

# Poetry Y4 T2 Writing poems based on other poems

*The National Literacy Strategy*

## Objective

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Y4T2T11 to write poetry based on the structure and style of poems read, e.g. taking account of vocabulary, archaic expressions, patterns of rhyme, choruses, similes.

## Principles and explanations

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The suggested range - classic/modern, poems from different cultures - offers a broad range of opportunities for reading. A simple but effective classic poem to study would be James Reeves' poem 'Slowly'. This would ideally link back to work from Y4T1 carried out on adverbs. A suitable modern poem might be 'The Door' by Miroslav Holub. Both poems offer an interesting comparison for reading but also could act as a model for writing.

In reading, the focus is upon exploring figurative language, especially simile. Classic poems may provide clues in the language as to their history. Once again, reading aloud, paying attention to rhythm and rhyme, is important. Children should be used to varying.

- volume;
- pace;
- tone;
- expression;
- movement;
- as well as ensuring clarity and making possible use of background sound effects, rhythms or simple music.

Prior to writing, highlight distinctive features of selected poems that might act as models or contain features that the children might use in their own writing, e.g.

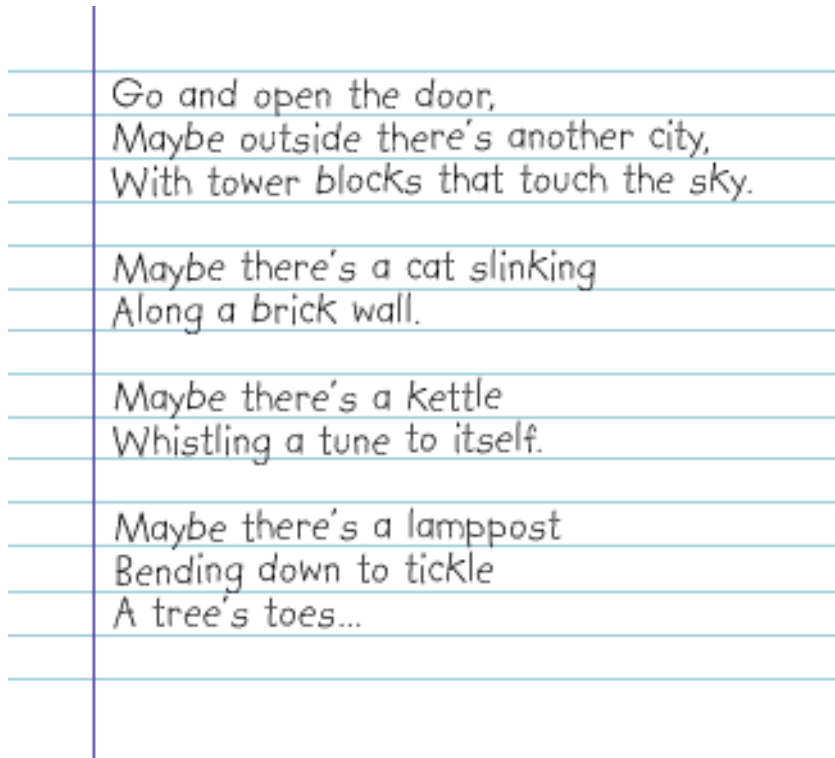
- well-chosen words - especially powerful verbs, adjectives and adverbs;
- use of detail and sense impressions;
- surprising combinations of words;
- simile and personification;
- alliteration and onomatopoeia;
- the pattern of the poem.

## Capturing

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There are two basic approaches that might be adopted.

- Writing a poem based on the structure of a poem that has been read. For instance, 'The Door' offers an ideal structure that can be used like a coat hanger for poetic ideas, e.g.



Sam, 9 years.

- Writing a poem in the style of poems read. This does mean that the poems selected must have a distinctive style that can be emulated by the children. Michael Rosen or Brian Moses both offer different voices. Michael Rosen's poems are often stories, sound like everyday speech and are often mono or duologues. His poems are about the everyday concerns of children, such as being in trouble. For instance, this poem has a simple enough format - begin with a warning, followed by the words, 'But I did.' Then an account of what happened.

"Don't you dare  
Touch the paint - it's not yet dry,"  
said my Dad.

But I did.  
As soon as he was out  
Of the room  
I wandered over for a look.  
It was green and shiny.  
It smelt funny.  
I couldn't resist,  
Just one little touch.  
It left a print of my finger  
And it wouldn't take Sherlock Holmes  
with his magnifying glass to work out  
what had happened -  
besides my finger had turned  
apple green!  
I knew that I was in for it.

Sally, 9 years.

To help children explore ideas about the chosen theme it is important that the whole class writes to the same focus. Children write best about both what they know and what matters to them. The teacher will need to light upon a theme that interests the class.

## Planning writing

Prepare for writing through listing words and phrases, brainstorming, by creating a word web, or talking through an incident, e.g. recounting '*a time I was in trouble*'.

If about to write a poem based on a model such as 'The Door', list possible ideas for inclusion, e.g. yacht, two moons, a unicorn, a terminator, talking telescope...

## Demonstration

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### Shared writing

#### The Open Door

Go and open the door,  
Maybe outside there's a golden yacht  
Shimmering in the sun.

Maybe there are two bright moons  
Like eyes staring down at the earth.

Maybe there is a unicorn  
Pacing the High Street at midnight.

Maybe there is a terminator  
Who is shy and prefers dandelions to  
death.

Maybe there is a talking telescope  
That could keep me company at school.

#### Points to make:

Work from the basic list of ideas. When writing build on the previous term's work, trimming ideas to cut out unwanted words that do little for effect or meaning, extend ideas to make them more interesting, using powerful verbs and well-chosen adjectives.

In trouble again

"Don't you dare  
play with that rabbit  
while I'm out," said my Mum.

But I did.  
As soon as she went out  
I undid the latch  
And let the rabbit out.  
It stood for a moment,  
White and soft  
Between my hands.  
Its nose twitched  
As if it was smelling the air  
For the first time.  
Then it shot forwards  
And ran for the end  
Of the garden!  
I scrambled after it which  
Seemed to make it move more quickly.  
It shot beneath the hedge  
And out onto the road.  
I couldn't look.  
I knew that I was  
In trouble.  
So I did the latch up  
And pretended nothing had happened.  
I pretended to feed  
A rabbit that wasn't there  
For weeks!

### **In trouble again**

Points to make:

Work from the oral recount. When writing build on the previous term's work, trimming ideas to cut out unwanted words that do little for effect or meaning, extend ideas to make them more interesting, using powerful verbs and well-chosen adjectives. Keep rereading to check the flow.

## Shared composition

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If writing 'The Door', make sure that you have a long enough list of ideas to select from - ask the children to develop their suggestions in pairs or on whiteboards. Challenge them to use language effectively - pushing them to use similes, effective verbs, etc. If writing in the style of Michael Rosen make sure that the children do not ramble too much. You will have to agree on a basic story line and pretend!

## Independent writing

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Just prior to writing, read aloud several good quality examples that are just above the level of the majority, so that they start writing with the flow of language ringing in their ears.