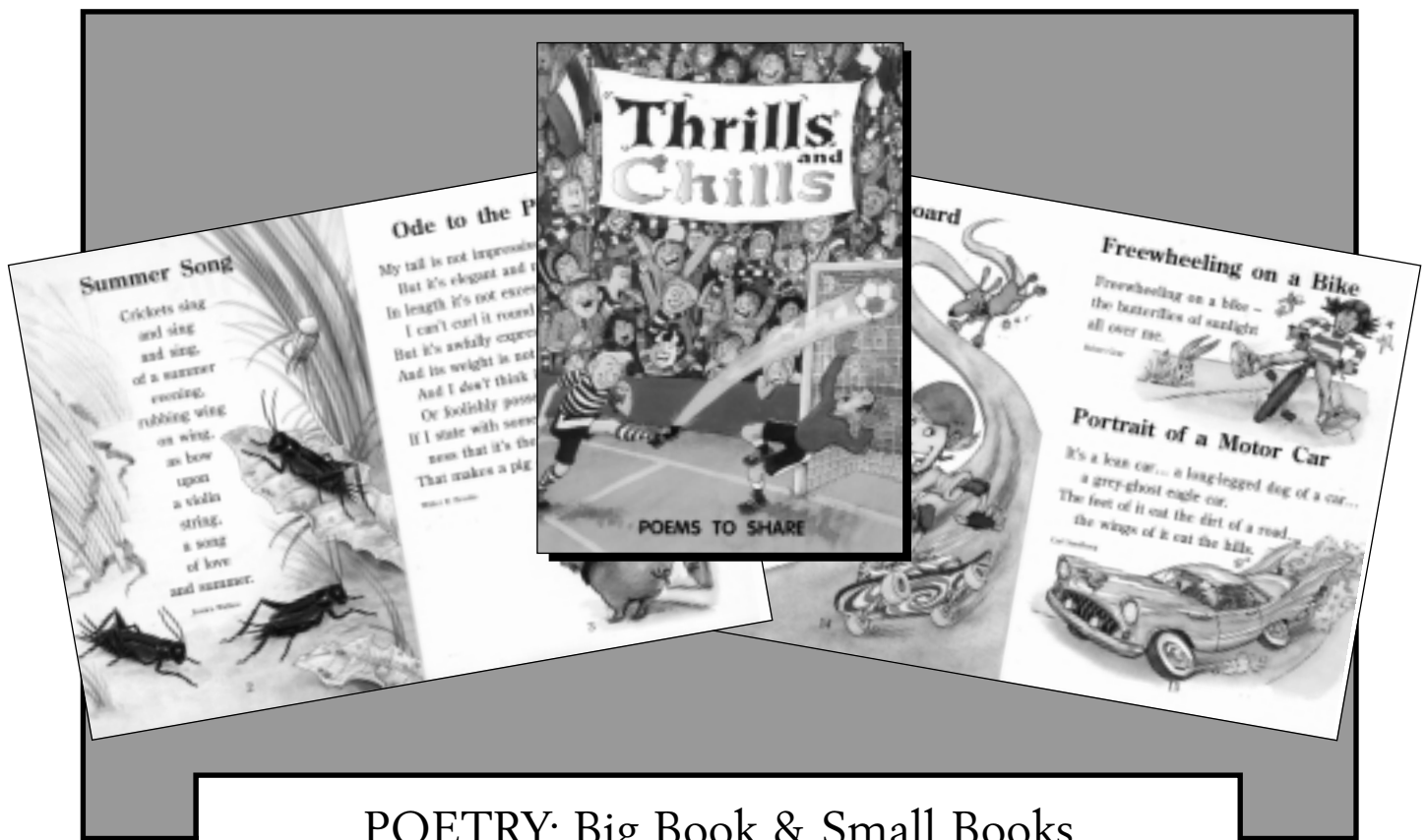


# KINGSCOURT / MCGRAW-HILL

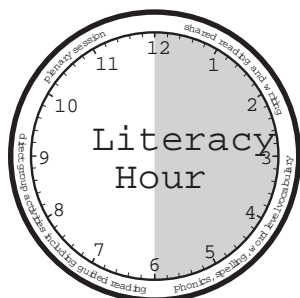
## LITERACY HOUR LESSON PLANS

Shared Reading and Writing  
Text, Sentence and Word Level Work

### YEAR 4



POETRY: Big Book & Small Books



£4.95

# Thrills and Chills (Year 4 Poetry) and the NLS

| Poems              |  | Skills in Focus   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| <b>1</b><br>Term 1 | <p><b>Summer Song and Ode to the Pig: His Tail</b><br/><i>Animal poems: free verse and humorous rhyme</i><br/>the first two poems in a series of animal poems, each with a unique and positive view of nature</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comparing poems with different language styles</li> <li>• investigating viewpoint and its effect on the reader; writing from different points of view</li> <li>• writing scripts for role plays and interviews</li> <li>• investigating suffixes</li> <li>• identifying adverbs and their function</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2</b><br>Term 1 | <p><b>The Eagle</b><br/><i>Classic rhyming poem</i><br/>Alfred Tennyson's tribute to the eagle is rich in bold and thrilling images.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigating details that build a character</li> <li>• describing, and expressing responses to, the form and language of the poem</li> <li>• writing character sketches</li> <li>• investigating viewpoint and its impact on the reader</li> <li>• writing prose descriptions using ideas and images from the poem</li> </ul>                           |
| <b>3</b><br>Term 1 | <p><b>Pigeons</b><br/><i>Contemporary free verse</i><br/>Children may discover underlying comments on human nature in Lilian Moore's poem about the habits of pigeons.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing an active attitude towards reading,</li> <li>• identifying specific language features and their impact, including metaphor</li> <li>• writing scripts based on a familiar poem</li> <li>• comparing and contrasting poems on similar themes</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4</b><br>Term 1 | <p><b>The Crocodile</b><br/><i>Humorous rhyming poem</i><br/>a famous and delightful poem by Lewis Carroll, taken from Alice in Wonderland</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substituting own words and ideas to help clarify a poem's meaning</li> <li>• using a poem as a model for writing</li> <li>• writing from the point of view of a character</li> <li>• comparing and contrasting poems</li> <li>• investigating verbs</li> </ul>   |
| <b>5</b><br>Term 1 | <p><b>Lion</b><br/><i>Word play</i><br/>an animal poem with a difference – an ideal starting point for children's own imaginative writing about animals and sound</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigating how characters and themes develop</li> <li>• exploring humour and language play, including innovative uses of typography and its effect on the reader</li> <li>• identifying adverbs and understanding their function</li> <li>• writing poems linked to poems read</li> <li>• investigating prefixes</li> </ul>                           |
| <b>6</b><br>Term 1 | <p><b>Samuel</b><br/><i>First-person free verse</i><br/>Bobbi Katz skilfully weaves both poignancy and humour into this excellent example of free verse about owning a pet</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussing personal responses to poems and comparing the form and language</li> <li>• investigating language patterns sometimes found within free verse, such as repetition</li> <li>• identifying point of view, and its effect on the reader</li> <li>• writing scripts using known stories as a basis</li> <li>• investigating verb tenses</li> </ul> |
| <b>7</b><br>Term 2 | <p><b>A Football Game</b><br/><i>Descriptive rhyming poem</i><br/>a poem about sport and the passion it arouses; children will relate to and have fun with the descriptions of a football match</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding the use of figurative language</li> <li>• understanding the effect of expressive and descriptive language</li> <li>• writing poetry and other texts based on poems read</li> <li>• investigating and using prefixes</li> </ul>   |
| <b>8</b><br>Term 2 | <p><b>The City Dump and City</b><br/><i>Contemporary poems on the same theme</i><br/>two poems (one by Felice Holman and the other by Langston Hughes) with unusual topics that will encourage children to look for the extraordinary in ordinary things</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussing the use of figurative language in poetry, and evaluating its impact on the reader</li> <li>• comparing and contrasting settings</li> <li>• writing poetry based on poems read</li> <li>• using alternative words to be more accurate or interesting and extend vocabulary</li> </ul>  |

