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NATIONAL POETRY DAY @ 25 YEARS ON THURSDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2019

This year National Poetry Day marks its 25th anniversary with a mass campaign highlighting poetry's power to touch on truth - whether intimate or on the grand scale.

The **'In Poetry, Truth'** campaign, which culminates on Thursday 3 October with thousands of poetry events across the UK, is supported by poetry champion and broadcaster Cerys Matthews, with comedian Henry Normal, actress Jade Anouka, Instagram influencer Savannah Brown, footballer Marvin Sordell and artist Chris Riddell. A new slate of National Poetry Day Ambassadors includes Tony Walsh, Sarah Crossan, Michael Rosen, Nikita Gill, Karl Nova and Kate Clanchy, whose voices will feature in live and recorded performances, on film, podcasts and online.

The scale of the celebrations reflects poetry's growing popularity, particularly among millennials seeking fresh ways to communicate what matters most to them. In choosing truth as its theme, National Poetry Day highlights a hunger for new ways of thinking, speaking and feeling.

Poetry sales have risen almost 50% since 2014, with two-thirds of buyers aged under 34 (Nielsen Bookscan). Poets are changing too: 3.1 % of the adult population of England write poetry, according to the government's **Taking Part** survey. That's more than 2 million adults directly engaged with the genre.

On National Poetry Day 2018 the hashtag #nationalpoetryday was #1 global trending topic on Twitter with total reach of 734.5m, the celebrations inspiring more than 1.5 million live encounters with poetry.

Here is a selection of campaign highlights leading up to National Poetry Day 2019.

- **New National Poetry Day Ambassadors and supporters include Michael Rosen, Kate Clanchy, Tony "Longfella" Walsh, Sarah Crossan and Nikita Gill.**

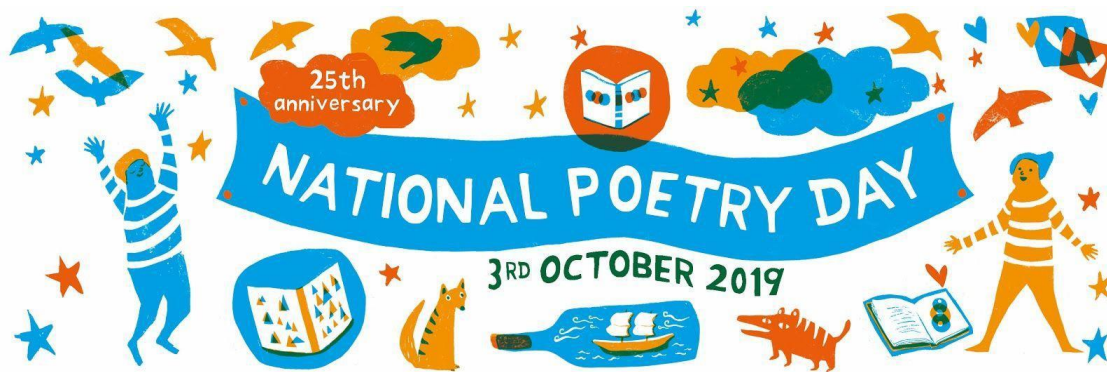
Michael Rosen comments on becoming a NPD Ambassador:-

"I am over the moon to be a National Poetry Day Ambassador. I can't think of anything more important than to help children and young people find a voice, and explore how they feel about the world. Sometimes you can do that by reading something that someone else has written. Sometimes you can do that by writing yourself."

(For full list of Ambassadors please visit <https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/ambassador>)

- **A new National Poetry Day anthology of poems** curated by broadcaster Cerys Matthews, invites “poetry champions” - from music, sport, comedy...and outer space – to nominate poems that capture truths that matter to them. The poem choices of an astronaut, an Olympic rower and a criminologist will sit alongside poems chosen by members of the public. *Tell Me The Truth About Life: A National Poetry Day Anthology*, is published by Michael O’Mara Books on 12th September (hardback, £12.99).
- **Tell Me The Truth About Life: Poems that Matter and Why – a poetry podcast with Cerys Matthews.** Five contributors to the anthology - author Michael Morpurgo, comedy writer Henry Normal, teacher and author Kate Clanchy, instagram star Nikita Gill and actor Jade Anouka - discuss the poems that speak truth to them. Presented by Susannah Herbert and introduced by Cerys Matthews. Podcast available to download across all platforms including iTunes, Soundcloud and Spotify from September 2.
- **#SpeakYourTruthPoem competition.** With YouTube, National Poetry Day will launch a nationwide search for the best online poetry talent in August. The competition will be judged by Tony “Longfella” Walsh, Savannah Brown, Nikita Gill and footballer Marvin Sordell, who will invite their audiences to upload new poems to YouTube and Instagram. Target audience is 18yrs and over. To be launched in August, competition closes in September, winners announced on National Poetry Day.
- **Poetry Booksellers Love:** a choice of 25 poetry books from the 25 years of National Poetry Day. The Booksellers Association has partnered with National Poetry Day this year to compile a list of booksellers’ poetry favourites for all ages, to be announced in September.
- **#MyNPD Poem Challenge.** All children aged 6 to 13 are invited – via their teachers and schools – to write a poem on the National Poetry Day 2019 theme of Truth and share it on social media using hashtag #MyNPDpoem. This nationwide poetry challenge is launched by Forward Arts Foundation - the charity behind National Poetry Day - in association with CLPE (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education) and with the support of ALCS (Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society).
- **#BBCLocalPoets campaign** launched on 10th June 2019. The BBC has invited listeners to local radio to identify home truths about their region that deserve to be better known nationally. Their suggestions will inspire 13 poets, each representing a local radio station in the BBC’s 13 English regions. The poems be shared as video and audio across the BBC on National Poetry Day.
- **The Places of Poetry** project, led by Exeter University, centres on a distinctive digital map of England and Wales. Through a summer campaign, concluding on National Poetry Day, writers of all ages and backgrounds will be invited to pin new poems of place, heritage and identity to the map. Places of Poetry will celebrate the diversity, heritage and personalities of place.
- **Tell Me The Truth About Life: Cerys Matthews in conversation with special guests**– On National Poetry Day celebrate by listening to Cerys Matthews and guests talking about *Tell Me The Truth About Life* at Foyles Charing Cross Road from 6.30pm, followed by a book signing. Details to be released end of July. www.foyles.co.uk

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Notes to editors:

Forward Arts Foundation is a registered charity in England and Wales (charity number 1037939), promoting public knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of poetry in the UK and Ireland. It is committed to widening poetry's audience, honouring achievement and supporting talent: programmes include National Poetry Day, the Forward Prizes for Poetry and the Forward Book of Poetry, an annual anthology of the year's best poems. For more information, visit: <http://www.forwardartsfoundation.org/>

National Poetry Day is an annual celebration that inspires people throughout the UK to enjoy, discover and share poems. Everyone is invited to join in, whether by organising events, displays, competitions or by simply posting favourite lines of poetry on social media using #nationalpoetryday.

National Poetry Day was founded in 1994 and enjoys the support of the BBC, Arts Council England, the Royal Mail and leading literary and cultural organisations. The 2019 25th anniversary Truth campaign is supported by UK book trade wholesaler Gardners and leading education supplier Browns Books for Students. For more information visit: <https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/>

The Teach Company

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including print and digital. It is the publisher of national education magazines including Teach Secondary, Teach Primary and Teach Early Years and runs teaching websites such as [teachwire.net](https://www.teachwire.net) and [primaryleaders.com](https://www.primaryleaders.com), collectively reaching hundreds of thousands of teachers each month.

