



TAKE OFF YOUR BRAVE: Poems Just for You

by Nadim, illustrated by Yasmeen Ismail

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TEACHERS' NOTES

  @WalkerBooksUK



These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.

This is a very special collection of poems by a four-year-old author, introduced by Kate Clanchy and illustrated with wit and whimsy by Yasmeen Ismail. The poems in this book beautifully capture how a four-year-old sees the world – a world of rainbows, glitter and magical boxes; a world of nursery, hometime and cuddles with Mum. They make for joyful reading and are an invitation for young readers to join in the fun.

Poetry, rhyme and song play a vital role in the development of children's language and literacy. Poetry gives children a valuable opportunity to play with words and language. These notes will explore different aspects that contribute to the development of language, vocabulary, reading skills and building ideas and imagination for writing, encouraging children to read and write for purpose and pleasure, drawing on key poems from the collection.

These notes have been written with children ages 4-7 in mind, but the poems can be enjoyed by and be a useful stimulus for inspiring writers of any age. You may choose to explore different sections of the notes at different times of the year, coming back to the collection with a different focus over a longer period of time and keeping a focus on poetry as a regular part of the year, rather than doing the whole thing as a block of learning.

Using poetry as a means of self-exploration and expression:

- Begin by reading the poem, **Oh! My Best Things** to the children, sharing the text and Yasmeen Ismail's illustration alongside. Talk to the children about the poem, using appropriate questions to frame your discussions. *What did they like about the poem? What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel?* Include questions that encourage the children to connect personally with the poem. *Do they like any of the same things? Look at and talk about the illustration with the children. What are the two children doing? How are they feeling? What do you think is making them feel this way? What or who makes you feel this way?*
- Come back to the poem and discuss all the best things. *What kinds of things does Nadim focus on? Why do you think he likes these things in particular? What might these things tell us about him and his life? How could they be categorised?* This will help you to explore the meanings of some of the words with the children to check that these are understood, broadening vocabulary and strengthening comprehension. Allow the children to think broadly about the way things could be categorised, like people, things to do, tastes, smells.
- Come back to the poem again, re-reading it and discussing how he describes his favourite things. *Why do you think he uses the word **Oh** at the start of some of the lines? What does the repetition of **I love love love. / I love my family extra much.** Tell us about the way he feels about his family?* Think about the line at the start of the poem (**Even if it's the whole big one / It's still my favourite.**) *What else does this tell us about his family and how he feels about them?* Think about the verbs that have been used throughout the poem. *How do these help us visualise what Nadim likes best?* Talk about ways in which to describe his feelings throughout the poem. The children's first response might be that he is **happy**, but look for other ways to describe some of the experiences. Some are moments of **excitement**, some are moments of **love**, and others are moments of **intrigue**. Some are linked to **warmth**, others might link to **hunger**. Use this to explore and extend children's vocabulary, allowing them to be more expressive and precise about their own feelings and those of others.