| Poems        |   | Skills in Focus  |
|--------------|---|--|
| 9<br>Term 2  | <p><b>On the Skateboard, Freewheeling on a Bike <i>and</i> Portrait of a Motor Car</b><br/><i>Free verse</i></p> <p><i>three poems featuring metaphor, by Lilian Moore, Robert Gray and Carl Sandburg, all celebrating aspects of motion</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comparing and contrasting poems</li> <li>• identifying patterns of rhyme in poetry</li> <li>• writing descriptive poetry and/or other descriptive texts based on poems read</li> <li>• investigating the effect of expressive and descriptive language on the reader</li> <li>• using connectives and commas to join clauses</li> </ul>   |
| 10<br>Term 2 | <p><b>Silver</b><br/><i>Classic rhyming poem</i></p> <p><i>Walter de la Mare's peaceful poem looks at the effects of silvery moonlight on a landscape.</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying words which suggest a poem is not contemporary</li> <li>• discussing figurative language</li> <li>• writing descriptive poetry and/or other descriptive texts based on poems read</li> <li>• adding suffixes to nouns and verbs to make adjectives</li> </ul>   |
| 11<br>Term 2 | <p><b>Winter Moon <i>and</i> Summer Full Moon</b><br/><i>Classic and contemporary verse</i></p> <p><i>poems by Langston Hughes and James Kirkup, inviting comparison and contrast and providing many starting points for children's own imaginative writing</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comparing and contrasting poems on similar themes</li> <li>• identifying specific language features and poetic techniques that create impact</li> <li>• describing how a poet does or does not use rhyme</li> <li>• understanding how words can be changed</li> <li>• writing scripts based on the poem</li> </ul>  |
| 12<br>Term 3 | <p><b>Wrestling</b><br/><i>Free verse (monologue)</i></p> <p><i>a poem about the games children play and the unspoken rules that govern them; an interesting poem for children to compare with Samuel</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussing figurative language and how it creates powerful images</li> <li>• investigating the effect of expressive and descriptive language on the reader</li> <li>• exploring the impact of viewpoint; writing from different points of view</li> <li>• investigating verb tenses</li> </ul>  |
| 13<br>Term 3 | <p><b>Salt and Pepper</b><br/><i>Rhyming conversation</i></p> <p><i>light-hearted rhyming poetry in the form of a conversation</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussing the message of a poem</li> <li>• investigating how characters and themes develop</li> <li>• writing a script; e.g., for an interview with an imagined character</li> <li>• collecting words with common roots</li> <li>• discussing and using direct and indirect speech</li> <li>• investigating suffixes and prefixes</li> </ul>   |
| 14<br>Term 3 | <p><b>Can You Sing?</b><br/><i>Nonsense conversation</i></p> <p><i>a delightful piece of nonsense based on the old game of Me, Sir?; the dialogue format provides an ideal springboard for activities involving direct speech and dramatised reading</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring humour and language play</li> <li>• investigating the use of direct speech and how it affects the reading of the poem</li> <li>• reviewing sentence structure and effect of the grammar used</li> <li>• writing dialogue</li> <li>• writing nonsense poems</li> </ul>   |
| 15<br>Term 3 | <p><b>Skipping Rhyme <i>and</i> The Swings in the Park</b><br/><i>Traditional skipping rhyme and haiku</i></p> <p><i>Skipping Rhyme explores a traditional skipping rhyme, reminding children that poetry is not only found in books; Swings in the Park, a haiku written by a child of 9, offers a more meditative view of play.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigating language features such as alliteration and describing their impact</li> <li>• describing how a poet does or does not use rhyme</li> <li>• investigating features of different forms of poetry, such as haiku</li> <li>• writing poetry or other texts based on poems read</li> <li>• spelling using phonemes and visual skills</li> <li>• investigating homophones</li> </ul> |

YEAR TERM

4 1

*Summer Song* by Jessica Wallace and *Ode to the Pig: His Tail* by Walter R. Brooks introduce a series of poems about animals. *Summer Song*, evokes the sounds of enthusiastic cricket song – “a song of love and summer” – on a warm summer evening. *Ode to the Pig: His Tail* treats us to a pig’s celebration of his own tail. Far from agreeing with the popular image of a pig as a stupid and inelegant creature, the pig that speaks eloquently in this poem is almost overflowing with self-esteem.

## NLS REFERENCES

W14 investigating suffixes  
 S4 identifying adverbs and investigating their function  
 T7 comparing poems  
 T13 writing scripts based on texts read  
 T14 writing poems linked to poems read

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- list “-ly” adverbs to describe how crickets might sing, for example, *Crickets sing loudly, rowdily, expressively, boldly, brightly*
- find other poems written from an animal’s point of view; these could be included in a class anthology of animal poems
- write a scripted interview with the pig; children might include questions such as, *How do you feel about the reputation of pigs as dirty, fat and snorting animals?*
- choose an animal and write a poem from the animal’s point of view about its own very special feature or *master touch*; for example, a lion’s mane; a snake’s hiss. Alternatively, children could script a conversation among several creatures in which each boasts that it has the most impressive special feature of all.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Before reading the poems, remind the children that in many poems someone other than the poet is “speaking” – someone the poet has invented. Invite them to read just the first two words of each poem and suggest *who* might be speaking: perhaps the poet herself in *Summer Song*, while *Ode to the Pig* is definitely in the voice of the pig.
- Read *Summer Song* to the children. Then re-read it together. Ask the children whether or not the poet seems to enjoy the crickets’ song, and why they think so. Also invite them to describe any patterns they can find in the language, such as the repetition of *sing* and *summer* and the rhyme of *sing, evening, wing* and *string*. Ask them if they think that these patterns, such as rhyme, would stand out as clearly if the words were in one long line rather than in short lines.
- Invite the children to substitute the word *I* for the word *Crickets* at the start of *Summer Song* (*I sing and sing and sing*). Discuss how this simple alteration changes the *voice* of the poem.
- Explain that an *ode* is a poem that expresses strong or enthusiastic emotion. Read the children *Ode to the Pig: His Tail*, and then re-read it together. Ask the children what they think of the pig. Discuss several responses, encouraging them to refer to specific parts of the poem to help explain and support their views. Also invite them to compare and contrast the two poems; they might comment on humour, rhyme and rhythm, the simplicity/complexity of the language, and the use (or not) of similes.
- List the words *impressive, elegant, excessive, expressive, conceit, possessive, aggressiveness*, and *master touch* on the board. Work with the children to compose sentences that help to show what the words mean; for example, *If something is elegant, it is graceful and attractive. A master touch changes something from ordinary to special*, and so on.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Write the word *excessive* on the board, and discuss with the children how the addition of “ive” changes the word *excess* (a noun) into an adjective. Ask them to find other words ending in “ive” that have changed from a noun (or verb) to an adjective. Now draw their attention to the word *aggressiveness* and invite them to add “ness” to *excessive*. Scribe the new word on the board. Ask them what kind of word it is now (a noun). Invite them to suggest what other words ending in “ive” can change into nouns by adding “ness”; for example, *passiveness, inventiveness, imaginativeness*.
- Remind the children that adverbs often end in “ly”. Invite them to find two words in *Ode to the Pig: His Tail* that end in “ly” (*awfully* and *foolishly*). Ask them if these are adverbs in the poem – do they tell us anything about the verbs? (No.) Discuss with the children how the words are being used as “intensifiers” to add to the meaning or strength of *adjectives*, as in *foolishly possessive*. Invite them to use *foolishly* as an adverb in a simple sentence; for example, *He behaved foolishly*. Challenge them to find other adjectives from the poem that could have “-ly” added to become adverbs, such as *impressively, elegantly, neatly*, and so on. Discuss and list their suggestions.

