



TeachingLive | Season 11 | Malamander | Week 2 | April 30
Poem to celebrate your place – the special and the mundane -
Tuesday 30th April 2024

Anything in **blue** should be read before the session – I will also put in **red** any grids or sentences or instructions that should ideally be in the children's books. A main focus of this session is to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the technology and the teaching sequence as well as loosening up and gaining confidence as writers. **The children need:**

- **Notebooks/ writing journals and pencils**
- **access to a tablet**
- **be able to see main screen**

Creative Game

As usual, the show begins with a game for children to play. Make sure that they have their notebooks and pencils ready and listen carefully. The games can be played as a class, in threes, in pairs or solo – usually **played in pairs**. Get everyone to make notes as Pie and David play the game. Then there will be a pause of a few minutes – a 'timer' will be onscreen giving a countdown. **The initial games are played orally and do not involve them using their tablets.**

- **Today's Game – List local things that matter** (*The Objective – generate rapidly a list of ideas.*)

Generate ideas about lots of things that make your place special – some will be unusual but many may be quite ordinary.

Creatures - pets/ wild animals/ insects/ birds, water/ sea creatures...	
Flora - trees, bushes, plants, flowers, hedgerows, gardens/ woods...	
Places - monuments, buildings, roads/ paths, parks, rivers, lakes, ponds, woods, forests, pitches, cinemas, library...	
Special events - seasonal, lights, fairs, community events, trips and outings...	
See - what can you see	
Hear - what can you hear	
Touch - what can you feel	
Taste - what can you taste	
Smell - what can you smell	
Weather and seasons	
Objects - in home, school, out and about	

What I love about my cat Chichi is her soft and snuggly purr.
 What I love about snow is the soft swarm of cold confetti.
 What I love about inner Birmingham is the buzz.
 What I love about planes is the improbability of flying.
 What I love about rain is the gift of banded snails.
 What I love about writing is the lightning appearance of an
 idea from what seemed like an empty room.
 What I love about babies is the elastic scrunch of their red
 faces as they howl.

Padlet 1 – Children have a few minutes to complete one or more ‘post it notes’ that celebrate special things in their locality. They should think about amazing things – local flora, fauna, objects, buildings, places, events etc - and write a descriptive line celebrating them. They should use detail, ‘name it’ and write with the conditional frame, ‘It could be.....’.

It could be the London eye at night like a glittering spinning wheel.

It could be the rooks nesting in Sharpham woods.

It could be frost like cut glass jewels in Stratford Park.

It could be the robin’s flame-grilled chest as it flickers onto the bird feeder.

It could be the Stroud canal winding its way through the Golden valley.

It could be the sudden dash-flash of the kingfisher, in a flare of electric blue.

It could be the fallow deer in morning sunlight by the hedge on Strawberry banks.

It could be the rowan berries like buttons of blood freckling the hedge.

It could be the dodgems at the Mop Fair.

- Remind them to extend their ideas.
- Remind them to use accurate punctuation.
- If you have a very young class or reluctant writers who lack confidence, ideas could be co-constructed in pairs or as a class and posted by the teacher.

- Remind children and adults to use the refresh button at the top of the page so that they can see their post-it note appear – as each note is moderated, they will not all appear during the session but will appear later once moderated. *The Objective – to write extended, descriptive sentences that are correctly punctuated, drawing on the locality.*

Children’s Audio – encourage children to listen carefully to the reading as it was chosen because it was well written but also because it was read aloud effectively. Later on, get the class to discuss why they think the reading was chosen. Discuss the most effective images, ideas or turn of phrase and discuss why it worked. During the performance, children should take notes of any words, phrases or ideas that they thought were effective. *The Objective – to listen attentively, enjoy and reflect on what makes good writing and performance.*

Padlet 2 - This activity prepares the children for the blog post that they will write. **The focus is on writing sentences that celebrate the ordinary, the everyday things that might to some appear ugly. Can they be made anew by using celebratory language? You may find copying the following grid and model helpful.**

Everyday things to make special

Notice – crisp packet, brick, pebble, grass, trees, wall, abandoned bottle, newspaper, mud, pavement, road, yellow lines, fence, hedge, roof tops, windows, doors, hills, park, cars, buses, coat, hat, shoes, leaves, rain, wind, sunlight, clouds, tears, moonlight, stars, night, dawn, radio, TV, lights, conversation, laughter, chatter, sneeze, yawn, child, man, woman, policeman, belisha beacon, zebra crossing, saucepan, kettle, cup of tea/coffee, drink can, pizza, fish and chips, chair, table, clock, watch, eyes, teeth, earring, ring, necklace, footsteps, whistle, etc.