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- Give time for the children to learn the poem as a group. You might wish to give different children different lines or even individual words to perform, rather than make this a choral performance. You could give them props, like a toy owl, a loaf of bread or some Lego to help them remember their words. When they have their lines, think about how they can use their voices and their facial expressions to bring out the different emotions and feelings in the poem. *How can you vary this between the moments of softer reflection and those of unbridled excitement?*
- Now, support the children in making lists of their own best things as a way of gathering ideas for their own writing. Model this first by talking about your own best things and sharing ways of recording these. Depending on the children's age and stage of development, you could scribe these for the children; they could make their own pictorial reference list or could write lists of their own.
- Give the children time, space and appropriate resources to support them in composing their own poem. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing a poem about your own favourite things. Think about how the original poem could inspire your ideas, such as using verbs and exclamatory words to add description and share emotion. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary.
- When they have completed their poems, they might then want to think about how to illustrate these. What moment will share the thoughts, feelings and ideas in their words most effectively? Come back to the original illustration in the poem. *What does it show you? What feelings does it give you about the poem?* Give the children access to cartridge paper, sketching pencils (2B-4B are ideal), watercolour paints and brushes, modelling techniques in an illustration for your own poem first and then allow the children to create images to illustrate their own poems. Leave copies of the poem nearby so that the children can refer to these if they wish.
- When all these are finished you could record the children performing their poems, encouraging them to use what they learnt about performance when thinking about how to perform their own words.
- Move on to reading three more poems, ***For My Mum, My Best Friend*** and ***Miss Angela***. Think about how each of the poems allows Nadim to celebrate someone that is special to him. *What words and phrases in each poem tell you what the person is like and how Nadim feels about them? What is similar and different about these three people? Why do you think he chose these people to write about in particular?* Look at the descriptive and figurative language that is used throughout the poems that helps to share a sense of what they are like, for example: ***Miss Angela sounds like a bell, ringing gently; He's as fast as anyone - / Faster than everyone / Faster than anyone / And everyone you've ever seen; You smell like a beautiful candle smell. You smell like a candle when it blows away.*** *What do these things tell you about the people? Why do you think Nadim has made these particular choices?*
- After reading, encourage the children to think of someone special in their own lives. It might be a family member, an adult that they know from school or home, or a friend. Allow the children to really visualise the person, through either drawing them or by providing or asking them to bring in a photograph of the person. *What is most memorable to them about this person? What words and phrases would they use to describe them? What are they like or what do they remind them of?* Model this by thinking about and describing someone who is special to you.



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- Think now about what illustration would represent the way you think and feel about this person. Come back to the original illustrations for each of the poems. *What does they show you? What feelings do they give you about the person?* Give the children access to cartridge paper, sketching pencils (2B-4B are ideal), watercolour paints and brushes, modelling techniques in an illustration about your own special person first and then allow the children to create their own images. Leave copies of the poems nearby so that the children can refer to these if they wish.
- When the children have thought about their special person, give them time, space and appropriate resources to compose their own poem. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing a poem about your own special person. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary. When these are finished, scribe or type the poems for the children, or allow them to use presentation handwriting or a word processor to publish their work, giving them the chance to think about where they want to break lines or verses, and talking through choices for this.
- When the poems are complete, publish these in a hand made anthology (a plain page hardback bound A3 notebook is ideal for this), with the poems and accompanying illustrations published alongside each other and leave this in a prominent space to revisit and share with a wider audience. Photocopies of the poems and illustrations could be made and shared with the special person themselves.
- Complete this section by reading the **Magic Box** poems by Nadim and his sister Taleen. Think about the things they choose to put into the box for the person they chose. *Why do you think they chose these things? What do these things tell you about each person and the way in which Nadim and Taleen feel about them? What does Nadim tell the person about the objects he's chosen?*
- The children might be inspired to go on to create their own Magic Box poem for someone in their own lives. Give time and space for the children to consider the person they want to give the magic box to, and what they might put inside it and what they might tell the person about the things they have chosen. Model this for the children with your own ideas first, then in the same ways as before, give them time to draft, respond to and publish their ideas. Come back to the illustrations and look at how each box is unique. Provide each child with a small cardboard box (you could make these with the children using nets or purchase them, e.g. <https://www.packaging2buy.co.uk/single-wall-boxes-102x102x102mm.html>) and invite them to decorate it to reflect either themselves or the person the box is for. You can then print out or copy the poem to fold up and place inside the box to display in the setting or give as a gift to the person it was written for.

Using poetry to observe, describe and capture moments:

- Begin by looking at the poem **The Busy Cat** on the page, sharing the title and giving the children time to take in and closely observe the illustrations. *What do you think this poem will be about? What makes you think this?* Discuss the title, **The Busy Cat**. *What do you already know or think you know about cats? In what ways do you think a cat can be busy? What kinds of things might they be busy doing?* Come back to the illustrations on the page. *Do you think this cat is a busy cat? Why or why not? Can you be busy sleeping?*
- Read the poem aloud to the children. *What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel? What did they learn about the cat from the poem? Do you think all these things were absolutely true, or were some of the*



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things how the writer saw or thought about the cat? Explain to the children that when we write, we can bring our own thoughts, ideas and interpretations, sharing what we think and feel as well as what we see directly. Re-read the poem again. *What words, phrases or lines were particularly memorable for them? Why was this?*