YEAR TERM

4 1

*The Eagle*, a poem of tribute to one of the lords of life, is rich in bold and thrilling images. The eagle is presented to us as a monarch, fearless and proud. The feelings of the poem are very much in keeping with what we find elsewhere in Alfred Tennyson's (1809–1892) poetry: bravery is honoured and mastery is admired.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W1 identifying phonemes in speech and writing  
 S2 investigating verb forms  
 T1 investigating how characters are built up from small details  
 T7 comparing the form and language of poems  
 T11 writing character sketches

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- write a third verse for the poem, in keeping with the first two, describing the eagle falling on his prey and swooping back to his mountain crag
- write (and later act out for the class) a confession from an unusual eagle who is scared of heights
- research and prepare a report on the habits and habitats of various birds of prey, if possible describing those that are found in particular parts of the United Kingdom
- look in anthologies for other short poems about eagles and/or other creatures of prey
- write a description of the eagle from the point of view of another, smaller bird that the eagle might prey upon; you could suggest that the eagle might be seen as a terrible demon of the skies in the eyes of this vulnerable creature.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Before reading the poem, invite discussion of the title and illustration. Ask the children what comes to mind when they think of an eagle. List and briefly discuss suggestions; for example, *bird of prey*; *powerful*; *hunter*, and so on. Write the word *regal* on the board, and discuss the meaning: like a king or queen. Ask the children to think about the suitability of this word for the eagle as they listen to the poem.
- Read the poem to the children. Explain the meaning of *crag* and *azure* if necessary, and ask children what picture *Ringed with the azure world* makes them see (the eagle so high above land and sea that only the blue sky surrounds him). Then read the poem together. Ask the children if they think Tennyson sees the eagle as a regal creature, encouraging them to refer to specific parts of the poem.
- Invite the children to describe the rhyming pattern of the poem and to find other patterns of sound, such as the alliteration in *lonely lands* and in the repeated use of initial “hard c” in the first two lines (*clasps, crag, crooked, close*). Remind the children that poets tend to choose words with great care – for meaning as well as for sound.
- Ask the children what they think Tennyson means by *Close to the sun*. Suggest that “very high” conveys the idea of superiority. Ask them what other metaphors and similes are used and how they affect us. For example, the simile *like a thunderbolt* conveys a sense of great power; the eagle’s “fall” towards its prey is effortless but deadly. Children could also suggest why the poet might have chosen *crooked hands*; they might think of the eagle’s bent talons as being like hands, or could suggest that the use of *hands* lets us think of the eagle as a king gripping the arms of his throne.
- For a shared writing activity, work with the children to compose a description of the eagle using ideas and images from the poem, along with the idea of royalty. You could suggest a starter, such as *High above the world on his craggy throne, the eagle beholds his vast kingdom. He...* Scribe for the children as they agree on the text, encouraging them to pay careful attention to word choice and to guide you with spelling and punctuation.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Remind the children that a complete sentence will have, at least, a subject and a verb. Invite them to suggest sentences with a minimal number of words, using word sequences taken directly from the poem; for example, *He clasps the crag. He falls. He stands*. Now ask the children if the first line of each verse forms a complete sentence, and if we could make complete sentences by joining the second and third lines of each verse. (The answer in both cases is yes.) Help them to identify the subject and verb in each case.
- Ask the children what three personal pronouns are used in the poem (*he, him, his*). Remind them that the poem is written in the third person, and briefly explain why we use this term. Now ask the children to put the whole poem into the first person; that is, in the voice of the eagle himself. Remind them that they might have to change more than the pronouns; for example, verb forms may need to change, as in *like a thunderbolt he falls/like a thunderbolt I fall*.

YEAR TERM

4 1

*Pigeons* (Lilian Moore) looks with gentle and slightly puzzled disdain at the habits of city birds that rarely use their gift of flight. With some guidance, children may discover an underlying comment on aspects of human experience as well. The poem provides a perfect contrast (in terms of subject) to Tennyson's *The Eagle*, while at the same time suggesting that Lilian Moore and Tennyson may share certain values and beliefs.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W3 spelling by analogy with other known words  
 S4 collecting and classifying examples of adverbs  
 T7 comparing and contrasting poems on similar themes  
 T13 writing scripts, using known stories as a basis

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- script a conversation between pigeons, talking about how busy they have been in the city
- write a dialogue between a pigeon and an eagle in which each defends the life he or she prefers
- research pigeons and their habits, with a special aim of discovering (if possible) facts that would contradict the version of pigeon life in the poem
- write the story of a pigeon that yearns to become an eagle (or vice versa)
- list Rules and Regulations that might be agreed upon by a group of "city folk" pigeons; for example, *Rule 1: No singing of hills! Definitely no singing of flowering hedges! Rule 2: No unnecessary use of wings...*

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display *Pigeons*. Before reading the poem remind the children that we are the only creatures on earth with language, and that we have the freedom to tell stories about other creatures. The other creatures, of course, cannot tell us that we are wrong or right in what we say about them. Ask the children to keep this in mind as they listen to the poem.
- Read the poem to the children. Then read it together. Ask the children to suggest some adjectives that would suit the pigeons in the poem; for example, *boring, dull, unadventurous, unexciting*. (also ask the children if they think the pigeons would agree with this view of their lives.) Now ask the children which adjectives relate to: *a/ the final line; b/ They seldom try the sky; c/ A pigeon never sings of hill and flowering hedge, and d/ but busily commutes from sidewalk to his ledge*. Encourage the children to refine and/or add to their adjectives if their list does not include words to suit all these lines.
- Ask the children if they think the poem might be about people as well as birds. Why/why not? Encourage them to focus on the terms *city folk* and the words *but busily commutes from sidewalk to his ledge*. You could also ask them in what ways might human *city folk* who *busily commute* be like Lilian Moore's pigeons?
- Invite the children to compare the pigeons and their environment with Tennyson's eagle and its surroundings (page 4). Discussion of contrasts could lead to a shared writing activity, focused on composing sentences that mention both birds. For example, *The eagle soars, with all the world below him, while pigeons seldom rise above the rooftops*. Discuss several possible approaches before children agree on text for you to scribe. For example, they could take the point of view of a contented city pigeon, as in a sentence such as  
*The eagle may be king of the skies, but the city is my castle.*

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Write *pigeon* on the board. Invite children to think of some other words that use the unusual letter string "eon" (such as *bludgeon/dungeon/surgeon*). Then focus discussion on the "soft g" (/j/ sound), and challenge them to think of other words in which a "g" between two vowels represents the /j/ sound; for example, *age, cage, rage, advantage*. Now ask if they can find two words in the poem in which the /j/ sound, following a vowel *other than "a"*, is made by "g" in conjunction with another consonant (*hedge* and *ledge*). Ask them if they can think of more rhyming words for *hedge* with the same "dg" combination (for example, *edge, sledge, wedge*), and "dg" words with other vowel sounds, such as *bridge, dodge* and *fudge*.
- Using the word *seldom* as a starting point, brainstorm with the children words that indicate frequency or quantity without specifying a number. A list for frequency could include the adverbs *often, rarely, usually, occasionally* and *regularly*, and a list relating to quantity could include the words *several, few, some, many*, and so on. Discuss what each word means and encourage the children to put each word into a sentence.

YEAR TERM

4 1

This famous and delightful poem by Lewis Carroll (1832–1898) is taken from *Alice In Wonderland*. The children may also be interested to know that it is a parody of another, equally famous poem by Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748), *Against Idleness and Mischief* (*How doth the little busy bee/ Improve each shining hour...*). Encourage the children to compare *The Crocodile* with other verse by Lewis Carroll, in addition to comparing it with other poems in this collection that focus on animals.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W7 spelling regular verb endings  
 S2 investigating verbs  
 T7 comparing and contrasting poems  
 T8 finding out more about poets  
 T11 writing character sketches

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- work in pairs to write an interview with a crocodile, in which he claims to be misunderstood and actually a great friend of all living creatures
- write a warning sign for fish using some of the language of the poem; for example, *Beware the jaws of the crocodile! Any sign of a welcoming smile is just a trick, and means that you are in danger of being eaten. Do not be taken in!*
- research crocodiles and alligators, preparing a report that includes an explanation of why these creatures might be thought to be smiling and also what is meant by the term *crocodile tears*
- find other poems by Lewis Carroll and learn or practise reading a favourite to present to the class; or write about similarities and differences between *The Crocodile* and one other animal poem they have read in *Thrills and Chills*.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the poem and read it to the children. Ask them what word in the poem suggests that it was written some time ago (*doth*). Also discuss *improve*, which in this context might mean something like “polish” or “make more beautiful”. Tell the children that the poem comes from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, published in 1865.
- Re-read the poem together. Encourage the children to explain how they can tell that the poet wants his depiction of the crocodile to be humorous. For example, they could mention the phrases *little crocodile*; and *gently smiling jaws*, pointing out that the words *little* and *gentle* really relate to the *opposite* of what the crocodile is like.
- Draw the children’s attention to the three uses of *how* in the poem. Discuss the use of *how* to begin statements (usually a statement expressing strong feeling) rather than questions. Then ask the children to make a *How* sentence in the poem into a question without changing the words; for example, the exclamation mark at the end of the first stanza could become a question mark, while in other cases the word order needs to be changed as well. Also invite the children to suggest statements that “match” Lewis Carroll’s ironic tone but begin with *What*; for example, *What a welcoming smile the crocodile has!*
- After re-reading the poem, work with the children to compose a similarly ironic text about another dangerous creature. Scribe for the children as they agree on sentences, linking adjectives that mean *gentle* and *harmless* with animals that are dangerous. For example, the new text might begin, *How sweetly the snake hisses before it strikes!* or, *How tenderly the wolf looks at the rabbit!*

