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In this book the use of he, him or his is gender neutral and is intended to include both sexes.

Introduction

Why teach poetry?

Teaching poetry is an enjoyable activity that allows pupils and teacher to interact with each other, to share ideas as to how words can be used for effect and to experience the joy of speaking and listening to rhythms and rhymes, thinking about imagery and meanings that amuse, challenge and stimulate thought.

Everyone can be a teacher of poetry, you only have to enjoy reading, speaking and listening to the variety of ways that words can be used to give meaning to an audience. To help children understand that their language offers them the chance to develop as thinkers; to express their ideas in a variety of ways of their choice, and to appreciate and share the skills of others is a privilege for a teacher.

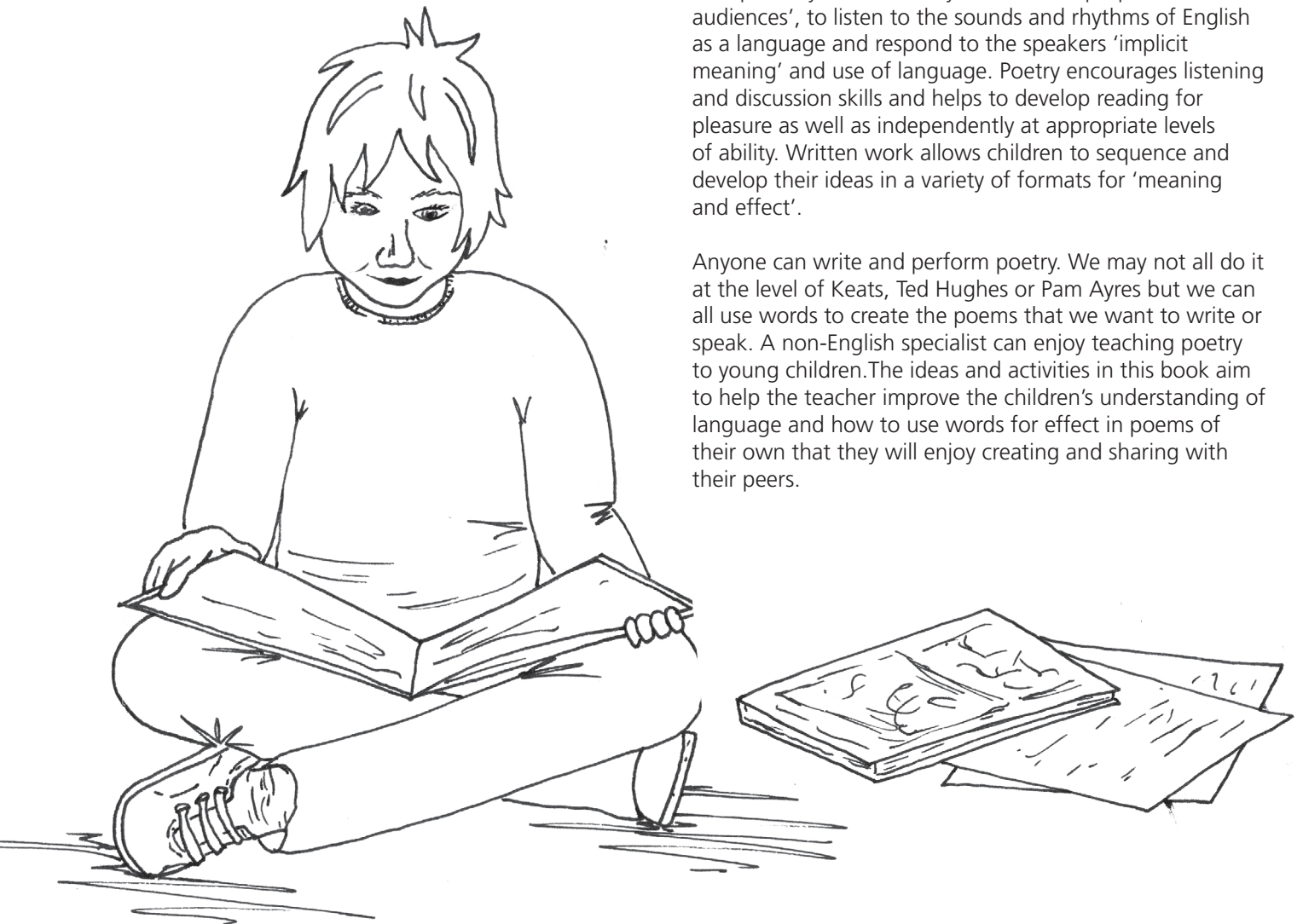
Poetry plays an important part in our lives, we learn the chants and rhymes of childhood that help us to understand the culture we are living in, its ideas and values. Nursery

rhymes set to music allow children to begin to understand how music, words, rhyme and rhythm can be used to give understanding and pleasure. In the early years of education, we are introducing children to their language, its usage and giving them a tool to communicate more effectively with as they progress. We are helping them to develop their creativity, their thinking skills, their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills within the National Curriculum in a way that should be interactive, challenging and pleasurable for them.