- Discuss with the children what their favourite animals are and why they like these particular animals. Moving on from here, you could either choose to write a whole class poem on one agreed animal, in the way that Nadim's nursery class have here, or give the children the choice to work in smaller groups on a choice of different animals or to write individual poems of their own about their favourite animal. With any of these options, you'll need to ensure the children have the chance to build up their ideas and imaginations for writing first. You could do this by looking at photographs of their chosen animal, reading information books about them, or watching age appropriate films of them, seeing them in action (CBeebies My Pet and Me, Our Planet, Andy's Adventures, Andy's Secret Hideout and Andy's Baby Animals have lots of age appropriate clips). As they observe and learn about the animals, collect examples of the descriptive and figurative language the children use in their talk and display these to come back to when they compose their ideas.
- When composing as a larger or small group, you may find the list poem form useful. Each child could contribute their own idea about the animal on a strip of paper (handwritten or scribed by an adult, depending on their age and stage of development). These can then be organised by the group, considering which line might be a good opening or closing line and what order flows best and provides cohesion, reading aloud and making any small edits to improve the poem as you go. Individual writers may also find the structure of this form useful for a poem like this, or may want to write in free verse instead. As they write, in whichever way, encourage the children to read their words aloud, hearing how the poem sounds of the page and redraft as they feel necessary. When these are finished, scribe or type the poems for the children, or allow them to use presentation handwriting or a word processor to publish their work, giving them the chance to think about where they want to break lines or verses, and talking through choices for this.
- Come back to the illustration on the page. *Why do you think the illustrator has chosen to include lots of images of the cat sleeping? What might this tell us or make us think about the cat?* Ask the children to consider how they could capture their animal in an illustration to accompany their words. *Will it be one image or lots of different images?* Give the children time, space and appropriate art materials to compose their own illustrations to accompany the poems they wrote.
- When these are finished they could either be displayed prominently in the environment or collected in an animal poems anthology.
- You could do the same exercise using the poem **Bluebell, Where Did You Get Your Blue?** Begin by providing photographs, videos or ideally by going out to view some real bluebells in the environment if this matches the time of year. Allow the children time and space to observe and interact with the flowers, asking them what they notice about the flowers and what questions they have about them as they interact with them and capturing examples of the descriptive and figurative language the children use in their talk and questions they have and display these to come back to.
- Following this experience, read the poem to the children allowing them to respond to and discuss the words written by Nadim's nursery class. *What did the children notice about these plants? What questions did they have? How did these compare with your own thoughts and observations?* Re-read the poem a second time, so that the



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children become more aware of the words used. *How do you think the children felt about these flowers? What tells you this? What words, phrases or lines are most memorable for you? Why is this?*

- Provide the children with the chance to observe and make observational drawings or paintings of lots of different types of flowers. These could be in the outdoor environment, focussing on seasonal growth, or you could provide cut flowers or flowering potted plants.
- Encourage the children to write their own poems about the flowers they have interacted with, either as a group or individually, using the ideas above to support their composition. When these are finished they could either be displayed alongside their artwork and photographs of the plants and flowers prominently in the setting, indoors or outdoors, or collected in a plants and flowers anthology.
- To complete this section and encourage the children to focus on, think about and write descriptively about what they see, hear and feel, read the poem ***My Lonely Garden***. Talk together about the place Nadim describes. *How does it feel to be there? What can he see, hear and feel? How does he feel about this place? How can you tell?*
- Re-read the poem a second time, so that the children become more aware of the words used. *What words, phrases or lines are most memorable for you? Why is this? What words help you picture what the garden is really like?* Highlight, text mark and annotate a copy of the poem to recognise the children's thoughts and ideas and make these visible.
- Come back to the title ***My Lonely Garden***. *What do you think the word lonely means? Do you think this is a bad feeling? How might you describe how Nadim feels in this place? Why do you think he has chosen this as a title?*
- Take the children to a local outdoor space, a park or garden where they can sit, take in their surroundings and focus in on what they can hear, see and smell around them, what they can feel and how this place makes the feel. Encourage the children to make sketches while they are in the place. These might be of things that catch their eye or of themselves in this place and will help them collect and compose ideas and focus on elements in the surroundings. Older children might want to make notes of their thoughts, feelings or ideas as they sit. With younger children, ensure adults are engaging children in sharing their thoughts and ideas and scribing these to come back to later.
- When the children come back from the outdoor space, talk about the place together, discussing and making notes of the different things children saw, heard and felt and how it felt to be in the place, discussing specific words and phrases to describe these, linking back to the original poem to compare thoughts, ideas and language. Model this alongside by talking about your own thoughts, observations and feelings and in talking about language and ideas used by the children while they were in the space that you observed.
- Now, give them time, space and appropriate resources to compose their own poem about the outdoor space you visited. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing a poem about this place, based on your own ideas. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary. When these are finished, scribe or type the poems for the children, or allow them to use presentation handwriting or a word processor to publish their work, giving them the chance to think about where they want to break lines or verses, and talking through choices for this.