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Refer once again to the word *doth* in the poem (meaning does or do). Ask the children if they have ever come across other words like *doth* (such as *hath*, *goeth*). Remind the children that English has changed a great deal over the years, and that verbs such as “to do” and “to go” no longer have “th” endings. Also discuss words such as *thee*, *thou* and *thy* and ask the children if they can tell you what pronouns we now use in place of these (*you/your*).
- Discuss the meaning of *pour*. Remind the children that, like most verbs, this base word can be used in different forms (*pours*, *poured*, *pouring*) to indicate whether it relates to a singular or plural subject and to show tense. Invite children to suggest sentences that show the different forms of the verb in use. They could find and change the form of other verbs in the poem; for example, *grin/grinning/grinned*, *welcome/welcoming*.
- Ask the children what it is in the poem that the crocodile welcomes. When you are told *fishes*, write the word *fish* on the board and ask the children if you are right or wrong to leave off “es”. Now ask them if they can tell you any other animal’s name that can be made plural without the addition of an “s” or “es”. Scribe the suggestions on the board; for example, *deer*, *sheep*, *swine*, and so on (explain that these cannot have “s” or “es” as an alternative plural form).

YEAR TERM

4 1

*Lion* (Barbara Juster Esbensen) is an animal poem with a difference, in that it is about the lion's name as much as it is about the lion himself. The idea that the name "Lion" is perfect for being said with a roar will appeal to the children and provide starting points for their own imaginative writing about animals and sound.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W3 spelling using phonemes  
 S4 identifying adverbs and understanding their function  
 T1 investigating how characters are built up  
 T14 writing poems linked to poems read

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- pick a name for themselves and one for a friend to suit them in terms of their personalities. (Remind them that the the sound of the word chosen should be an important part of the suitability.) They could use these names as the basis for poems about themselves that are modelled on the structure of *Lion*.
- list and explain other animal names that seem suited in sound or feeling to the creature they name; for example, snake which starts with a hissing, sibilant /s/, and hippopotamus, which sounds heavy and ponderous
- find a picture of a lion, or print one from a software program, and fashion the words of the poem around it so that they form a type of concrete poem
- write an acrostic poem for the word *LION* or the word *ROAR*; for example, *Lord of the jungle, Impossible to silence, One fierce roar, Numbs his foes.*

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the poem. Ask the children to focus on the "look" of the poem, and to suggest why some of the words are in capitals; for example, these words should be read more loudly. Children will also notice that the word *LION* is split over two lines and that there are larger spaces and fewer punctuation marks than usual. Ask them to think about these features as they listen to the poem.
- Read the poem to the children, using the large spaces as opportunities for dramatic pauses, and saying *LI-ON* as a roar and opening your mouth wide on the first syllable. Invite children's spontaneous reactions and comments. Then read the poem together.
- Invite children to suggest how the phrase *jaw unhinges* helps to emphasise or exaggerate the way a lion roars (and the way the word lion is "unhinged" in the poem). Invite individual children to act out a lion's attempt to say the other animal names while roaring with wide-open jaws, and to explain how the words *flea*, *toad* and *peacock* make this difficult. They could also try saying the word *roaring* to see if they think the sound would satisfy the lion.
- Talk with the children about *teeth flash white*, guiding them to see that this comprises noun, verb and adverb (since *white*, although usually an adjective, here qualifies *flash*). Ask the children if they can find the same three-word format elsewhere in the poem (*name opens wide*). Now ask them to suggest an adverb, this time ending in *ly*, that could follow *jaw unhinges*; for example, *enormously*, *ferociously*, *savagely*. Work with the children to compose similar phrases for other creatures; for example, *Flea bites sharply*; *Toad hops lazily*; *Peacock struts proudly*. Scribe the suggestions on the board.
- Write the following quotation from *Romeo and Juliet* on the board: *That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet*. Tell the children where the quotation comes from, and ask them what they think it means and whether they agree. You could ask, *Would we feel any differently about a lion if it were called a "glug"? Why/why not?*

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Ask the children to find a word in the poem beginning with the prefix "un". Ask the children if they can think of two good reasons for the poet choosing this word (to avoid repeating *open*, and because a jaw actually is a hinge). Then discuss the use of "un-" to form opposites and ask them to suggest examples (*unhappy*, *uncomfortable*, and so on), together with sentences in which each word could be used. Discuss and list suggestions. Then challenge the children to find words in the poem that could have "un-" as a prefix; the words could be altered to accommodate the prefix, as in *unopened* (from *open*) and *unspoken* (from *speak*).
- Ask the children what they notice about the punctuation of the poem. Invite them to guide you in punctuating it more conventionally as you write the text on chart paper as "normal" sentences. When the newly punctuated text is complete, ask the children to compare it to the original. Which do they prefer? Why?

YEAR TERM

4 1

This poem is linked to others in the collection by its animal theme. But it is unlike the others in that it is about feelings that are associated with having a pet. The “pet” salamander does not remain alive for very long (and might have been an inappropriate choice for a start) but still the unnamed owner experiences strong emotions of attachment and loss, along with regret. Bobbi Katz, the author of many fine poems appealing to children and adults alike, skilfully weaves both poignancy and humour into this excellent example of free verse.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W2 spelling by analogy with other known words  
 S2 investigating verb tenses  
 S4 identifying adverbs and understanding their function  
 T7 discussing personal responses to poems and comparing the form and language  
 T13 writing scripts using known stories as a basis

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- research salamanders, finding out about their habits and giving some details of the famous myth of the salamander: that it can live in fire without being harmed
- act as medical detectives, speculating (on the basis of some study) on just why poor Samuel died in the classroom and writing a report of their conclusions or hypotheses
- write a story based on the poem
- work in pairs to write an interview with the child in the poem
- imagine that Samuel could tell his story, and write what he might say about being found, put into the coffee tin and taken to school.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the poem, but before reading, write on the board: *Amphibian of the order Urodela*. Now read the poem to the children, then re-read it together. Explain that the words describe Samuel the salamander in scientific terms. Ask the children if the poem would work as well as it does if we were to change the opening lines to read: *I found this salamander/ Near the pond in the woods/ Amphibian of the order Urodela...* Ask the children what lines particularly suggest that the child who found the salamander would not be satisfied with a scientific description of the little creature (*Right away I loved him*, along with the repetition of *Samuel, I called him...*). Discuss the desire most people have to give a pet a “personal” name. Invite the children to talk about the names of pets they have or know.
- Ask the children about the mood of the poem and the emotions of the speaker in the poem. Remind them to quote lines from the poem to support their comments. They could also explain and demonstrate how they think certain lines should be read: what pace? what tone? what volume? what emphasis?
- Talk with the children about the absence of adjectives in the poem. (*Coffee* is the only adjective.) Ask them if they think the minimal description seems right, and if so, why. Suggest that they try adding some adjectives to see what impact they have and whether they assist or interfere with the poem’s expression of simple, strong feelings. Scribe the more descriptive version of the poem on chart paper; for example, *I found this interesting salamander/ Near the pond in the leafy woods...* Read it together and discuss what has been gained and/or lost.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Refer to the verb *slept* in the second stanza and write it on the board. Remind the children that many verbs do not simply have “-ed” added when put into the past tense. Ask them to suggest other irregular verbs, including some that have a past-tense form using “-pt”, such as *creep/crept; leap/leapt; weep/wept*. Another irregular form they could find in the poem is *found*, and they could think of other verbs that use the “-ound” letter string in the past tense, as in *bind/bound, wind/wound, grind/ground*. Children could also suggest *run/ran, shake/shook, take/took, do/did*. List and discuss the irregular verbs, grouping them where possible by spelling pattern.
- Refer to the word *sometimes* in the poem. Remind the children that *sometimes* indicates the frequency of an event without specifying the exact number of times it happens. Ask them if they can think of other expressions such as this. (You may wish to mention that these will be adverbs or adverbial phrases of time.) For example, *often, usually, occasionally, rarely, now and then*. List and discuss suggestions, encouraging the children to give examples of sentences using the expressions. As a follow-up, children could suggest adverbs or adverbial phrases that give more specific details of frequency or time, such as *every morning, annually, at 3 o'clock, when I wake up, tomorrow night*.