Traditional rhymes can help a young child develop a more varied vocabulary and an understanding of how to use words differently and effectively. Poetry, with its different ways of using words in different situations allows children to enjoy and have fun with words, the ideas they inspire and the images they can develop with them.

In terms of literacy skills, poetry enables children to speak 'competently and creatively for different purposes and audiences', to listen to the sounds and rhythms of English as a language and respond to the speakers 'implicit meaning' and use of language. Poetry encourages listening and discussion skills and helps to develop reading for pleasure as well as independently at appropriate levels of ability. Written work allows children to sequence and develop their ideas in a variety of formats for 'meaning and effect'.

Anyone can write and perform poetry. We may not all do it at the level of Keats, Ted Hughes or Pam Ayres but we can all use words to create the poems that we want to write or speak. A non-English specialist can enjoy teaching poetry to young children. The ideas and activities in this book aim to help the teacher improve the children's understanding of language and how to use words for effect in poems of their own that they will enjoy creating and sharing with their peers.



How to use this book

This book is written in different sections so that teachers can, if they wish, follow a route through the different sections and gradually introduce children to the different aspects of poetry and then use them in their topic work.

Let's get started aims to introduce children to different types of poems and encourages them to listen to poems, to read poems and to work out how words are used in them, to speak poems and write poems of their own. We use traditional poems so that children, who may not have heard them at home or playschool, can access the traditional, older literary culture of the United Kingdom. These poems are good starting points as they have rhyme, rhythm, repetition and introduce them to the next section of the book where they explore the technical aspects of poetry and forms it can be presented in.

Children begin to understand that poems can be discussed and deconstructed. They learn to listen to each other and begin to understand that it is alright to express different points of views and ideas about poems.

Exploring different types of poems

This is the 'technical section' that introduces the children simply to different aspects of poetry. They explore rhyme, rhythm, repetition, the use of words to present imagery, poems and the senses as well as sound in poems. The sessions work through the different aspects of each type of poem showing examples and setting tasks that help the children to understand how poetry is constructed. Teachers can use this section to teach the children how to write in particular forms and how to identify them in their reading. The different forms can be used when exploring different topics and with different subjects.

Links with other subjects

This section of the text offers ideas about how to use the different subject areas to revisit aspects of poetry and use them in subjects other than English. The subject ideas are developed showing how different forms of poems can be used to help the children understand the work they are doing and to reinforce their subject knowledge in a

different and fun way. Teachers can also develop their own approaches to using poetry in the subject areas they are introducing the children to.

Topics

These sessions are developed from different topics that are often worked on at KS1. The images, ideas and poems presented in the topics aim to encourage the children to enjoy the poetry they are reading, discussing and writing. The poetry becomes a means of developing thinking, knowledge and understanding of the topic and how they can use words effectively to express themselves.

The resources support the session activities and include definitions of terms, examples of useful poems, and provide a CD that has images and guidance sheets that help progress learning about poetry and using it to effect through ages 5 to 8 years. The CD can be used to provide images that stimulate discussion and can be used for poetry and writing sessions as the teacher wishes. The CD is divided into folders that are referenced in the text and show which images can be used for the different types of sessions.



The CD provides opportunities to extend tasks and to develop further speaking, listening, reading and writing skills for the young child.

It contains many paintings and pictures that are put into folders relating to the sessions in the book, but the images can also be used as the teacher wishes.

Paintings and photographs have been used to allow the children to discuss how ideas can be presented visually and then poetically. The artist's painting of the child in 'Doing my own thing' and the poet's interpretation of the painting shows the children that words can be used in a variety of ways to describe and bring to life images that they look at and make. The contrast between a picture that is painted and a photograph can also be looked at as part of Art and ICT cross-curricular links.

Let's get started!

