

# National Poetry Day 2023

**Comparing refuge**

Session plans for pupils aged 11-14 (KS3)



# National Poetry Day 2023: refuge

To celebrate National Poetry Day and the 2023 theme of refuge, National Literacy Trust have created two 60-minute learning sequences designed to help pupils reflect on the theme of refuge, all whilst encouraging a love of reading and writing poetry.

The resource consists of a series of discussion questions, freewriting exercises and reflective writing activities, which will guide pupils on a learning journey, culminating in the composition of a poem.

The learning sequence is aimed at pupils aged 11 to 14 and can be delivered as part of the English curriculum.

## Vocabulary and background knowledge

For the purpose of this learning sequence, we are using the following definition of refuge:

**Refuge is the state of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or difficulty.**

We recommend spending time before the sessions exploring the word 'refuge' as a class. *What do pupils think of when they hear the word refuge?*

Some pupils may link the word to 'refugee'. Reflect on the relationship between the words refuge and refugee. The term 'refugee' comes from the Latin word 'refugium', which means 'the act of taking refuge'.

Once pupils have a clear understanding of what refuge is, invite them to spend a few minutes sketching a picture of what refuge means to them. This may be a place, a person or an object which makes them feel safe. Pupils may wish to label their picture with words or phrases that they associate with refuge. Pupils can continue to add words or phrases to their picture throughout the sessions. They can then refer back to their ideas when they come to composing their own poems.

## Session one: Discussing and exploring poetry

### Learning objective

To explore and reflect on refuge through poetry.

### Starter (20 minutes)

Read aloud (or watch the poets' own recordings) the poems below to your class, modelling expression. You may wish to pre-teach any new vocabulary beforehand.

- **Dear Mum**, BTEC written by Steven Camden, found [here](#).
- **Science Block Toilets** written by Steven Camden, found [here](#).
- **Shelter** written by Heather Cahoon, found [here](#).

Invite pupils to share their initial thoughts with each other. *What were their first impressions of each poem? How did it make them feel? Which was their favourite, and what made this poem stand out above the others?*

### Discussion activity (15 minutes)

Invite pupils to select a poem in pairs to explore further. Invite pupils to first read the poem aloud again, sharing verses, before reflecting on the questions below.

- *In what way has the poet described a safe place, or refuge?*
- *What is the narrator's refuge? How do you know? Why is it a place of refuge?*
- *Why do you think having a place of refuge is important?*
- *Where else could be a source of refuge for somebody?*

Once pupils have had a chance to reflect on the poem, open the discussions to the wider class. You may wish to spend time collating pupils ideas into a 'refuge word bank' which pupils can use in future session when creating their own refuge poems.

Finally, invite pupils to reflect on the questions '*Where else might others find safety or shelter from pursuit, danger, or difficulty?*', and '*Why is it important for everyone to have a place of refuge?*'

### Main activity (15 minutes)

Ask pupils to reflect on and discuss the questions below.

1. *What does refuge mean to you?*
2. *Do you have a place that makes you feel safe? Why do you think it makes you feel this way? This may be an actual place, a hobby, or a person.*

3. *How do you make somebody feel safe?*
4. *Why might somebody need 'refuge'?*
5. *Where are some places of refuge within our community?*

Invite pupils to add to their drawing of their refuge or create a new drawing, and label this with key words or phrases.

### Plenary (5 minutes)

Can you think of five places of refuge which you could recommend to somebody new starting at your school, either in school or in the wider community?

## Session two: Writing poetry

### Learning objective

To explore the theme of refuge through poetry.



### Starter (5 minutes)

Inspire pupils with poetry through freewriting, by warming up their writing muscles.

- Set a timer for three minutes
- Invite pupils to freewrite without fear of layout, spelling or grammar, using one of the prompts below. Encourage pupils to write without hesitation. They won't be expected to share their writing – it's just for them.

Invite pupils to use one of the prompts below to kickstart their ideas.

*I feel at peace when...*

*My place of refuge is...*

*When I hear/see/feel/touch/taste..., I feel refuge because...*

### Main activity (50 minutes)

Invite pupils to spend 20 minutes creating a haiku about their refuge before spending 25 minutes creating a found poem or shape poem inspired by refuge.