YEAR TERM

4 2

*A Football Game* is the first in a series of poems that focus on aspects of contemporary life. Alice Van Eck's poem is about sport and the passions it arouses. The children will relate to and have fun with the descriptions of the energy and excitement of a football match. They are also given the opportunity to discuss whether the aim of sport is enjoyment, or winning. While children are discussing the poem, you could ask them how they can guess that it was originally written about American football rather than soccer (e.g., the reference to popcorn).

## NLS REFERENCES

- W3 spelling by analogy with other known words  
 S1 revising and extending work on adjectives  
 S4 using connectives and commas to join clauses  
 T4 understanding the effect of expressive and descriptive language  
 T7 identifying patterns of rhyme in poetry  
 T13 writing examples of descriptive, expressive language

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- write an additional stanza for the poem, keeping the same 2/4 rhyming scheme
- compose their own football club theme song (to an existing tune, perhaps) that focuses on the fun and thrill of the game, rather than winning
- write an account of the things they most enjoy about attending a football match (or any sporting event), either as a spectator or a player
- write a poem or story about the most thrilling and chilling sporting event they have ever witnessed or been involved in.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the poem, then read it to the children. Re-read it together. Allow time for a brief discussion of the children's experiences of attending a football game, or another game.
- Re-read the final stanza and ask the children if they think there is a message, and if so, what that message might be. (Encourage the children to quote directly from the poem). Discuss the idea that it is better to play any game for the fun of it, rather than to win and ask the children if the message is one they would agree with. Why/why not? Also ask them if they can find any lines that might seem to contradict the message (for example, *two teams that won't give in* and "*Go, fight, win!*").
- Discuss the *mood* of the poem with the children. Invite them to suggest adjectives that could describe the mood. Scribe the suggestions on the board, encouraging them to quote from the poem to support their choice; for example, if they suggest *cheerful*, then lines such as *It's the colours everywhere*, or *It's a thrill...*, could be quoted to support that view. Discuss the rhymes and rhythm of the poem, and ask children how effective they think these are. Ask the children if a slow and mournful rhythm would be more or less appropriate for the subject of the poem, and why.
- Draw the children's attention to the rhymes *whiff/sniff* and *thrill/chill*. Ask the children if they can tell you what is special about these particular rhymes (the words not only rhyme, they are related in their meaning). As a shared writing activity, challenge the children to think of other matched rhymes like these, and put them into sentences for you to scribe on the board. For example, *hurry and scurry; prattle and rattle; doom and gloom; light and bright; fearful and tearful; weary and dreary*.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Draw the children's attention to the word *popcorn* in the second stanza of the poem. Ask the children what is unusual about *popcorn* as the name for a food (its name describes the process of its preparation). Challenge the children to think of other food names that have this same or a similar characteristic; for example, *apple turnover, crackers, bubble and squeak, mashed potatoes, milk shake, stir-fry*. List the names on the board as the children offer them, then ask the children to put three of their suggestions into a single sentence, using connectives other than *and*. For example, *I ate the apple turnover after the milkshake, but this meant I had no room left for the stir-fry*.
- Discuss with the children the task of adjectives, and the important part they play in this poem. Ask them if they can find two examples of adjectives being used to make a noun stronger and more intense (*deep, breathless hush; desperate grasp*). Challenge them to use adjectives to make some of the unqualified nouns more intense in the same way; for example, *a sigh* could become, *a long, heartfelt sigh*. Other nouns that could be qualified in this way are: *cheer, roar, band, colour, thrill, chill*.

YEAR TERM

4 2

*The City Dump* provides a wonderful example of the way a poet can look at something ordinary to make us see something extraordinary. Felice Holman found inspiration in a rubbish dump and turned a heap of rubbish into a carnival. (Children will readily understand mild Americanisms such as *dump*, and *pits* rather than *pips*.) *City*, by Langston Hughes, similarly transforms the ordinary into the special: the city is no longer tired, polluted and dull, but a place that soars into life, while at night the lights appear like fabulous jewels. The children will enjoy thinking of their own unusual topics for poetry.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W9 using alternative words to be more accurate or interesting  
 S4 investigating the effect of punctuation  
 T3 comparing, contrasting and evaluating settings  
 T5 understanding the use of figurative language in poetry  
 T11 writing poetry based on poems read

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- choose and write about another feature of the city, in the way that Langston Hughes has; city features might include the hustle and bustle of busy shoppers, or the city skyline
- write a more complete menu for the creatures that visit the dump, with hors d'oeuvres, a main course, side dishes, desserts and drinks, all based on what would be found on a garbage heap
- choose an activity or a location that we usually consider unattractive or uninviting and write about it in a way that makes it seem fascinating; for example, washing a pile of dirty clothes; sweeping up the rubbish from the streets; a butcher's shop.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Before displaying the poems, discuss with the children some of the more common subjects of poetry; for example, *nature*, *animals* and *people*. Tell them one of the poems they will be reading today is about a rubbish dump; ask them whether this seems a very likely subject and invite them to suggest what might be in the poem.
- Read *The City Dump* to the children. Re-read it together. Ask them if they think the poet is disgusted with the dump, or has discovered a different, more positive side to it. Invite them to quote specific lines from the poem to support their view, and to find the word in the poem that the poet has used to sum up all of the images we are offered (*carnival*). Ask them what creatures are enjoying this *carnival* (*mice*, *seagulls*). Challenge them to find things that happen at the dump that could be compared to the things that might happen at a carnival; for example, *There are lots of different sorts of foods to try, like grapefruit rinds and apple peels*. Scribe the comparisons on the board, using inverted commas for quotations from the poem.
- Read *City* to the children, then re-read it together. Discuss the mood of this poem. Allow time for discussion of the children's impressions of the differences in a big city in the morning and at night. Ask them if they think the poet has made the city an attractive place or an ugly place. Discuss with the children what the poet has compared the city to in each stanza (a bird and jewels). Ask them if they think the comparisons work to help us imagine the city as an appealing place at the different times of the day, and why/why not.
- As a shared writing activity, invite the children to create a "menu" for the dump, adding to the foods already mentioned in the poem. Encourage them to choose words that rhyme, as in the lines *crusts and crumbs/ And pits of plums*; for example, *bits of cheese and the shells of peas*. The children could also suggest a name for the "dump restaurant". Scribe the children's suggestions on the board, inviting the children to guide you with spelling and punctuation.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Challenge the children to find two words in the poem that we use to name things we have thrown away and consider useless (*garbage* and *refuse*). Scribe these words on the board. Then ask the children if they can think of any other words that we use for the same purpose; for example, *debris*, *rubbish*, *muck*, *trash*, *swill*, *junk*, *litter*. Scribe these new words on the board.
- Ask the children to identify the punctuation marks in the two poems (full stops and ellipses). Work with them to punctuate the poems more fully. Scribe the lines of each poem on chart paper, adding the children's suggested punctuation as you go (for example, *City asleep, City asleep, Papers fly at the garbage heap*). Take this opportunity to discuss the use of any punctuation marks they may be unfamiliar with, such as semi-colons. Encourage the children to look at the two versions of each poem and suggest reasons why the poets did not use more punctuation; for example, perhaps they wanted to leave the words on the page uncluttered.

