



Language: English

## Writing poetry throughout the Primary school

### General Guidelines

- It is important that children have the opportunity to hear, read, write and enjoy poetry on a regular basis.
- When writing poetry allow the children to work as a whole class, in groups and pairs as well as individually.
- Model writing the different types of poems
- Give children plenty of opportunity to see and discuss the style of poem you have selected before writing it themselves. Photocopy and laminate poems and have them in your room.
- Give children the opportunity to present their work

In this document we look at various styles of poems for the different classes (which can be adapted for your classes according to the children's prior experience) but they all need to be developed as children move up through the school.



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### Junior and Senior Infants

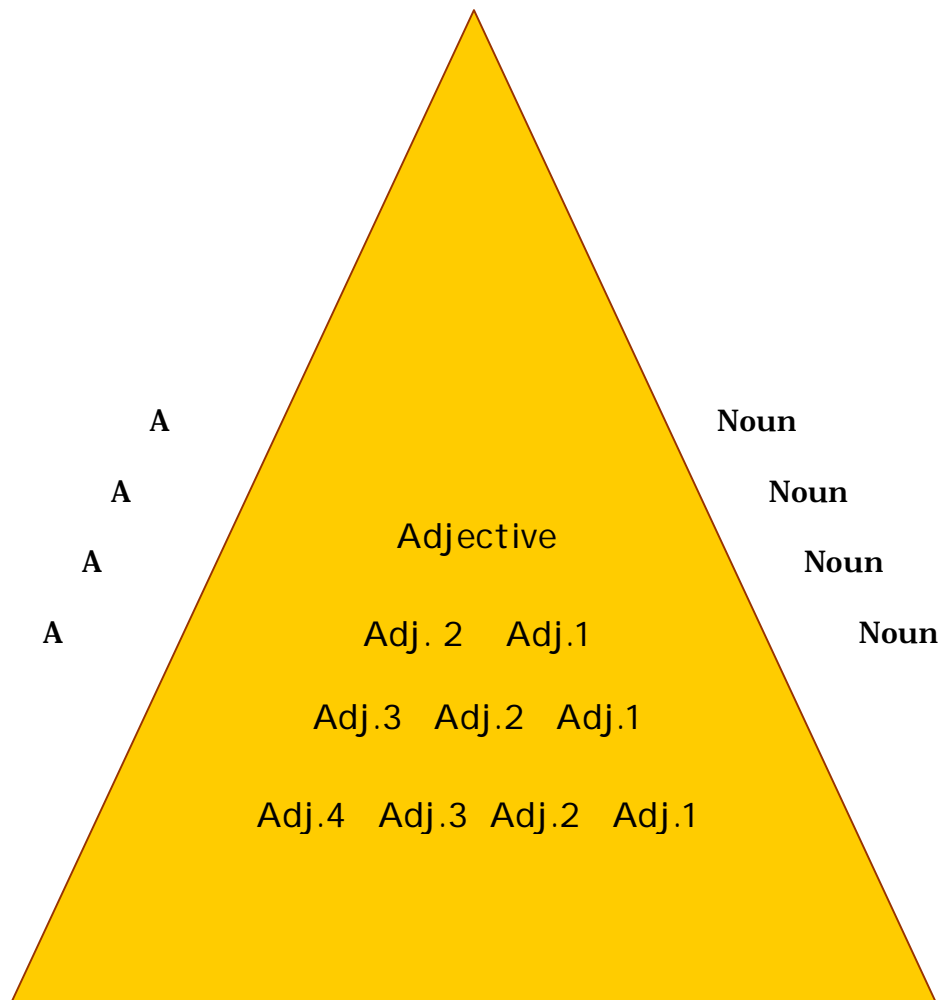
#### Onomatopoeic Poems

Onomatopoeic Poems are sound poems and are ideal way for young children to think about objects, people, animals, birds etc and the sounds they make. Children would need plenty of preliminary work before creating the poem and it may link with oral language, a story that has just been read, an excursion etc

e.g. The Supermarket

Trolleys banging,  
Mammies talking,  
Music playing,  
Babies crying,  
Registers ringing,  
I want to go home.

#### Pyramid Poems





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In the Pyramid poems get the children to describe the chosen topic using one adjective in the first line, then two adjectives in the second line and so on. The children can add as many lines as they wish, with a short sentence at the end to round off the poem. The following example is based on the story “Can’t You Sleep Little Bear” by Martin Waddell.

Bear

A little bear

A cute, little bear

A tired, cute, little bear

A scared, tired, cute, little bear

Go to sleep little bear



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## First and Second

### Acrostics

Write the title vertically on the left hand side of the page, each letter represents a word and can then be added to form a sentence. For younger children you can begin by using their name, mammy, daddy, pets, animals, birds, seasons etc Develop the theme for older children by using feeling/emotions or other abstract ideas.