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- Think now about what illustration would represent the place for you. Come back to the original illustrations for the poem. *What does it show you about this place and how the person feels within it? What feelings does this illustration give you about the place?* Give the children access to cartridge paper, sketching pencils (2B-4B are ideal), watercolour paints and brushes, modelling techniques in an illustration that represents this place for you first and then allow the children to create their own images. Leave copies of the poem nearby so that the children can refer to the original artwork if they wish.
- When the poems and artwork are complete, publish these in a hand made anthology (a plain page hardback bound A3 notebook is ideal for this), with the poems and accompanying illustrations published alongside each other and leave this in a prominent space to revisit and share with a wider audience. Photocopies of the poems and illustrations could be made, laminated and positioned in the space, if appropriate.

Using poetry to explore and capture and make sense of thoughts, feelings and emotions:

- Begin by reading **Moments**. Use the poem as a stimulus to talk about different feelings and emotions with the children. *Can you think of moments in your own life that have been sad, happy, nice or angry?* Be prepared, as an enabling adult, to share and discuss moments from your own life that fit these feelings and emotions. Talk with the children about the importance of recognising your feelings and those of others and feeling able to talk about, share and discuss feelings and emotions with others. You may also find the book *A Book of Feelings* by Amanda McCardie, illustrated by Salvatore Rubbino (Walker) useful to enrich and extend discussions in this area.
- Move on to sharing the poem **Tell Me About a Day of the Week**, reading aloud the poem and taking time to look closely at the accompanying illustration. *What does this poem make you think about? How does it make you feel? How do you think Nadim feels about Wednesdays? What makes you think this?* Give time for the children to discuss the poem, drawing on specific words or phrases that they associate with feelings and emotions and to draw on elements of the illustration that also suggest the feelings and emotions imbued in the poem.
- Ask the children to talk about the day of the week that evokes a certain feeling within them. It might be a day that makes them feel happy or joyful, as it Nadim's poem, or might be an entirely different feeling. *How does this day make you feel? What is it about this day that makes you feel this way? How would you describe the emotions of this day to someone else? If this day was a physical thing, what would it look like, smell like, taste like? What colour would it be or what clothes might it wear? What words describe how this particular day makes you feel?* Model thinking aloud your own ideas around this, scribing your thoughts and ideas for the children to see.
- Now, share with the children how to write your own **Tell Me About a Day of the Week** poem, using the original poem as a stimulus for your own writing, but being flexible in changing the structure and ideas to fit your own thinking and ideas.
- Now, give them time, space and appropriate resources to compose their own poem about their own day of the week and how this day makes them feel. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing such a poem, based on your own ideas. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary. When these are finished, scribe or type the poems for the children, or allow them to use presentation handwriting or a word processor to publish their work, giving them the chance to think about where they want to break lines or verses, and talking through choices for this.