Invite pupils to spend the final 5 minutes sharing their poems if they wish to. *Can others guess where, what or who their refuge is?*

## Haiku

Invite pupils to compose a haiku inspired by the theme of refuge, shelter or safety, using ideas from their previous discussions and activities.

Invite pupils to create a mental image or a quick sketch of their refuge before creating their haiku.

A haiku is a three-line poem, with five syllables in the first line, three syllables in the second line and five syllables in the third line.

**Example:**

*My refuge, a cloud,  
Mind at peace,  
The place I count sheep.*

**Layout:**

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## Found Poem

For this activity you will need:

- Newspapers, magazines or scrap cuttings
- Scissors
- A4 paper (per pupil)
- Glue



Invite pupils to create their own found poem exploring the theme of refuge. You may wish to model this to the class beforehand.

A 'found poem' is composed by taking words, phrases or whole paragraphs from ready-made sources, reorganising them, and adding and/or deleting words from a readymade text such as newspapers, magazines, and scrap cutting

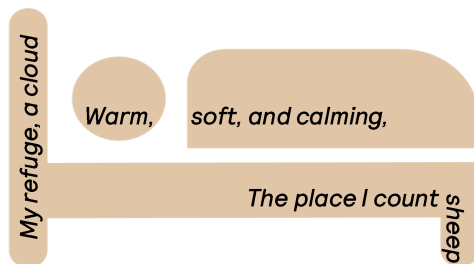
## Shape poems

Reread the refuge poems from session one. *If this poem were a shape poem, how do you think it would be presented? And why?*

A shape poem is a poem that is shaped like the thing it describes. The shape adds to the meaning of the poem.

Encourage pupils to use all they have learnt throughout the activities to compose their own shape poem inspired by the theme of refuge.

**Example:**



### Plenary (5 minutes)

Reflect on how you could be a place of refuge for someone. What three attributes would you need to have to be this?

## Curriculum links

### English programmes of study: Key stage 3 National Curriculum in England

#### Reading

Reading pupils should be taught to:

develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently through:

- reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including in particular whole books, short stories, poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors.

#### Writing

Pupils should be taught to:

write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through:

- writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including:
  - stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing

#### Programme of Study for PSHE education (KS1-5)

Learning opportunities in Living in the Wider World

- the importance of having compassion towards others; shared responsibilities we all have for caring for other people and living things; how to show care and concern for others.

### Curriculum for excellence in Scotland Fourth Level

#### English

- I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I am developing my own style. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.  
LIT 3-20a / LIT 4-20a

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#### Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

- I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support.  
HWB 4-08a
- As I explore the rights to which I and others are entitled, I am able to exercise these rights appropriately and accept the responsibilities that go with them. I show respect for the rights of others.  
HWB 4-09a

### Language and Literacy Curriculum for Northern Ireland

#### Language and Literacy

Through engagement with a range of stimuli including peers, poetry, prose, drama, non-fiction, media and multimedia which enhance creativity and stimulate curiosity and imagination, pupils should have opportunities to become critical, creative and effective communicators by:

- expressing meaning, feelings and viewpoints
- writing and presenting in different media and for different audiences and purposes
- Use a range of techniques, forms and media to convey information creatively and appropriately.

#### Learning for life and work

- develop the young person as a contributor to society

### Programme of Study for English: Key Stage 3 taken from the Welsh Curriculum

#### Reading

Learners should be given opportunities to:

- read a wide range of continuous and non-continuous texts, in printed and dynamic format, as a basis for oral and written responses. These should include:
  - o traditional and contemporary poetry and prose
  - o classic children's fiction and poetry

#### Writing

- produce poetic writing, using imagery and poetic devices, e.g. rhyme and form
- use a wide range of written and dynamic stimuli, e.g. stories, picture books, images, poems, experiences, film, paintings, music

### Programme of Study for PSHE education (KS1–5)

#### Learning opportunities in Living in the Wider World

- the importance of having compassion towards others; shared responsibilities we all have for caring for other people and living things; how to show care and concern for others.