Gardening all of the time  
Rubs my knee when I fall,  
And makes yummy scones.  
Never gives out,  
Never complains,  
Yes I love my granny.

### Rhyming Couplets

Teachers can begin using rhyming couplets with infant classes but children need a lot of practice with rhyming words. Nursery rhymes are a great place to start; rhyming couplets can also be linked to phonological awareness or with rhyming poems and stories. Teachers can begin using rhyming couplets. Begin by reciting common nursery rhymes to the kids, but change the last word on the first line, get the children to fill in a word that rhymes with this e.g.

Humpty Dumpty went to the shop  
To buy himself a ...lollipop/spinning top

Humpty Dumpty bought a hat  
In it was a big black ...cat/rat

Jack and Jan (Dan, Gran, Stan, Ann)  
Went to ...Japan,  
To see a..man in a caravan

Or just make up your own rhymes. It is important to brainstorm rhyming words with the children before you begin e.g. bear, there, where, lair, mare, hair, chair, glare, pear, pair, stair, tear, wear etc

Deep in the wood was a grumpy bear  
Who sat all day in a gloomy lair...

I saw a lovely young red fox  
With a black tipped tail and white, white socks.



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### Alphabet Poems

Good precursors to alphabet poems are oral language games such as the Minister's Cat. These allow children to think of adjectives, going from a-z to describe the cat.

The minister's cat is an awful cat

The minister's cat is a beautiful cat

The minister's cat is a creepy cat etc.

This game can also be played using the names of the pupils

My name is Deirdre and I like doughnuts

My name is Tom and I hate tomatoes etc.

Or

My name is Ita and I am in Italy (countries)

My name is Mary and I eat marmalade (food)

This depends on the level and ability of the class

There are numerous different forms of alphabet poems, in the example below we focus on verbs but you can create a poem using adjectives, nouns etc. The poems don't have to rhyme

#### The Playground

A asked to go to the loo

B bounced a ball

C crawled under the fence

D danced round Paul

Adapting the theme for senior classes

ABC Books allow children to choose a word for each letter of the alphabet and describe it in some way. As a class you may wish to focus on a theme, animals, insects, countries, flowers, feelings etc

A is for anger and gritting my teeth

B is for blushing and making silly mistakes

C is for cranky when I don't get my way...

#### Group Poems

In the following poem the title of the poem is taken and repeated throughout the poem, to begin link the theme to a topic that the children are familiar with e.g.

#### In the Playground

We run around

In the Playground

We swap lunches

In the Playground

We play chasing

In the Playground



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### Free Poems

It is important that children remember that poems don't always have to rhyme in order to be a poem, similarly we don't always have to tell children to write a poem for them to express themselves poetically. A young six year old wrote the following piece in her nature copy, she was not asked to write a poem but when the teacher saw the piece she praised the child for the beautiful poem, the child was delighted. You may have opportunities within your own class that can highlight children writing poetically, it may be a sentence from an essay etc.

### I Like Nature

Flowers come with nature.  
Trees come with nature.  
We come with nature.

### Colour Poems

Colour poems can be written and developed right through the school. When writing colour poems with junior classes just repeat the colour at the beginning of each sentence. Get the children to brainstorm things that are this colour e.g.

#### Black

Black is my cat  
Black is granny's stove  
Black is my shiny shoe

You can also focus on themes when writing this sort of poetry e.g. Friends are..., Autumn is ... etc

#### Adapting the theme for Senior Classes

War is..., Hunger is ... etc. When working with the older classes you don't have to repeat the colour/theme at the beginning of each sentence, also rather than constantly thinking of solid objects ask the children to think of things that the colour/object/theme represents e.g.

#### Black

The old mine degenerating in the dead of night,  
The exposed body lying helplessly on waste ground,  
An engulfing darkness in a maze of winding passages,  
A dagger of evil stained with blood,  
A cold and lingering silence



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### Third and Fourth Classes

#### Adjective Poems

In this instance we repeat the title three times on the first and last lines of the poem and at the end of each line in the poem. The poem can be as long or as short as you want. For younger kids the words may be of just one syllable but in order to develop this type of poem for the middle classes and senior classes you can ask for two and three syllable words also. You can also ask that all of the adjectives in each line begin with the same letter e.g.

#### Pirates

Pirates, Pirates, Pirates,  
Big, beefy, burly pirates,  
Dark, dour, dangerous pirates,  
Mean, mucky, massive pirates  
Pirates, Pirates, Pirates,

A variation of this poem is to use verbs and adverbs e.g.

