

Write a poem by playing a game

NATIONAL
POETRY
DAY 2020

See It Like a Poet



Simon Mole: Poems, raps and writing games for kids

National
Literacy
Trust

Changing life stories

Learning outcomes:

- Pupils will make vocabulary choices to change and enhance meaning
- Pupils will draft and edit a poem

You will need:

- Unusual images of ordinary things, this might be in a book or this quiz:
- <https://brightside.me/wonder-quizzes/test-can-you-recognize-everyday-objects-close-up-262360/>
- Objects for the class to write about – this could be everyday items they already have (e.g. a jumper, a shoe, a pencil) or a set of objects brought into class
- Write a Poem by Playing a Game video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kv_2cNae6hE

Simon Says:

Only got 15-20 minutes? Just whack [this video](#) on and sit back to enjoy watching your young poets at work!



Taster (5 minutes)

Explain to pupils that they are going to work with a poet to write their own poem. The poet won't be physically in the classroom but speaking to them via YouTube.

- Share this song by Simon Mole and Gecko which imagines animals in unusual places.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvnSx7d9KNg>
- Discuss the song, particularly focusing on whether they enjoyed it or not. Are there any other animals that could go to the jazz cave? Which instruments would they play? Remind children that songs are often poems set to music.

Warmer (5 minutes):

Play a game in which children look at an unusual image and guess what the object is. You could do this by:

- Playing the picture quiz as a class
- <https://brightside.me/wonder-quizzes/test-can-you-recognize-everyday-objects-close-up-262360/>
- Looking at a non-fiction book such as *Actual Size* by Steve Jenkins
- Looking at unusual illustrations e.g. images drawn by Shaun Tan in his books *The Arrival* or *The Lost Thing*

Simon Says:

“Being a poet is about looking closely at tiny important details. It’s also about being able to see things differently.”

Main writing activity: write a poem by playing a game (10-15 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kv_2cNae6hE

This fun tutorial video begins with a game to be played in pairs or small groups, but quickly begins to guide your young poets through a step by step process to write their own poem inspired by the theme of national poetry day 2020 – see like a poet!

Encourage students to be as detailed and specific as they can with every answer.

Simon says:

“For any child who gets ‘stuck’ when it comes to putting their ideas on paper, remind them of those first ‘unedited’ responses to the game at the beginning of the video and encourage them to write those down.”

Editing activity (10 minutes)

The last section of the video gives advice on how to develop and shape the raw poem they have into a final version. The amount each pupil will want or need to do that of course varies massively, so perhaps you could allocate 10 minutes to finish off and/or practise reading the poems aloud.

Simon says:

“Try keeping your reminder instructions simple at this point to make sure your poets feel total ownership of their work. Using general questions can be helpful for this, for example:

- Can you add some detail to your favourite bit?
- Is there anything you could leave out?
- Are you happy with the answers in the order that they are, or would they work better rearranged slightly?”

Sharing (5 minutes)

Pupils perform their poems for each other. If need be, create the right environment for performance by:

- Reminding the class how to be a good audience
- Using this performance warm up video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7EEMS9VPY8>
- Having a 'dress rehearsal' where pupils perform just for a partner or all at the same time!

Prompt pupils to provide feedback for each other focusing particularly on aspects relevant to this poem: how they have presented an ordinary item in a different or unusual way; their use of vocabulary or the sounds of words to create a sense of the imagined item; or how they performed the poem to convey their meaning.