Topic - Introducing poems to your class

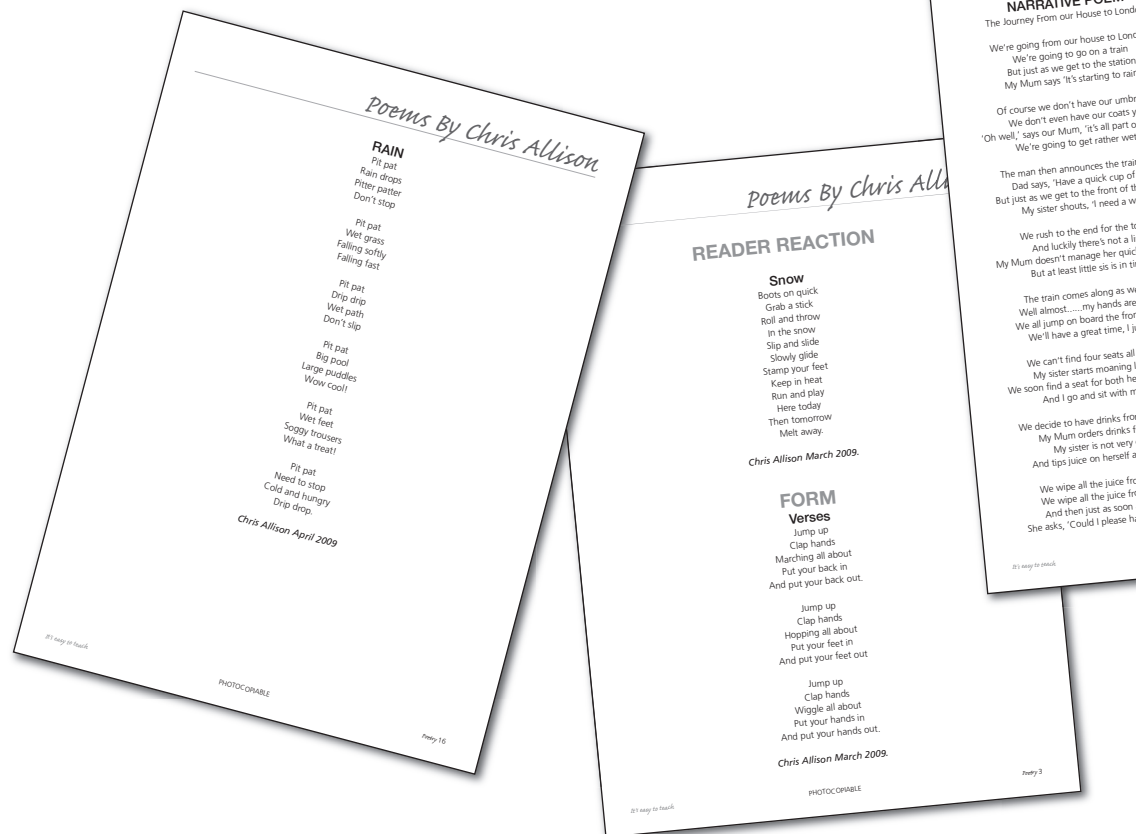
Preparation

- Plan this session on introducing poems to the children indicating how long each activity – speaking, listening, reading and writing, is going to take.
- You may find that a half hour after lunch is a good time for poetry activities that are going to lead into cross-curricular work when poetry topics are introduced.
- Arrange your space to suit the type of activities the children will do. It is a good idea to start in a circle or sitting in front of the teacher.
- Remembering the purpose of the lesson is *introducing poems to the children*; make sure your *resources* include:
- Examples of poetry, topic boxes if required, and any resources that you feel will help the children to understand what poetry is - this can include a visiting poet or librarian or other relevant visitor, including pets.

Ask the children to sit as desired for the beginning of the lesson and settle them down with a relaxation exercise (three minutes) so they are ready to listen.

Tell the children to sit with their backs as straight as they can get them, and ask them to imagine that the top of their heads are stretching to the ceiling. When the children are sitting in this way ask them to breath quietly and slowly, in through their noses and out through their mouths. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine a happy place, let them think about this and tell them that they are going to enjoy their task, which is to learn about poems. Ask them to open their eyes and smile.

They should now be relaxed and able to focus on the questions you will ask them.



Have fun with different kinds of poetry

Session 2 – Writing

Introduction

Using the Word Wall, remind the children of the definitions of rhyme and rhythm. The aim of this session is to enable the children to create their own poems using clusters of rhyming words from the resource list (see page 63). Tell the children they are going to write their own rhyming and rhythm poems.

Main Activity

Put a word on the board and ask the children to give you a word that rhymes with it, then a word that rhymes with the one given. Repeat until you have six to eight rhyming words, for example:

Dog, fog, clog, flog, blog, slog.

Rain, pane, lane, stain, gain, Spain!

Literacy links: The children are learning to read and spell using alternative ways of spelling the graphemes already taught.