#### Sailing

Sailing, sailing, sailing  
Silently sailing,  
Swiftly sailing,  
Surely sailing  
Sailing, sailing, sailing

#### UP and DOWN POEM

This is a variation of acrostics poems, and can be used with the older classes - a theme or title is taken and is written in capitals and in a bright colour. They create their poem around this. Before beginning Choose one “key” word as the focus - e.g. slavery, Peace, freedom, etc. brainstorm related key words - adjectives, adverbs, feeling words, power words, etc. Write the word DOWN the middle of the page, (one letter per line). Students can write individually, in pairs or in small groups. Fit words and phrases around the letters by choosing your kindred words, or by using the brainstorm list to help. The idea is that each letter from the key word becomes incorporated into the word or phrase going across. The one rule is that the first line and the last should be connected in some way - same word or same sentiment. A more difficult exercise is to write the title down the right side of the page, so that all the lines of the poem end with those letters.



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## HOMEWORK

Horrible stuff,  
cOmpletely disgusting, in fact!  
Makes  
mE  
Want to  
gO and find a  
"Real job"..  
Nah, I don't thinK so!!

### Sausage Poems

Sausage poems are lots of fun. In these poems the last letter in the first word is the same as the first letter in the second word and the last letter in the second word is the same as the first letter in the third word and so on.

Before you begin play Word Tennis Pairs. It's a great oral language game and a good introduction to these types of poems.

Word Tennis Pairs (countries) e.g. EnglanD, DenmarK, KenyA etc.

Examples of Sausage Poems:

HoW Would DangerouS SnakeS SnaP Petrified DonkeyS?

HippoS Swop PyjamaS SO OfteN No-oneE EveR RememberS

Now try write the poems so that the last letter of the last word is the same as the first letter of the first word, this is known as a circle sausage poem.

### Riddle Poems

Riddle poems can be just two lines long e.g.

I am a see-through pear  
Hanging from my tree-less branches

Answer: Light bulb  
(Puskin)





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However there are riddles that have a standard format

Line 1: Clue about the subject

Line 2: Hint using an adjective and a noun

Line 3: Two actions connected with the riddle

Line 4: Last clue in the form of a phrase/statement

Line 5: Answer to the riddle

### Character poems

(Character first name) \_\_\_\_\_

Lives \_\_\_\_\_ where \_\_\_\_\_

Hears \_\_\_\_\_,

Sees \_\_\_\_\_,

Touches \_\_\_\_\_,

Needs \_\_\_\_\_,

Fears \_\_\_\_\_,

Gives \_\_\_\_\_,

Wonders \_\_\_\_\_,

Dreams \_\_\_\_\_,

Believes \_\_\_\_\_,

Loves \_\_\_\_\_ and

Is \_\_\_\_\_.

(last name of character)

An example of a character poem:

**Frodo**

Lives in Bag End where he

Hears horses hooves,

Sees black riders gallop,

Touches the one ring to rule them all,

Needs to save the Middle Earth,

Fears the Orcs,

Wonders if he can fulfil his quest,

Dreams of home,

Believes in Gandalf's magic

Loves Bilbo, and

Is strong enough to defeat all enemies.

**Baggins**



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### Limericks

In limericks line one, two and five rhymes, and line three and four rhymes.

In a castle that had a deep moat  
Lived a chicken a duck and a goat.  
They wanted to go out  
And wander about  
But they didn't have was a boat.



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## Fifth and Sixth Classes

### Kennings

A title or topic is chosen and children describe it in other ways without using the name.

#### Storm

An angry sky-god

A lightning-thrower

An electricity-charge

A tree-destroyer

### Alliteration Poems

For the middle classes poems with alliteration can be scaffolded. Here the children are given sentences that may act as starting points. Similarly the children may be given a word that can begin each sentence e.g. (to rhyme or not to rhyme p. 85)

Alliteration poems are sentences, phrases or statements where the words in each sentence begin with the same letter e.g.

One waggly walrus won a wet wager  
Two trustful twins tumble in a typhoon,  
Three thin thoroughbreds thumped a thick thief ...

### Cinquains

These poems have five lines:

Line 1: 1 noun

Line 2: 2 related adjectives

Line 3: 3 descriptive gerunds (verb + -ing)

Line 4: 1 complete, related sentence

Line 5: 1 noun (a synonym of first noun)

### War

War

Sad, destructive

Killing, injuring, destroying

A thing that kills life.

Terminator



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### Diamante Poems

Line 1: 1 noun (a)

Line 2: 2 adjectives to describe the noun (a)

Line 3: 3 gerunds (verb + ing) (what you do in/with noun)

Line 4: 2 nouns linked with a + 2 nouns linked with its antonym  
(opposite) (b)

Line 5: 3 gerunds

(verb + ing) to describe noun (b)  
describe noun (b)

Line 6: 2 adjectives to

Line 7: noun (b)

Seasons

Winter

Rainy, cold

Skiing, skating, sledding

Mountains, wind, breeze, ocean

Swimming, surfing, scuba diving

Sunny, hot

Summer

### Haiku

This is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. The first two lines make a statement and in the final line these two statements are combined.

Line 1: 5 syllables

Line 2: 7 syllables

Line 3: 5 syllables

Example of a Haiku:

A broken oak branch

In the dark and soggy wood

Supports my trip home