



# TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

NATIONAL  
POETRY   
DAY 2020

**National Poetry Day** is the annual mass celebration that encourages all to share a poem. Now's the chance for you and your students to discover, enjoy, and share your own and others' poetry, whether for the first time, or as a part of your school's ongoing literary culture.

This year, it's on 1st October 2020, and the theme is **Vision**.

2020 has been a year of considerable change, and more people than ever are turning to poetry. Since March, the number of Instagram posts tagged #poetry have increased by 6million (to 46million). Poetry has a vital role to play in children and young people's educational and social development: it changes lives by boosting confidence, improving communication skills, fostering creativity and building communities.

*UK poet Roger Robinson recently described poems as "empathy machines" that can "translate trauma" – never have we needed to build the capacity for empathy in our classrooms more. Poetry helps us do this work.*

— Anna Cole, Teacher at Belle Vue Girls' Academy, Bradford

**National Poetry Day** gives you and your students the chance to participate meaningfully in a national conversation that will unite communities across the UK. By joining in, you give your students the chance to find their own connections with poetry and the inspiration to spark their imaginations and creativity for years to come. This pack will help you get started.

Please share your work and poems you love on social media using **#MyNPDpoem**.

**#MyNPDpoem**

**www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk**

See It Like a Poet  
1st OCTOBER 2020





## 1. HOW TO PLAN YOUR CELEBRATION

Decide together what you want the day to achieve, such as:

- Students, staff and families know about poetry.
- Students, staff and families enjoy poetry.
- Class lessons feature a wider range of poems.
- Celebrate that anyone can be a poet.
- Have fun!

What activities will help you achieve your aims?

- Display poetry around the school.
- Centre assemblies or lessons around poetry.
- Have a whole school poetry party or slam.
- Meet a poet! (See section 4 for more.)

In the next sections you'll find more ideas for activities and don't forget to check out our recommendations for the best new poetry books of 2020:

[www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poems/poetry-recommendations](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poems/poetry-recommendations).

How will you celebrate what you have achieved – and how will you tell people about it?

- Record it, write about it – photos, videos, podcasts, blogs and newsletters (share them on social media using **#MyNPDPoem**).
- Make displays to showcase activities.
- Ask friends and family what they liked best, and what they got from the day.
- Are your friends talking about poetry more? Reading it more? Writing it more? Enjoying it more?
- How will you keep the momentum going? (See section 5 for ideas).

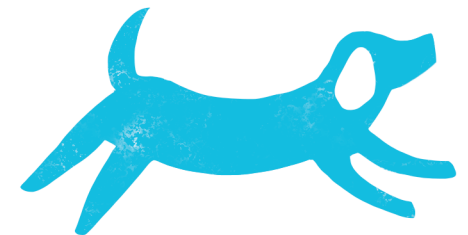
### TELL US ABOUT YOUR EVENTS

Anyone can hold an event for National Poetry Day.

Please list any events on our map:

[www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/events](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/events).

If you used our logos or posters, take pictures and share them on social media with the hashtag **#MyNPDPoem**.





## 2. THINGS YOU CAN DO – SIMPLE AND FUN

Here are ideas to choose from and enjoy on National Poetry Day, and every day!

Make sure you have lots of poetry books on display. If you're looking for some great recommendations of books published this year, check out our recommended reading lists: [www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poems/poetry-recommendations](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poems/poetry-recommendations).

### *Things to talk about*

- Ask students what they think poetry is – how would they describe it? What does poetry mean to them? Is it something that rhymes or that doesn't have to?
- Is it funny, beautiful, boring? Does it help you feel or understand things?
- Make a list and see how many different things poetry can be to different people.
- You could have this discussion to start off your planning for National Poetry Day.

### *What kinds of poetry do you know?*

Make a list of all the different kinds of poetry people know – e.g. limericks, rap, haikus, nursery rhymes. Put the list up on the wall for people to see, and add to it as you share new kinds of poetry.

Display examples of children's favourite poems and new collections or anthologies to share and discuss, ensuring each class can see this display and borrow books.

### *Sharing a poem*

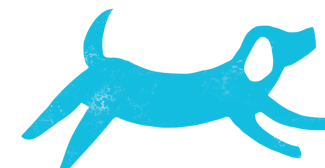
Share a poem in an assembly or in your class lessons. We have collected a number of poems on the theme of Vision on the website [www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poems/poems](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poems/poems), or you can visit partners such as the Poetry Archive, who will be curating Vision-themed poems around the day.

Read and/or listen to the poem together more than once, maybe a few times. Have copies of it for everyone to read and ask if anyone would like to read it aloud to the class.

Then start by asking: 'Why do you like – or not like – this poem?' Make it clear that everyone is right – there is no right or wrong answer. Everyone will find their own meanings, likes and dislikes, and that makes for great arguments and discussion!

Here are more questions you could ask:

- What do you think the poet is trying to say?
- How does the poem make you feel? Why?
- Are there any lines or words you especially like?





### 3. PLANNING CLASS LESSONS

National Poetry Day and our fantastic partners have put together a trove of resources you can use to structure a class lesson. You can find them on our website at [www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/education/free-education-resource-downloads](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/education/free-education-resource-downloads).

You can also now access a fantastic guide for secondary-school teachers by poet and teacher Kate Clanchy to help engage with contemporary poetry and enjoy creative writing using activities built around the books shortlisted for the Forward Prizes for Poetry 2019 and 2020. We will also be launching a new ten-minute poetry writing video and assembly packs created by Simon Mole and in association with the National Literacy Trust, or join Leena Norms for her Poetry Lock-In on the day. She'll be leading schools-targeted activities in the afternoon.