YEAR TERM

4 2

These poems all capture and celebrate the poetry of motion. *On the Skateboard* (Lillian Morrison) follows a skateboard rider skimming an asphalt sea; *Freewheeling on a Bike* (Robert Gray) pinpoints a moment of sheer delight as a cyclist speeds beneath overhanging branches and experiences flickering sunlight; Carl Sandburg's famous poem *Portrait of a Motor Car* finds as much to enjoy about the look and performance of a sleek automobile as others might find in the grace and speed of an eagle. Use the poems to explore the use of metaphor.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W7 using prefixes  
S2 using the apostrophe to mark possession  
T4 understanding the effect of expressive and descriptive language  
T5 understanding the use of figurative language  
T11 writing poetry based on poems read

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- write a poem or story about their own experiences of speed and motion on wheels
- write an extra line or lines for each of the poems, showing how anything on wheels can come to a sudden, undesired halt; for example, a new final line for *Portrait of a Motor Car* might be, *Then, pow!... Puncture! and the driver had no spare!*
- write a script for a scene that shows the skateboarder, the cyclist and the motor car driver all colliding at an intersection, and then having to explain themselves to the police. They could use metaphors from their respective poems; for example, *Well, constable, I think that butterflies of sunlight must have obscured my vision.* They could perform the scene for the class.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the three poems and read *On the Skateboard* to the children, then re-read it together. Ask the children if they think the choice of words in the poem suits the subject. Encourage them to quote lines and phrases from the poem that they think are well chosen and that help them imagine how it feels to ride a skateboard; for example, *skimming, swerve, curve, sway, speed.*
- Draw the children's attention to the lines *I'm the sailor and the sail* and *I'm the driver and the wheel.* Ask them if they know what we call this type of description (metaphor). Invite them to describe how the words *I swerve, I curve, I sway* relate to these metaphors. Then discuss with them how these metaphors improve the description of the skateboarder's motion. Challenge them to think of other metaphors that would convey the joy of motion; for example, *I'm the pilot, and the plane.* Scribe the suggestions on the board.
- Read *Freewheeling on a Bike* to the children, then re-read it together. Ask them what the metaphor is in this poem (*butterflies of sunlight*). Invite them to talk about what this metaphor is describing and what it makes them imagine; you could suggest that perhaps the speeding cyclist is cycling under the branches of tress and experiencing the "fluttering" of sunlight as it shines through the leaves.
- Display *Portrait of a Motor Car.* Read the poem to the children, then re-read it together. Ask them what is the first thing they notice about the language of the poem (it contains four metaphors). Invite them to discuss what sort of car they imagine from the poet's description. Draw their attention to the illustration and ask them if they imagine it looking anything like this. Scribe the children's suggestions on the board, building up a description of the car. As a shared writing activity, work with the children to compose other "animal" metaphors that could describe the car; for example, *A sidwinding snake of a car, A rearing, foaming-at-the-mouth, great black thoroughbred of a car.* Scribe the new metaphors on the board.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Ask the children to identify two words from the poems that contain an apostrophe (*I'm, It's*). Ask them what task the apostrophe performs in each word, and what words are joined in each one. Now challenge them to think of and put into sentences, four other common abbreviations starting with *I*; for example, *I'll, I'd, I've, I'm.* Scribe the sentences on the board. Then ask the children if they can think of one other common abbreviation starting with *it* (*it'll*) and put it into a sentence.
- Refer to the word *freewheeling.* Remind the children that *free* is also the first part of other words, although it is not actually a prefix, like *dis* or *pre.* Ask them if they can think of other words or terms that start with *free,* such as *free-fall, free-for-all, freeloader, free-range.* Invite the children to put these words into sentences that show the word's meaning. You could repeat this activity for *automobile;* for example, *autograph, automatic, automation.*

YEAR TERM

4 2

*Silver*, by Walter de la Mare (1873–1956) looks at the effects of silvery moonlight on a landscape. The poet finds in the moonlight a unifying quality; something that places each feature of the landscape, and each animal, in the cradle of nature. The children will respond to the peacefulness conjured by the poet, and could compare it to the energy and racket of some of the other nature poems in this collection.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W13 adding suffixes to nouns and verbs to make adjectives
- S3 understanding the significance of word order
- T4 understanding the effect of expressive and descriptive language
- T5 understanding the use of figurative language
- T6 identifying clues such as archaic words which suggest poems are older
- T13 writing examples of descriptive, expressive language based on those read

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- describe a landscape in which rain or bright sunshine has changed the look of everything, as the moonlight has in the poem
- look in anthologies for other short poems by Walter de la Mare, and describe features that are similar to those found in *Silver*; for example, the rhyming scheme, the fascination with nature and peacefulness
- imagine and write about what the animals in the poem think of the moon; the mouse, for example, might think it a great help to him at night, while the dog might think it strange and mysterious
- write about the effects of silvery moonlight on a scene that they know well, such as a local street or park, or their own garden.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Suggest to the children that one special thing about human beings is that we notice things, not only things to do with survival, but things that are beautiful, or unusual, or mysterious, or just plain interesting. We also want to express what we notice and how it makes us feel – sometimes through poetry. Tell them that the poem they will be reading is about a scene in moonlight. Invite them to discuss the title, *Silver*, and to suggest what features of a moonlit night a poet might write about.
- Display the poem and mention that it includes an old Scottish word, *shoon*, which means shoes. Read the poem to the children. Discuss any other unfamiliar vocabulary, such as *cote* (a shelter), *couched* and *moveless*. Then read the poem together.
- Ask the children what features of the moonlight scene they think the poet wants to emphasise. They could talk about particular things that are mentioned and how they are described, the way the moon is given characteristics of a person, and the overall sense of peacefulness and rest. Ask them to quote specific phrases or lines from the poem to support their views.
- Discuss the poet's use of rhyme. Ask the children what they notice about the words that end each line. Suggest that they "test" whether the poem features rhyming words that are easy to rhyme; what other rhymes can they think of for *moon*, *sees*, *catch*, *log*, *peep*, *by*, *gleam*? Children could also suggest why *silver*, one of the key words of the poem, is not used at the end of a line: how easy would it have been for the poet to find a rhyme?
- Refer to the word *scampering* in the poem. Ask the children to suggest other descriptions of the movement of creatures – but only using words that would not interfere with the hush of the poem. For example, *snakes slithering*, *whisper-quiet*; *cats creeping on padded paws*... Discuss and scribe several suggestions.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Refer to the term *silvery thatch* in the poem. Ask the children if they can think of any reasons why we sometimes add "y" to a word that can stand by itself, as *silver* can. Is *silvery* different than *silver*? In what way? Why can we say *silver shoes* or *silvery shoes* or *shoes of silver*, but not *shoes of silvery*? (*Silver* can be a noun as well as an adjective.) Also discuss the word *shadowy*. Then invite the children to suggest other adjectives or nouns that can have "y" added while keeping their original sense; for example, *feathery*, *lumpy*, *hairy*.
- Refer to the word *kennel* in the poem. Ask the children to suggest other words that end with an /l/ sound. List suggestions, grouping them by the spelling pattern of the end of the word; for example, a double letter as in *tall*, "le" as in *pale*, "ial" as in *special*, or other vowel combinations as in *real*, *cool*, *feel*, *coal*, and so on. Help them to think of as many words as they can (there are not very many) that have a single "e" followed by "l", like *kennel*; examples could include *barrel*, *quarrel*, *panel*.

YEAR TERM

4 2

*Winter Moon* (Langston Hughes, whose poem *City*, is also included in this collection) and *Summer Full Moon* (James Kirkup) invite the children to speculate on the great popularity of the moon as a subject for poets. Both poems are deft and appealing; the distinction between the similes and metaphors in the poems provide an opportunity for children to explore the importance of figurative language as a tool for the poet.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W1 identifying syllabic patterns in multi-syllable words
- S1 revising and extending work on adjectives
- T4 understanding the effect of expressive and descriptive language
- T5 understanding the use of figurative language
- T13 writing examples of descriptive, expressive language based on those read

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- reverse the images in the poems; for example, *How round and full is the moon tonight! / How round and full and white / Is the brimming milk dish of the moon tonight*
- research the phases and motion of the moon, and write an explanatory text on its "change" of size and shape
- imagine and write about what people living ten thousand years ago might have thought about the moon and its changes, and what similes and metaphors they might have used
- script a conversation between Langston Hughes and James Kirkup in which the two poets criticise each other's depiction of the moon, and suggest alternative images for them to offer; for example, *The moon doesn't look like a dish of milk – it looks like a giant billiard ball!*