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- Think now about what illustration would represent the day and its associated feelings. Come back to the original illustrations for the poem. *What does it show you about the feelings associated with this day? What feelings does this illustration give you about the day that is being described?* Give the children access to cartridge paper, sketching pencils (2B-4B are ideal), watercolour paints and brushes, modelling techniques in an illustration about your own special person first and then allow the children to create their own images. Leave copies of the poem nearby so that the children can refer to the original artwork if they wish.
- When the poems and artwork are complete, display these prominently in the setting, alongside books that support the children in talking about and sharing their thoughts, feelings and emotions with others. Such books might include:
 - *A Book of Feelings*, Amanda McCardie and Salvatore Rubbino (Walker)
 - *Happy! A First Book of Feelings*, Mary Murphy (Walker)
 - *Happy in Our Skin*, Fran Manushkin and Lauren Tobia (Walker)
 - *Joy*, Yasmeen Ismail and Jennie Desmon (Walker)
 - *Grumpy Duck*, Joyce Dunbar and Petr Horacek (Walker)
 - *Silly Billy*, Anthony Browne (Walker)
 - *Owl Babies*, Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson (Walker)
 - *Rain Before Rainbows*, Smriti Halls and David Litchfield (Walker)
 - *Feelings: Inside my heart and in my head*, Libby Walden and Richard Jones (Caterpillar Books)
 - *Sometimes I Feel*, Sarah Maycock (Big Picture Press)
 - *Tell Me Something Happy Before I Go To Sleep*, Joyce Dunbar and Debi Gliori (Corgi)
 - *Sweep*, Louise Greig and Julia Sarda (Egmont)
 - *Kindness Grows*, Britta Teckentrup (Caterpillar Books)
 - *When Sadness Comes to Call*, Eva Eland (Andersen Press)
 - *Where Happiness Begins*, Eva Eland (Andersen Press)
 - *Ruby's Worry*, Tom Percival (Bloomsbury)
 - *Ravi's Roar*, Tom Percival (Bloomsbury)
 - *Meesha Makes Friends*, Tom Percival (Bloomsbury)
 - *Dogger*, Shirley Hughes (Red Fox)
 - *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears*, Emily Gravett (Macmillan)
- Move on to reading three more poems, ***Love, Memories*** and ***Scared Sugar***. Think about how each of the poems allows Nadim to express thoughts, emotions and feelings. *What feelings and emotions are captured in each poem? What words and phrases in each poem tell you about the feeling or emotion? What do we learn about each feeling from the poem? What is similar and different with each poem? Why do you think he chose these feelings to write about in particular?* Look at the descriptive and figurative language that is used throughout the poems that helps to share a sense of the feelings and emotions explored, for example: ***Everyone has love / Even baddies; It makes me think "Oh... / I'm never going to get to do that again; And that's it. Scary and Sweet.***



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Scared-sugar. *What do these things tell you about the feelings described – how they feel and what might induce these feelings in us? Can you remember a time you have felt this way? What in the poems feels familiar to you? How would you describe feeling this way?* Use the discussions to continue to explore and extend vocabulary to describe and make sense of emotions. You could add these words to the display you have created.

- After reading, encourage the children to think of a feeling they have experienced in their own lives. Support the children in navigating their choices, ensuring that they are comfortable to talk about and explore the emotion they have chosen. Allow them to think about times they have felt this way and talk about experiences or associations they have with this feeling. Model this for the children by talking about a feeling of your own.
- When the children have thought about the feeling they want to explore, give them time, space and appropriate resources to compose their own poem. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing a poem about your chosen feeling. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary. When these are finished, scribe or type the poems for the children, or allow them to use presentation handwriting or a word processor to publish their work, giving them the chance to think about where they want to break lines or verses, and talking through choices for this.
- Think now about what illustration would best accompany their poem. Come back to the original illustrations for each of the poems. *What do they show you? What sense do they give you about the feeling that is being explored or particular moments associated with these feelings?* Give the children access to cartridge paper, sketching pencils (2B-4B are ideal), watercolour paints and brushes, modelling techniques in an illustration to accompany your own poem first, and then allow the children to create their own images. Leave copies of the poems nearby so that the children can refer to the original illustrations if they wish. When the poems and artwork are complete, add these to the display with the day of the week poems.
- Complete this section by reading the two poems, **Baddies** and **Take off Your Brave**. *What do these two poems tell us about different feelings that we experience? What connections do you make with each poem? Does anything remind you of something you have experienced in your own life?*
- Re-read the poems a second time, so that the children become more aware of the words used and the concepts explored. *Is it easy to control how you feel? What different ways do you know that help you deal with more negative or uncomfortable feelings or to support someone else who might be dealing with these feelings?* Use the children's ideas to add suggestions to the display corner and to support you in continuing to develop an environment where children feel safe to discuss their feelings and emotions and feel supported to do so by adults in the setting creating a safe space where children feel comfortable to share and they take time to listen and respond to others when they do.

