

A resource for schools celebrating National Poetry Day 2025 themed all around play!

# Play with Poetry!



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## Overview

**Date**

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025

**Theme**

National Poetry Day 2025 themed around 'play'

**Year**

Years 1-9 - A group task to develop oracy skills for performance.

**Outcome**

Pupils are encouraged to create a group poem based on their ideas of what the word 'play' means to them and perform it for an audience.

**Guidance**

Select a poem about play to read out that inspires the children e.g.  
KS1 - Let's Play by Kiesha Shephard  
KS2 - Anticipation by Sarah Ziman  
KS3- A Good Play by Robert Louis Stevenson.

## Learning Objectives

Combine ideas to create joint reflections through poetry identifying with others' experiences and perspectives.

Select carefully and review content to improve the impact of the poem on the audience.

Perform poetry as a group to reflect on pace, punctuation, power and pause. Engage the audience with a variety of techniques.

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## Lesson Outline

Duration	Teacher Guidance	Tips
15 minutes	Explain the theme of National Poetry Day 2025 and encourage pupils to discuss then write down words and annotations around the term 'play' showing pictures to inspire. Focus on what play means to them. Share your inspiration poem and discuss what the term 'play' meant in this poem. Are there any other interpretations? Explain the importance of play for all for wellbeing.	Begin by discussing in pairs, then join up to make a group of 4, taking turns to give examples.
10 minutes	Teacher brings together the different ideas by creating themes of play titles on big pieces of paper, putting play into categories. e.g. games, playtime, sibling play, learning play, sports, imaginary play, gaming.. etc.	Pupils then move around adding ideas to the large piece of paper relevant to their category. Alternatively, lead this as the teacher.
10 minutes	Model how to use the ideas on each category sheet to create a stanza, then encourage the class to work in pairs or small groups to create their own short poem about 'play'. This may look different for each phase e.g. pick a particular theme for younger pupils to write a verse about together or give a title: 'What is Play?' or 'What Play means to me'. Older pupils may create a poem of their own which illustrates play in a different form in each stanza. Another option is for pupils to use a rhythmic pattern to create a stanza each that can be compiled to form the final poem.	Consider which task reflects the pupils thoughts about play. If your focus is to perform the poem, write the content together, or ask pupils to come up with ideas that can be combined through shared writing.

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## Lesson Outline

Duration	Teacher Guidance	Tips
25 minutes	<p>Writing time</p> <p>Model how to reflect on the content of the poetry written- could any words be changed to create a different effect?</p> <p>Combine ideas to form a final poem.</p>	<p>If your focus is to perform the poem, write the content together, or ask pupils to come up with ideas that can be combined through shared writing.</p> <p>Encourage reflection on how to choose and refuse content, considering what sounds better as the listener.</p>
10 minutes	<p>Listen to the final poem(s) and consider performance techniques. Text mark the poem to highlight pauses and other physical oracy techniques. This can be done in small groups or as a whole class.</p>	<p>Practise, feedback and improve performance technique over a number of short re-visit sessions.</p>
<b>PERFORM!</b>	<p>Select an audience and perform your poems/poem as small groups or as an entire class. This could be filmed for an online audience if necessary.</p>	<p>Reflect and celebrate the achievement by recording your poem to play back to pupils.</p>

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## Example Outcomes

### Example 1

Play is whatever you want it to be,  
Do we need it?  
Sure, it's the way we learn,  
the way we come together  
or how we create alone.

### Example 2

Playing online, or in imaginary roles,  
we play games or sports,  
we can make up the rules.  
Play is freedom, take it for yourselves.

## Further Resources

For more literacy support and free resources, access  
[Publications & Documents | One Education](#)

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