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Before displaying the poems, discuss with the children the fascination that people have with the moon. Ask them if they can suggest reasons for this fascination; for example, the illusion of its changing size and shape; its domination of the night sky; or perhaps a belief that it influences people's moods and lives. Then ask them if they have ever imagined the moon to look like something else. Discuss and list suggestions.
- Display the two poems and read them to the children. Refer back to the list on the board to see if any of their views relate to the images of the moon in the poems. Ask them if they find it easy to imagine the moon as a curved blade, or as a dish of milk. Also ask them whether they have ever looked at the clouds and seen interesting shapes in them, like the Persian cat that James Kirkup saw.
- Re-read the poems together. Discuss with the children the use of metaphors and similes, and the differences between them. Ask the children whether *Winter Moon* uses a simile or a metaphor. Then ask them if the description of the moon as a dish of milk in *Summer Full Moon* is a simile or a metaphor. Refer the children to the simile *The cloud tonight is like a white Persian cat* and challenge them to re-write it as a metaphor; for example, *A white Persian cat rests in the sky tonight*. Scribe the metaphors on the board, inviting the children to guide you with spelling and punctuation.
- Ask the children to identify the adjectives that describe the moon in the second line of *Winter Moon* (*thin and sharp*, and *ghostly white*). Challenge them to add another adjective to the description; for example, *thin and sharp, glimmering and ghostly white*. Work with them to see how many words they can add to the description. Then ask them if they can think of a simile that relates to the description *ghostly white* (*as white as a ghost*). Challenge the children to think of other colours that are used in similes; for example, *as black as night; as green as grass; as red as a lobster*. Scribe their suggestions on the board.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Ask the children if they can find two words in *Summer Full Moon* that contain double letters (*lapping* and *brimming*). Ask them to name the part of speech each word is (verb and adjective, respectively). Challenge them to think of a sentence (based on the poem) in which *lapping* could be used as an adjective; for example, *The lapping tongue of the cat . . .* Also invite children to suggest other words that can be used as verb or adjective. Discuss and list suggestions, along with sentences showing the words used as different parts of speech.
- Ask the children if they can think of other words, like *lapping* and *brimming*, that have the last letter doubled when "ing" is added; for example, *hop/hopping, run/running*. Discuss with them what the reason might be for doing this (to avoid confusion in pronunciation with words that have had an "e" dropped when "ing" is added, such as *hope/hoping*). Challenge the children to find other words in the poems that double the last letter when "ing" is added (*star/starring; slim/slimming; shut/shutting; thin/thinning*).

YEAR TERM

4 3

*Wrestling* (Kathleen Fraser) tells of the games children play, and of the unspoken rules that govern them. It provides an interesting comparison with an earlier poem in this collection, *Samuel* (Bobbi Katz), which also is spoken in the slightly puzzled but determined voice of a child dealing in a fundamentally optimistic way with the ups and downs of life.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W8 extending words and investigating the links between meaning and spelling
- S1 understanding how words can be changed
- T1 identifying social issues
- T6 describing how a poet does or does not use rhyme
- T11 exploring the issues of a story by writing a story

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- write a short story about a particular wrestling match between the two children in the poem; suggest that they write in the third person, taking the role of a narrator who can tell us not only who the children are and what they look like, but what each is thinking and feeling before, during and after the fight
- write about their own experiences of a “play” wrestling match, or a real argument with a friend
- script a conversation between the children in the poem (giving them both names) and a friendly adult who is concerned about their “fighting”; the children’s aim could be to help the adult understand that this kind of “play” is part of their friendship and to persuade him or her that they know how to prevent a real fight developing.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the poem and read it to the children. Invite their spontaneous comments about the poem and about their own experiences of seeing or taking part in the sort of behaviour described in the poem; that is, wrestling in a friendly way. They might also have seen animals “play-fighting” and could suggest reasons for this: do they think that it is a type of practice for real fighting or just for fun? Do the same reasons apply to children?
- Ask the children what they think makes *Wrestling* a poem. You might like to suggest that the poet has created a rhythm in the words she has chosen, and ask the children how the rhythm has been created; for example, with repetitions and an unusual number of connectives. Invite the children to comment on the level of language used in the poem and say whether they think the words and style would suit a child of four, or a child of ten, or an age in-between these. Ask them to give reasons for their answers. Also ask them whether, based only on the words of the poem, they would assume the speaker to be a boy or a girl.
- Ask the children what “unspoken rules” might apply to the type of fighting and wrestling described in the first part of the poem. What words in the poem might suggest such rules? (...*but not very hard*) Also ask the children whether they would have a play-fight with someone they didn’t like. Why/why not? Invite the children to suggest a set of rules for play-fighting. Scribe the rules on the board; for example, *Opponents must not really dislike each other. Attempts to cause injury are strictly forbidden...*

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Refer to the word *sunny* in the poem. Ask the children what part of speech this word is (an adjective). Discuss how we would change the word if we wanted to say that one day or time was “more sunny” than another (*sunnier*, as in *Which day was sunnier: Monday or Tuesday?* or *The morning was sunnier than the afternoon*). Also guide children to explain how the superlative *sunniest* is used; that is, when three or more days or times are involved in the comparison, as in *Monday was the sunniest day we’ve had in weeks* or *Usually the afternoon is the sunniest part of the day*. Brainstorm with the children several groups of positive, comparative and superlative adjectives, including some examples that involve a change of word or the use of *more/most*; for instance: *funny, funnier, funniest; good, better, best; playful, more playful, most playful*. List the adjective groups on the board. Also discuss typical ways in which the different forms of adjective are used; for example, the comparative is often followed by *than*, the superlative is often followed by *of* (as in *It was the best game of the season... the hottest day of the week... and so on*).
- Discuss the tense of the poem, guiding the children to see that it is in the present tense. Work with them to change sections of the poem into past tense. Scribe the text on the board or on chart paper as children agree on what words need to be changed or added. Invite comparison of the past-tense and present-tense versions.

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4 3

*Salt and Pepper* provides an example of light-hearted rhyming poetry in the form of direct speech. David McCord gives a salt-cellar and a pepper-mill a voice and listens in on their conversation. As children discuss the differing characteristics of salt and pepper, encourage them to consider whether the poem is about more than just salt and pepper. For example, perhaps the poet is suggesting that *people* with very different temperaments won't always get along easily or have the same needs and reactions.

## NLS REFERENCES

- W7 collecting words with common roots
- S1 understanding how words can be changed
- S2 identifying common punctuation marks
- T1 identifying social issues and locating the evidence in the text
- T11 exploring the issues of a story by writing a story

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- write a conversation in direct speech between two other contrasting foods or objects; such as a chocolate bar and a lemon, or a hiking boot and a slipper
- script an argument involving various food items on a dinner table, with each one insisting that its taste is the best of all
- write about ingredients describing how they think they should be used; for example, *Good morning, this is A Cup of Sugar speaking. Now, I don't mind mixing with Flour, but don't put me anywhere near Mustard please!*
- work in pairs to write an interview with Pepper and/or Salt, asking about some of the most extraordinary experiences they have had.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the poem and read it to the children. Briefly discuss their impressions of the poem, and clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary. Then re-read it together. Invite the children to re-read the poem in parts, with some children saying Salt's words, the others reading Pepper's reply, and you reading the few linking words.
- Introduce and discuss the word *temperament*. Then ask the children to describe Salt's temperament, according to Pepper. They could start with an adjective to stand in place of *takes life easy (easy-going)*, and suggest other adjectives that might relate to *easy-going*; for example, *relaxed, unexcitable, calm*. Then ask, *Which lines in the poem show that Pepper thinks of his own temperament very differently?* For example, they could talk about the suggestion of a hot temper or trouble-making tendencies in "...if I let fly, people cry". Encourage them to talk about the literal meaning of "I make life sneezy" (spilled pepper might lead to sneezes). Also discuss what sort of *person* might make life "sneezy" in a metaphorical sense; for example, someone who makes it impossible for you to feel relaxed.
- Remind the children that, as this poem shows, imaginative writing makes it possible to give a voice to anything. Invite them to imagine other contrasting foodstuffs; for example, sugar and vinegar, or ice-cream and a very spicy curry. Discuss what these foods might say to each other and how they might say it.
- Work with the children to compose a new version of the poem using indirect speech and the past tense. This could begin: *Salt asked Pepper/ Why they were always separate;/ He in his cellar...* Scribe the new text for the children as they agree on each line. Discuss how the changes affect the impact of the text.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Challenge the children to take the word *kind* and think of all the words that can be made using it with the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Discuss and list the children's suggestions; for example, *kindness, unkind, unkindness, kinder, kindest, unkinde, kindly, kindness, unkindly, unkindliness*, and so on. Extend the activity to *life*, another word from the poem, discussing the need to change "f" to "v", as in *lives, living, livelihood*, and so on.
- Use the word *kinder* as a starting point for discussing positive, comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. Ask children to suggest sentences to show how *kind, kinder* and *kindest* are used. For example: *Helen is kind. She is a kinder person than her sister. She is the kindest person I know*. Also discuss some adjectives that follow a different spelling pattern or do not use "-er", "-est", such as *easy, easier, easiest* and *easy-going, more easy-going, most easy-going*.
- Ask the children to find a word in the poem that can be used as both an adjective and a verb, with different pronunciation but without any change of spelling (*separate*). Ask them how they can tell that it is used as an adjective in the poem. Invite them to compose a sentence using the verb *separate*; for example, *It's best if we separate the salt and the pepper*.