Using the CD, show the children a cluster of topic rhyming words plus the ones they have already made. Ask each child to choose a topic area – you may direct children to word lists according to their reading abilities.

Worksheets

Give the children a worksheet that reflects their ability. Using the work sheets as a guide, ask the children to write their own rhyming poems.

Worksheet 4 'My pet cat' (see page 69)

This is a worksheet for children who are beginning to read and is deliberately simple.

Worksheet 5 'Bend send' (see page 70)

Most children should be able to complete this worksheet.

Worksheet 6 'Rhyming poem' (see page 71)

The children are going to be asked to write a poem about a topic of their choice that rhymes. Sleep and snow have been chosen as these are topics they will be familiar with. Other subjects can be chosen by the teacher and children.

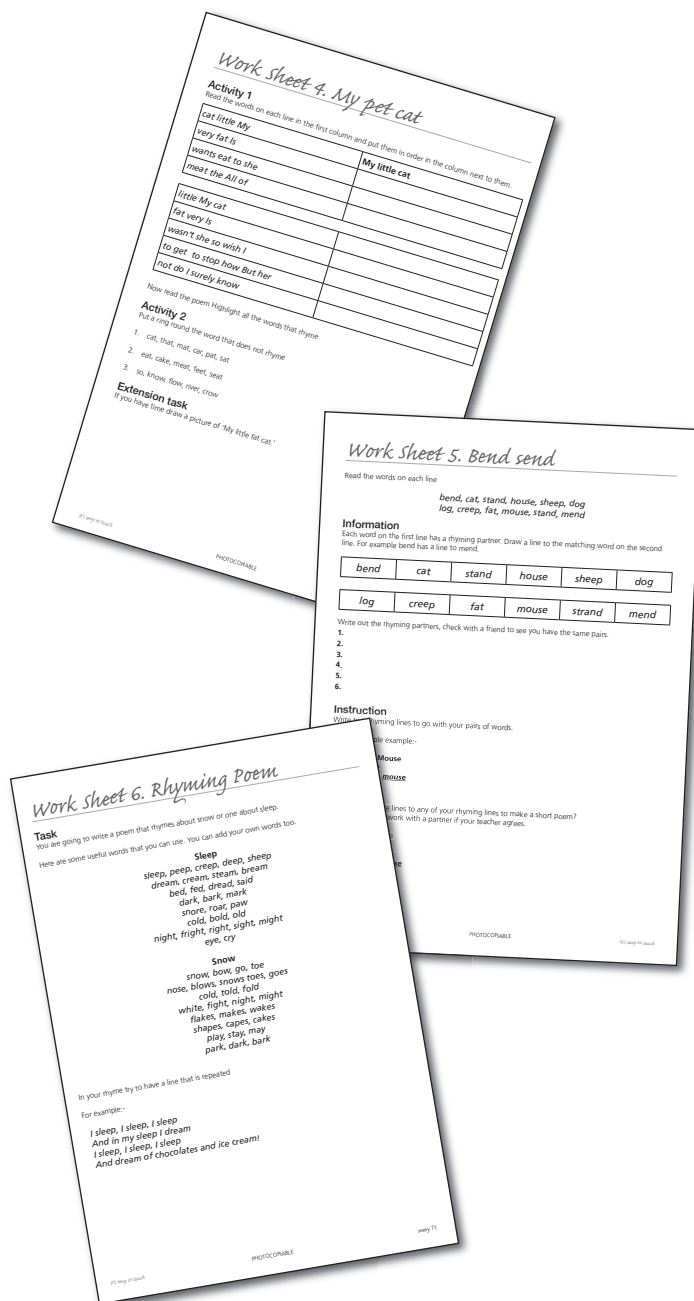
Discussion

Ask the children to sit in a circle and ask for volunteers to read their poems to the class. Ask the class:

- Do they think that the poems rhyme?
- Which poem did they like best?
- Can they choose a poem that had rhythm in it and tap out the rhythm?

Conclusion

Ask the children to write out their poems and illustrate them for a poetry display. This could be put up in the school library for others to see.



Worksheet 1. 'Three Blind Mice'

*Three blind mice, see how they run!
They all run after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife,
Did you ever see such a thing in your life,
As three blind mice.*

Activity 1

Read the poem and decide what it is about.

Activity 2

Put the mixed up words into the same order as they are in the poem.
Remember all the lines start with a capital letter.

blind mice Three

they how run See

run the farmer's wife They all after

off Who tails cut knife carving with their a

ever such Did thing a life you your in see

blind three mice As
