

National
POETRY
Day 7 October
2021



Words, words, words... choices, choices, choices

A guide to identifying key or 'clue' words within poems that students are reading, providing a framework to reflect on word choice in their own writing. Students will complete a reflection task at the beginning and end of the session.

Key Stage 2

#ChooseAPoem
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Sonnet with particles of gold

Today scientists discovered the origins of gold:
the sound of egg noodles crisping up in the wok,
the garden carpeted in kōwhai petals,
the way my phone corrects *raumati* (*summer*) to *rainstorm*.
The day after my grandmother died was white-gold in colour.
A star explodes and wings are found among the debris
along with pieces of a character I never memorised—
our only name for her, 婆, a woman 女 beneath a wave 波.
“Drift,” she mouths softly in English, “what is drift?”
My mother translates into her language, not one of mine.
I try to make myself remember by writing 婆 over and over
on squares of paper covering the walls so I am surrounded
by the women and the water radicals they hold close.
The tips of waves touch me in my sleep.

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WORD CHOICE REFLECTION ACTIVITY

(5 MINUTES)

Read each statement and choose the answer that most sounds like you:

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When I read poetry I love exploring and looking for words

1 Nope!	2 I don't know	3 Sometimes	4 Most of the time	5 Yes, I'm curious about words
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I could explain to a friend why word choice is so important in poetry

1 Poets choose words!?	2 Sort of	3 I think so	4 For sure	5 Yes, I could teach a whole lesson on it!
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I'm curious about how I use words in my own writing

1 I can choose words!?	2 Not really	3 Sometimes	4 Mostly	5 Yes, word choice is my favourite tool
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Add your results together. What did you get?

SCORES

0-7

Amazing, you have an opportunity to explore words and enrich your poems! This is going to really help with communicating your message to a reader.

8-15

Word choice is your strength as a writer. Keep exploring and keep asking questions.

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MAKE IT NEW (15 MINUTES)

Take a poem that you have recently read. Ask students to re-write the poem, changing a few key words to:

1. Make it funny
2. Make it sad
3. Turn it into a hopeful message

Share and discuss how we **chose** the 'key words' to change. Why are these words so important?

THE LOST POEM (15 MINUTES)

This activity works best with a poem that students are drafting themselves. It can fit with a poem that you are studying too. In the middle of a piece of paper, copy out your favourite line from your poem.

- Leave these around the room and ask the students to circulate, imagining that each line that they find is a fragment from a long lost poem.
- Which key words would they use as clues to the rest of the poem? Ask the students to circle/mark the words as they go around the room, and to write what they think the clue suggests about the lost poem.
- When students return to their desk, ask if they agree with other people's **choices**.

FALSE CLUES (10 MINUTES)

Go through your whole poem and highlight or underline what you think are false clues in your poem – words that lead the reader in the wrong direction. Reflect on your message, your favourite line, or the title that you are thinking about using.

How can you change these words to make them feel more like key words?

Go back and repeat the **Word Choice Reflection Activity (5 minutes)**. Share reflections as a class.