YEAR TERM

4 3

This poem is a delightful piece of nonsense based on the old game of *Me, Sir?*, in which a conversation is carried out with hardly any advance on the question that initiated it.

The children will enjoy the joke of the poem, and the dialogue format provides an ideal springboard for activities that will reinforce their skills in writing direct speech.

## NLS REFERENCES

- S2 identifying common punctuation marks  
 S3 understanding sentence grammar  
 T7 recognising some simple forms of poetry and their uses  
 T14 writing poems

## Independent Work

Children could:

- re-read the poem in the small book
- write a poem using *Can You Sing?* as a model, based on other one-word or two-word questions and responses, using words that begin with the same sound as *what, why, well, when, which, won't, will*; for example, "Where," he said, "is Wendy?"/ "What?" I said./ "Wendy," he said./ I said, "Wendy?"/ He said, "Wendy."/ "Wendy?" I said. "Why?"
- re-write the poem in indirect speech; for example, *A man asked me if I could sing. I asked him if he'd asked me if I could sing and he said that he had.* Alternatively, the children could re-write the poem using direct speech but expanding the responses; for example, *I said, "Sing? Did you say sing?"/ He said, "Yes. You heard me correctly..."*
- work in groups of three to read the poem, with one child as the man, one as the other speaker, and the third reading the attributions; they could try to read as rapidly as possible without overlapping.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Display the poem and read it to the children. Re-read it together. Children could also read the poem in parts; some of the children could be the boy, reading everything except the words spoken by the man, and the other children could read the man's speech. An enjoyable follow-up would be for children to act out the conversation without any of the attributions.
- Discuss the "joke" of the poem: the way a simple answer to a simple question is put off for as long as possible, so that when it comes it is almost a surprise. Children might also comment on the way the boy gives his replies in the form of questions; invite them to talk about having done or seen the same thing themselves.
- Ask the children to explain the task of the *attributions* (or the words that tell us who is talking) in the poem. The point that might emerge is that they help us make sense. As a way of testing this idea, ask the children to read *Can You Sing?* without the attributions, except for the first one; for example, *A man said to me, "Can you sing?" "Sing?" "Yes." "Who?" "You." "Me?"*, and so on. Ask why this might be confusing. Children might suggest that using character voices would be a way of helping to avoid confusion.
- Suggest to the children that they could think of *Can You Sing?* as a joke duet. Invite them to play with this musical idea by replacing the single-word responses with, in order, *Doh, Ray, Me, Fah, So, La, Tee, Doh*; for example, *A man said to me, "Can you sing?"/ I said, "Doh?"/ He said, "Ray."/ I said, "Me?"*... (The last line could remain: *... said, "Oh."*) This could be the basis of a shared writing activity. Invite the children to "sing" the result.

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Ask the children which word is most often repeated in the poem (*said*). Invite them to "test" whether it would be difficult or easy to find another saying verb (such as *exclaimed, asked, demanded* or *whispered*) that could be substituted for *said* throughout the poem. They are likely to find that using a mixture of two substitute words, such as *asked* and *replied*, would be easier than trying to find a single replacement for *said*, because the alternative words have more specific meanings.
- Invite the children to think of adverbs to describe the way the two characters speak. For example, *I said suspiciously, "Sing?"* Encourage them to change the adverb with each new attribution, and to make the adverbs consistent with the characters they develop. For example, if *suspiciously* is used at the start, the character should continue to be suspicious – so *warily* could be used.
- Ask the children how we would punctuate the following, if we wanted to put an attribution after *well*: *Yes, as a matter of fact I can sing very well, but I don't intend to sing for you.* ("Yes, as a matter of fact I can sing very well," I said, "but I don't intend to sing for you.") Continue with other direct speech, including some questions; for example, children could punctuate the following with an attribution after *now*: *are you asking me to sing for you now well I'm afraid I won't.*

YEAR TERM

4 3

Exploring a traditional skipping rhyme will remind children that poetry is not only found in books. Like many children's chants, *Skipping Rhyme* bases its rhymes and its energetic rhythm on numbers and counting, and is clearly designed to accompany action. If a convenient location and a long skipping rope are available, have children perform the game while the rest of the class chants the rhyme. *The Swings in the Park*, a carefully constructed haiku by a child of 9, offers a more meditative view of play.

## NLS REFERENCES

W3 spelling using phonemes and visual skills  
 T5 counting the syllables in each line of poetry  
 T6 describing how a poet does or does not use rhyme  
 T7 recognising simple forms of poetry and their uses  
 T14 writing poems

## Independent Work

- re-read the poem in the small book
- write their own skipping rhymes, or rhymes for any other sort of activity
- write a rhyme for an activity that we would normally not expect to be accompanied by a chant, such as cooking, washing clothes, ironing, fixing a motor car, sewing a garment
- write a haiku about skipping, and a rhyme about playing swings in a park
- research other game-rhymes and street-rhymes, including counting-out rhymes, and the short chants traditionally used in various games; for example, *Coming, ready or not!*
- try continuing *Skipping Rhyme* up to twenty.

## Shared Reading and Writing

- Before displaying the poems, ask the children what skipping chants or other play rhymes they know; for example, counting rhymes such as *One, two, buckle my shoe. Three, four, knock at the door...*
- Read *Skipping Rhyme* to the children. Discuss the actions with the children, aiming to reach agreement about what each involves; for example, *stay alive* could involve the pace of the game increasing rapidly for a few seconds; *bang the gate* could mean landing loudly on both feet without losing rhythm.
- Discuss the purpose of the rhyme with the children. In what ways does the rhyme add to the enjoyment of the game? You might like to remind the children of other activities in which a chant plays a part, such as hauling ropes on a sailing ship, accompanied by sea shanties. Children could also discuss sporting events where the spectators develop various chants to encourage their team, or other examples such as people dancing while singing along with a song.
- Invite children to describe the rhyming pattern of the poem and to give examples of exact and "imperfect" rhymes, as in *two/shoe* compared to *one/tongue* or *twist/this*. For each imperfect rhyme, ask the children what sound the two words *do* have in common; that is, the vowel sound is the same, and there is a similarity between the final sounds, although not an exact match.
- Read *The Swings in the Park* to the children. Draw attention to the haiku format (three lines, with 5/7/5 syllables), and ask the children how they can tell that the child who wrote the poem took care to follow this pattern. They might comment on *they* at the beginning of line 2; the pronoun is not needed but provides an effective rhythm and a "perfect" syllable count. Ask the children if they agree with the thought and image that this haiku conveys. Why/why not?
- Invite children to comment on the repeated /l/ sound in *lonely looking* and how effective this is. For a shared writing activity you could work with them to compose alliterative phrases that could relate to play, scribing suggestions under the headings *Cheerful* and *Less cheerful*. For example: *Cheerful – jump joyfully, dance with delight... Less cheerful – look longingly* (at children playing when you have not been asked to join in), *despair at dropping the ball, slip while skipping...*

## Word and Sentence Level Work

- Tell the children that *touch* has an unusual spelling pattern for the /uch/ sound. Ask them to test this statement by suggesting other words that rhyme with *touch*. Encourage them to guide you with spelling as you list their suggestions, grouping the words by spelling pattern; for example, *much, such/ clutch, hutch*.
- Remind the children that the names of some of the numbers in *Skipping Rhyme* are homophones. Write on the board the example of *one (won)*; then ask children to find and guide you in spelling the others: *two (to, too)*, *four (for)*, *eight (ate)*. Invite the children to suggest sentences using as many of the words as possible; for example, *We thought that eight pizzas, two huge bowls of salad and four apple pies would be too much food for one meal – but we ate it all!*