Using poetry to observe, describe and understand the wider world:

- Begin by reading **Between Bathtime and Bedtime**. Discuss together the questions that Nadim is asking in the poem. Do you know any of the answers to these? Have you wondered any of the same things yourself? Re-read the poem a second time, so that the children become more aware of the words used and the concepts explored. Which questions interest you the most, and why? Look carefully at the illustration. *What more does this tell us about the poem, and how does it relate to the title of the poem, **Between Bathtime and Bedtime**?*



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- Think together about the concept of this poem, using writing to explore all the questions we have about the world. *What questions do you have about the world?* Collect these together on strips of paper, that you scribe for the children or that they scribe for themselves, depending on their age and stage of development. Use the strips to compile a class list poem. If you are working with a very large group, you may want to split off into smaller groups to keep the poem a manageable length.
- Organise the strips together, considering which line might be a good opening or closing line and what order flows best and provides cohesion, reading aloud and making any small edits to improve the poem as you go. You may wish to finish with the same closing as Nadim's poem, to draw the writing together.
- Prepare a performance of the poem, with each child performing the questions they composed. You could then record this to share with a wider audience or hold a live performance for others to enjoy.
- Now, share the title of the poem ***Being on a train*** and look at the accompanying illustration. Talk together about the concept of travelling on a train. *Have you ever been on a train before? What was it like on the train? What could you hear, see, smell and feel?* Now, read the poem aloud. *How do you relate to Nadim's descriptions from your own experience of being on a train? Which descriptions do you like best and why?*
- Think about how you might perform this poem as a group, taking advantage of the sounds and evocative descriptions. You might want to break a very large group into smaller groups to work on performances. *How will you break up the lines? Will some parts have more than one person performing? How could you use your voices to make the audience feel like they are on the train ride with you? Which parts might be faster, slower, louder or softer? Might actions enhance the meaning in some parts?* (Be careful that the groups do not over-use these and detract from the performance). Work these up and when the children are confident, you could then record these to share with a wider audience or hold a live performance for others to enjoy.
- If you are able to make the opportunity, take a journey together, on a bus, tube, tram or train or encourage the children to think of a journey they have already been on, in one of these modes of transport, in a car or maybe even on a boat or plane. *What did it look like? What did it feel like? What could you hear, see or smell? What did you think about when you were on this mode of transport?* Talk through ideas of your own first, to model this process, taking notes as you go of descriptive words and phrases you might want to use in your writing.
- Use the children's ideas to encourage them to write about their experiences in a poem. Model this with your own ideas first. You could then share and write these as a group, arranging different groups to write about different modes of transport, so that children are able to write about something they have direct experience of. Older children could write their own individual poems, exploring their own ideas and experiences, which they could perform in the same way as the original poem.
- Complete this section by reading the two poems, ***Living Underground*** and ***Tell Me a Lie About the Sea***. *What does each poem make you think about? How does each poem make you feel? Which poem do you like best and why?*
- Watch a variety of clips about the concepts explored in these poems, to broaden children's understanding of the themes and concepts explored. The following clips from CBeebies *Our Planet* are rich in language and imagery and are appropriate for this age range:



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- *Animals that live in the sea:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011l4gy>
- *Animals found living and around a coral reef:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011t2m8>
- *Habitats: Underground Burrows:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011l4j7>
- *Different kinds of Beetles:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011kq94>

You may also wish to explore some different kinds of habitats and creatures with the children, using clips like:

- *Living in the forest:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011t2m8>
 - *Which animals make the most noise in the Rainforest:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011t2m8>
 - *Green plants and animals in the rainforest:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011mfvs>
 - *Animals that live on cold mountains:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011spt9>
 - *Adaptations of animals living in the Arctic:* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011mrxm>
- Now, give them time, space and appropriate resources to compose their own poem about the one of these habitats. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing a poem of your own, based on your own ideas, drawing back to some of the imagery and descriptive language from the original poems and considering how you could use language like this in your own poem. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary. When these are finished, scribe or type the poems for the children, or allow them to use presentation handwriting or a word processor to publish their work, giving them the chance to think about where they want to break lines or verses, and talking through choices for this.
 - Think now about what illustration helps to explore ideas about this habitat even further. Come back to the original illustrations for each of the poems. *What do they show you about this habitat and the wildlife and other elements within it? What feelings does each illustration give you about the place?* Give the children access to cartridge paper, sketching pencils (2B-4B are ideal), watercolour paints and brushes, modelling techniques in an illustration about your own special person first and then allow the children to create their own images. Leave copies of these poems nearby so that the children can refer to the original artwork if they wish.
 - When the poems and artwork are complete, publish these in a hand made anthology (a plain page hardback bound A3 notebook is ideal for this), with the poems and accompanying illustrations published alongside each other and leave this in a prominent space to revisit and share with a wider audience. Photocopies of the poems and illustrations could be made, laminated and positioned in the space, if appropriate.

Using your imagination in poetry:

- Write the word 'school' in the centre of a large piece of paper and use this as a stimulus to talk to the children about school. *What do they like about school? What do they dislike about it? Who do they see at school? What is it like at school? What are their favourite things to do there?* Make notes of the children's thoughts and ideas around the word on the sheet.



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- Now read the poem **My Dream School**. How does the school Nadim describes compare to their own school? Do you think you would like to go to his dream school? Why or why not?
- Re-read the poem a second time, so that the children become more aware of the words used and the concepts explored. Which words and phrases are most memorable for you, and why?
- Now, ask the children to think about their own ideas for a dream school. What would it look like, sound like or smell like? What would the people there be like? What would they do? How would people feel about the school? Make notes of the children's thoughts and ideas and model with thoughts and ideas of your own.
- Give the children time, space and appropriate resources to support them in composing their own **Dream School** poem. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing a poem about your own Dream School. Think about how the original poem could inspire your ideas. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary.
- When they have completed their poems, they might then want to think about how to illustrate these. What moment will share the thoughts, feelings and ideas in their words most effectively? Come back to the original illustration in the poem. What does it show you? What feelings does it give you about the school in the poem? Give the children access to cartridge paper, sketching pencils (2B-4B are ideal), watercolour paints and brushes, modelling techniques in an illustration for your own poem first and then allow the children to create images to illustrate their own poems. Leave copies of the poem nearby so that the children can refer to these if they wish.
- When all these are finished you could publish these on the school website – with appropriate permissions from both the writers and their families – or create a display in a central location in the school for others to read and be inspired by.
- Complete your work on the collection by reading the poem **My Wish**. What does this poem make you think about? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way?
- Think together about the planet we live on now. What do you already know or think you know about our planet? Make notes of the children's thoughts and ideas to come back to. Use Google Earth (<https://earth.google.com/web/>) to share a view of the Earth from space with the children on a large screen or IWB. If the children haven't already used the name Earth as the name of the planet we live on, use this as an opportunity to introduce this. Talk together about what they notice as they see the Earth presented before them in this way. Have they ever seen our planet like this before? What do they notice about it? What does it make them think about? Zoom in to look at some of the natural and physical features of the planet, talking together about what these are and why these things exist.
- Now watch the trailer for BBC's Planet Earth: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7n_1JZgDPf4 What does this video make you think about our planet? What are the good things about our planet? What might the bad things about living on this planet be, that we might not have seen in this video?
- Encourage the children to think about their own dream planet. What would it be like there? What natural and physical features would it have? Who or what would live there? What would it not be like or what might not exist on your dream planet? What would it feel like to live or be there?