Here are a few quick starters to get you going:

#### *Write a poem ...*

The word 'poet' comes from the Greek word 'poietes', which means 'someone who makes or creates things. In creating a poem think about:

- Crafting your poem – Look for the right words, the best place for them and the poem's sound and rhythm.
- Shaping your poem – Will it rhyme or be in free verse? Will you use a particular form or device (e.g. couplets, haiku, limerick, repetition)?

#### *Create a poem from words in a newspaper*

Cut out words and phrases you like from newspapers and magazines. Spread them out, move them around and group them. Are there any words that spark an idea for a poem? Arrange the cuttings to shape your poem.

#### *Learn poetry by heart*

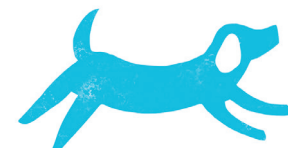
Learning to perform a poem aloud, on your own or as a group, can be a great confidence builder – and great fun. And it can indeed be 'by heart' – getting pleasure from the poetry and a deeper understanding of the words – letting you share that pleasure with others.

#### *Watch poets 'live'*

Over the coming weeks, we will launch a series of films on the theme of Vision that can be viewed in your classroom. You can find them here: [www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/education/mynpdpoem](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/education/mynpdpoem).

We have **23 National Poetry Day Ambassadors** who regularly visit schools across the UK and champion poetry everywhere. They include Michael Rosen, Sarah Crossan, Joseph Coelho, Dean Atta, Karl Nova and Victoria Adukwei Bulley.

You can watch our ambassadors and other poets reading and talking about their work on our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/NationalPoetryDay](http://www.youtube.com/NationalPoetryDay). Find and listen to your favourites, and get to know new ones.





## 4. MEETING A POET

There's no experience like meeting a poet and hearing them read and share their work. It can trigger a fresh enthusiasm for poetry and encourage pupils to keep reading and writing for pleasure.

Here are practical tips for arranging a visit, and if you can't arrange a physical visit, many authors now offer virtual visits.

If funding is tight, join up with other schools. Your poet could visit two schools in the same day – or schools could come together.

It's great to get involved with **local** poets – and they might like to become a Patron of Reading at your school: [www.patronofreading.co.uk](http://www.patronofreading.co.uk).

A number of libraries and bookshops will offer National Poetry Day events, including opportunities to meet with poets and listen to their poetry.

### *Planning*

Book your poet well in advance! Poets' diaries get well-booked up, often a whole year ahead for National Poetry Day and World Book Day. An early booking will give you time to make arrangements and for your class to explore their poetry. Make sure to address the practical concerns first (fee, invoicing, number of participating students and their ages, format).

### *Look after your poet*

Make sure your poet knows how to find your school. Plan the day together. Discuss any equipment needed and let them know how you will document the visit. Make them welcome, have someone to take them round, and offer tea/coffee/lunch.

Be clear with them about your goals for the visit, such as:

- Children's increased enthusiasm for poetry
- Children more confident about reciting poetry
- Children more confident about writing poetry
- A really enjoyable day – with pictures and maybe a film of the day!

### WHERE TO BOOK:

- Direct with poets via their websites.
- Through your school library service or public library service.
- Through your local bookshop.
- [www.poetrysociety.org.uk](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk)
- [www.authorsaloud.co.uk](http://www.authorsaloud.co.uk)
- [www.contactanauthor.co.uk](http://www.contactanauthor.co.uk)
- [www.speakingofbooks.studysupport.info](http://www.speakingofbooks.studysupport.info)

Link up with your school library and local library. They can suggest poets you might like to invite and they may help book them. They can lend copies of the poet's books, and a venue for sessions.

### *Other things you might think about:*

Book sales: You can arrange this via your poet or their publisher, or with your local bookshop.



## 5. KEEPING POETRY ON THE PROGRAMME

After the excitement of the day, make sure you keep the momentum so poetry is alive throughout your school. Build these ideas into school life.

- Promote all your activities through displays, newsletters and school media.
- Encourage classes and individual pupils to share their own poems and their favourite poems via display boards, in class, in assemblies and on digital spaces.
- Feature a special "Poem of the Week" space on your display boards. Teachers and students could take it in turn to choose – have lots of sticky notes available so pupils can put up around the poem their thoughts and responses.
- Make individual or class poetry anthologies that include students' own poems as well as out-of-copyright poems. (Make sure to check the rules around sharing published poems via the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society. They have a wealth of resources available at [www.alcs.co.uk/copyright-education](http://www.alcs.co.uk/copyright-education)).
- Set up a poetry blog. Invite students to write and talk about their favourite – and not-so-favourite – poems, and share their own writing.

## FREE RESOURCES TO DOWNLOAD FROM OUR WEBSITE:

- Vision poems
- Posters
- National Poetry Day blog with news, interviews, poetry and tips

## KEEP IN TOUCH

Sign up to our mailing list: [www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/join-our-mailing-list-full](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk/join-our-mailing-list-full)  
Or contact: [info@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:info@forwardartsfoundation.org)

National Poetry Day would like to thank the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society for supporting our #MyNPDpoem schools activities.

### SUPPORT US:

National Poetry Day is co-ordinated by the charity **Forward Arts Foundation**: we change lives by giving people the confidence to create and communicate, we support poets and strengthen communities. We need your support, both for poets and for the infrastructure that makes poetry possible. The closure of schools, libraries and the booktrade has hit us hard.

To donate, please go to:  
[www.forwardartsfoundation.org/about-us/support-us](http://www.forwardartsfoundation.org/about-us/support-us)