Techniques	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Alliteration● Simile using 'like'● Simile using 'as'● Personification● Kennings● Name it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Satisfying squelch</i>● <i>Like shiny tears</i>● <i>...as quiet as a moth</i>● <i>Puddles swell their bellies</i>● <i>Nut-thief</i>● <i>Lullaby's Laundromat</i>

Notice the satisfying squelch of mud.

Notice the rain on the window like shiny tears.

Notice dust motes caught adrift in sunlight as quiet as a moth's flutter.

Notice the rain swept roads and the puddles swelling their bellies.

Notice the nut-thief, the tree-jumper, swift-leaper.

Notice the squabbling sparrows or the chatter at the Lullaby's Laundromat.

Encourage the children to listen to any advice that Pie gives during this session and to act on it. It might be worth jotting any useful writing tips down on the flipchart. For instance, *name it, describe the detail so the reader can imagine it, reread to make the sentences flow, create fresh images not clichés, say it aloud, choose words with care, avoid repeating words, reread to police your sentences, pretend you are your teacher....* Writing tips could be made into writing posters or written in their journals. *Objective – the ability to write descriptive sentences, making the ordinary special.*

Gallery Challenge – Flower patterns.











Blogging Activity – Create poem based on your local area, using the same frame as the model or something similar.

Write a poem having reread, discussed responded to and analysed Pie's poem. [It can help for the children to have a copy of Pie's poem below in their books. Remind them to all come up with their own, original TITLE.](#) I would suggest also sharing the original poem and the poems by year5/6 from Coastlands Primary. *Objective – write an extended list, celebrating the special and the mundane.*

A Simple Request

It doesn't have to be
the green-winged orchid
or speckles of winter jasmine
petals in the hedgerow
or the squabble of tawny owls
in Tanner's Wood.

It could be the glint
of a crisp packet
left in Farm Lane,
or the silence between heart beats
or even dust motes
caught adrift in sunlight.

Be curious as a cloud;
those endless shift-shapers.
Notice now how even the mundane
can become memorable,
when seen afresh.
Even a raindrop shines
like a polished tear.

Celebrating

It doesn't have to be
The soft golden sand on Watwick Bay,
The fire-red breast of a robin,
The swan's elegant body gliding through water,
Or the mirror-glazed blackberry shining in the sun.

It could be
The woodpecker's red head,
The swallow's dart-shaped body,
The shimmering smooth jet-black pebble,
Or the crystal raindrop falling from the sky.

I can see the beauty in a grain of sand
Under the rolling tide.
Can you?

By Oliver

Taking Note

It doesn't have to be
Snow at the top of Snowdon,
The bright feathers on the red kite
Or the sparkling sea at Marloes.

It could be
The wet sand in a play park,
Black hair as dark as the night
Dirty muddy puddles
Or the grey sky on a damp day.

Just pay attention
To the days that are boring.
Fill your hands with dirt
And shape it into a heart.

Nico

Taking notice

It doesn't have to be the froth
of a cherry blossom tree,
a red kite swooping with its dashes of red,
the sparkle of Venus in the midnight light,
the orange sky in the morning sun,
or a peacock flashing its feathers, rainbow-bright.

It could be the twig off a tree,
a few pebbles off the golden
sands of Dale beach,
the sound of the rain sizzling,
or the trees dancing in the wind.

Just pay attention
to the small things,
and gather a few words together
to sing a song of nature.

Mason

Noticing

It doesn't have to be
the lime vines crawling up a tree's spine,
the green woodpecker's polka dot wings,
the smooth fin on a bottlenose dolphin
or drops sliding down into a sparkling lake.

