the end of each round**
- ◆ **Hold rounds, with one person going out in each round until you have a winner.**

POETRY ALOUD: CHORAL POETRY

With choral poetry everyone learns and recites a poem together in a group. It's an enjoyable way of experiencing poetry with everyone joining in together.

- ◆ **Short, humorous narrative poems are good for this**
- ◆ **As well as unison, you can encourage solos**
- ◆ **Think about variations in pace and volume – you can have good fun with this!**
- ◆ **And actions, gestures, body movements and finger plays**

POETRY 'X FACTOR'

Choose a poem per person/child and decide how to 'perform' it – e.g. learn and recite it, read it aloud, take turns in reading different parts, add noises and actions, beat out a rhythm.

Then have a special poetry show – read and recite your chosen poems. You could have a 'judging panel' to give feedback. Make the feedback positive and helpful, with tips and ideas for how else you could present the poem.

Vote for the poem which you think has the biggest X Factor!

ACTING OUT POEMS

Many poems work well in performance. For some ideas have a look at Julia Donaldson's Perform a Poem – and choose a poem which everyone is keen to have a go with.

Read and talk about the poem together and then work together on actions for each part of the poem. Now put on a performance!

POETRY PARTY

Invite family, or friends, to a special poetry party in the home or online with performances and recitals of children's poetry.

It could include any of the activities above – e.g. a poetry slam, 'X factor', or choral poetry.

More reading ideas

Here are some suggestions for poetry books to read, including many inspiring and enjoyable collections for children and young people.

John Agard & Grace Nichols	A Caribbean Dozen	Walker Books	978-1406334593
Valerie Bloom	Hot Like Fire	Bloomsbury	978-0747599739
Lis Brownlee, Jan Dean & Michaela Morgan	Reaching the Stars: Poems about Extraordinary Women and Girls	Macmillan	978-1509814282
Joseph Coelho	Werewolf Club Rules!	Frances Lincoln	978-1847804525
Paul Cookson	Crazy Classrooms	Frances Lincoln	978-1847805058
Sally Crabtree & Sonia Esplugas	Magic Train Ride	Barefoot Books	978-1846866579
Sarah Crossan	One (a YA novel written in free verse)	Bloomsbury	978-1408827215
Nicola Davies & Mark Hearld	A First Book of Nature	Walker Books	978-1406349160
Jean Dean & Roger Stevens	The Penguin in Lost Property	Macmillan	978-1447248583
Julia Donaldson & Clare Melinsky	Poems to Perform	Macmillan	978-1447243397
Carol Ann Duffy (ed)	101 Poems for Children: A Laureate's Choice	Macmillan	978-1447220268
Matt Goodfellow	Carry Me Away	Matador	978-1785892608
John Hegley	I Am a Poetato	Frances Lincoln	978-1847803979
Ted Hughes	Collected poems for children	Faber	978-0571215027
Roger McGough, M Rosen, K Paul	You Tell Me!	Frances Lincoln	978-1847804440
Gaby Morgan (ed.)	Read Me 2: A Poem for Every Day of the Year	Macmillan	978-1447294009
Michaela Morgan	Wonderland: Alice in Poetry	Macmillan	978-1509818846
Brian Moses	Lost Magic	Macmillan	978-1509838769
Rachel Rooney & Ellie Jenkins	The Language of Cat	Frances Lincoln	978-1847801678
Joshua Seigal	I Don't Like Poetry	Bloomsbury	978-1472930033
Roger Stevens	Off By Heart	A & C Black	978-1408192948

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