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- When the children have some initial ideas allow them to draw a representation of their dream planet. Come back to the poem and look at the accompanying illustration. *What do you see here that reflects what you read in the poem? What can you tell about the creatures, plants and wildlife that live here?* Give them appropriate art materials with which to draw an illustration that represents their own dream planet. Leave a copy of the original poem nearby, so that children can draw on the illustration if they wish.
- When they have a clear picture of their dream planet in mind and a representation of this in an illustration, give the children time, space and appropriate resources to compose their own poem. Model this first by sharing and talking through the process of writing a poem about your own dream planet. With younger children who don't yet have the transcriptional ability to write for themselves, they could use recording devices to record, and re-record their words. With older children, they can draft, read aloud and redraft as necessary. When these are finished, scribe or type the poems for the children, or allow them to use presentation handwriting or a word processor to publish their work, giving them the chance to think about where they want to break lines or verses, and talking through choices for this.
- When the poems are complete, allow the children to publish these in a range of different ways. They may wish to write these up in presentation handwriting, or have an adult scribe this for them to publish these on a display or in a class anthology, they may wish to record their poem for others to hear as a voice or video performance, or they may wish to put on a physical performance for an invited audience to enjoy.

Revisiting the collection as a whole:

- Talk together about the collection as a whole. *Which poems did you like best and why? Were you surprised that these were written by a 4 year old? Why was this? What did you learn about poetry from reading these poems? How did you feel about writing your own poems? Which of your own poems were you most proud of and why?*
- Ask the children if they know any other poems or poets. Make a list of these and create a permanent space in the classroom where children can read poetry and publish examples of their own poetry. This might include:
 - a book display of poetry collections, anthologies or individual printed poems (suggestions for age-appropriate collections can be seen below);
 - a device upon which they can watch or listen to poetry performances on websites such as CLPE's Poetryline: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poets> or The Children's Poetry Archive: <https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/>
 - photographs of well-known poets
 - a display board upon which children can display examples of their own poems
 - individual poetry journals where children can write their own poems freely
 - recording devices upon which children can record their ideas for poems or orally compose poetry
 - anthologies and examples of the children's own poetry writing
- Make it part of the daily routine to read and share a poem. You may start this off as the enabling adult, but this might encourage the children to bring in and share their own examples. This can just be dropped into any moment, simply for enjoyment and for the children to just talk about freely if they wish. You could revisit and re-read poems from **Take Off Your Brave** as part of this.



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After reading, you could also:

- Have multiple copies of the book available in the reading area for children to return to, share socially and borrow to share with parents and carers at home.
- Print out, laminate and display favourite poems from the collection in the indoor and outdoor environment for children to come back to and match their spoken words to printed words.
- Continue to provide props, puppets and role-play equipment for the children to access to recall and retell rhymes.
- Create a song and rhyme or poetry corner in the learning environment that has rhyme and song cards, poetry collections, copies of favourite poems and props, costumes and puppets that allow children to recall and retell familiar poems.
- Share favourite poems from the collection or children's own written poems with parents by sharing video performances of the children on the school website or class blog.
- Send poem bags home with the children, containing a laminated copy of a poem, along with puppets or props to support retelling or performing.
- Continue to support the children in composing their own poetry to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings, to describe experiences they have had and to entertain.

Other collections of poetry and rhymes for young children:

- *A Great Big Cuddle* by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Chris Riddell (Walker)
- *Honey for You, Honey for Me* by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Chris Riddell (Walker)
- *Here's a Little Poem*, collected by Jane Yolen and Andrew Fusek-Peters, illustrated by Polly Dunbar (Walker)
- *Out and About* by Shirley Hughes (Walker)
- *The Proper Way to Meet a Hedgehog and Other How to Poems*, selected by Paul B. Janeczko, illustrated by Richard Jones (Walker)
- *A First Book of Nature* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Mark Hearld (Walker)
- *A First Book of the Sea* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Emily Sutton (Walker)
- *A First Book of Animals* by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Petr Horáček (Walker)
- *The Oxford Treasury of Nursery Rhymes*, illustrated by Ian Beck (Oxford University Press)
- *Zim, Zam, Zoom* by James Carter, illustrated by Nicola Colton (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Poems to Perform* by Julia Donaldson (Macmillan)
- *Poems Aloud* by Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Daniel Gray Barnett (Wide-Eyed Editions)
- *Poems Out Loud*, illustrated by Laurie Stansfield (Ladybird)
- *The Puffin Book of Fantastic First Poetry*, ed. June Crebbin (Puffin)

Visit the link below for more content, including a poem read by Nadim himself!

www.takeoffyourbrave.com



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