It could be
the ginger autumn tree marching from left to right
or the nettles that sting
at every cell in your leg.

Just pay attention and stop.
Have you ever seen a beetle's veins?
Through them rushes a world of light.

Luca

Audio Challenge – If children want to record their own blog ensure that they have read it aloud a number of times. They should read it slowly and clearly with expression. This could be worked on in pairs or threes to develop their performance.

Final thoughts

This idea is playful and yet is also a serious challenge. It can be met at a very simple level and can also be tackled with sophistication and originality. The children will all succeed at their own level, are beginning to grow a sense of confidence in themselves as writers and starting to develop some techniques alongside a sense that writing might be for them as a way of changing or playing with the world. Everyone should have their imagination celebrated.

Please do not share these notes and models, put them online or use for financial gain. Please respect our copyrite. They are for your use with your class. Many thanks.

Notes for ‘Read and Respond’ to the main poem

Loosening the imagination

This second writing session is about celebrating the locality as well as revisiting some of the things that were taught last year.

Read and Respond

Before, or following, the programme, at a suitable time, read through the model poem fluently and expressively. Begin with a discussion of preferences - which sections do they like or dislike and why. The aim of this initial discussion is to get them digging deeper into the poem, thinking about its effect on them as readers and the images and ideas it creates.

To generate thinking, use a variety of prompts such as:

- *Which ideas are the most surprising and why?*
- *Which ideas are the most exciting and vivid?*
- *Which one do you wish you had written and why?*
- *Any suggestions for improvements?*
- *Explain what the poet seems to be saying in the third verse/ section.*

I'd go through it line by line, taking their thoughts about each idea. Create a simple display by the class choosing their favourite ideas and illustrating – any good ones could be popped onto the @TeachingLive gallery.

Model how to write a short 'critical response' paragraph about a line of their choosing, using a simple frame, e.g.

I like the line about

The poet states, ...

This suggests that....

The phrase/word makes me think of.....

I was surprised by ...

It makes me think....

At the end, the Poet seems to be suggesting that...

You could also share the four children's poems and discuss which is most effective and why. Focus on the endings as that is a difficult part of the task – how to effectively wrap the poem up.

Perform

Split the class into 3 groups so that each group has a section of the main poem to perform. Work towards a whole class performance.

Analyse the poem

It's easy enough to spot obvious techniques such as using **alliteration** (repeating similar **sounds** at the start of words) or using a **simile** with '*like*' or '*as*' to make a comparison. This poem relies more on word choice and naming things to bring them alive and make the image memorable. Get the children working out what is happening in the three sections.

Brainstorm

It is worth spend ten minutes or so doing a massive class brainstorm of things that could be written about – make a list with the children suggesting ideas of:

- a. Ordinary things that might be seen locally during different seasons or times of the day.
- b. Special things that you have locally, e.g. *animals, birds, plants, flowers, trees, local places and landmarks, monuments, buildings, key events, etc*

The list should be made fast and furiously so your handwriting on the flipchart might not be up to much. Children should be jotting down ideas that they might use at the same time. This means that no one can say, '*I don't know what to write about*'.

Shared into independent writing

As a matter of principle, I always used to 'do one together first', before they wrote. Again, this would be fairly rapid and I'd be pushing and challenging their suggestions as 'the first thought isn't always the best'. I'd be getting them to generate ideas and then choose with care, avoiding clichés and creating surprises.

Use the poem's basic structure. The aim is to celebrate the special things that you have in your area alongside the ordinary things.

When KS2 children write, I'd suggest total silence and give them a time limit of say 10 minutes. This creates a sense of urgency

as you want the children's total concentration. Extend the time, if they are working hard. The writing might stretch over several sessions.

Polishing

Use the IWB to show lines from different children, especially where there are teaching points to make. Children can then tweak and polish independently or in pairs. Discuss - *what works, what does not, and why, and how can it be improved.*

Blog it and Audio

Finally the children copy up their completed poem and then it can be blogged. If they have time, get them to perform for the audio padlet.

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