

BOOK A POET

SCHOOLS



**APPLES
AND
SNAKES**

Bring creativity to your classroom

WHY BOOK A POET FOR YOUR SCHOOL?

A VISIT FROM A POET CAN OFFER MANY BENEFITS. IT CAN DEVELOP PUPILS' LITERACY, SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE IN PERFORMANCE. IT CAN ENGAGE STUDENTS WITH SET-TEXTS, OR CAN OFFER THE CLASS INSIGHT INTO SOMETHING NEW; DEVELOPING EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING.

Poetry workshops offer new approaches to teaching poetry to your class, alongside improving engagement with English and literacy and targeting attainment within particular groups. Research from The National Literacy Trust shows children eligible for free school meals are more likely to engage with poetry than their peers. We select poets to speak to the particular dynamics of your class, reflecting pupils' backgrounds or interests.

Working with a poet also benefits staff. A study by NFER indicated that working with a poet in the classroom increased teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm for poetry, as well as improving confidence in teaching poetry. We offer INSET training, and can develop bespoke programmes to develop teacher skills and confidence in delivering poetry in the classroom.

BOOKING WITH APPLES AND SNAKES

Apples and Snakes is the UK's leading spoken word organisation. For nearly 40 years we have championed poetry in performance, working with some of the UK's biggest artists including Benjamin Zephaniah, John Hegley, Kae Tempest, Lemn Sissay and Hollie McNish.

Throughout this time, we have been working with poets and schools to offer workshops, performances, assemblies, residencies, projects and more. Whether you want to celebrate National Poetry Day, World Book Day or Black history, explore a particular curriculum topic, fire up your class with a creative energiser or offer them an end-of-term treat, we can find the right poet for you.

We work with all age groups and across a range of settings including Pupil Referral Units, Special Educational Needs schools, and with both formal and informal learning groups. We will work with a poet to tailor sessions to ensure the needs of your group are met.

"THE POET WAS VERY ENTHUSIASTIC AND ENERGETIC. IT HELPED ME EXPRESS MY FEELINGS"

PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

HOW TO BOOK

To book a session, visit applesandsnakes.org/book-a-poet to complete our online form.

Alternatively, contact bookings@applesandsnakes.org or call **020 8465 6140** to discuss your requirements.

We book poets for classroom performances and workshops, and for online sessions. We can develop bespoke sessions and projects to suit most needs and budgets.

Prices may vary for each artist, but indicative workshop fees are as follows:

Half day: £250 (up to 2 hours total delivery time)

Full day: £375 (up to 4 hours total delivery time)

Prices exclude VAT, and additional fees may be required for performances, assemblies or other activity. It may also be necessary to add travel or accommodation costs. Timings can be adjusted to fit your school day.

To plan and prepare for your visit, take a look at our our Preparing for a Poet Visit section section on page 8.

"THE CHILDREN REALLY GOT OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONE WHICH WAS GREAT TO SEE AND THEY ALL GREW IN CONFIDENCE SO MUCH."

TEACHER, FALCONBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL



"THE STUDENTS LOVED IT AND SO DID I. WE WOULD REALLY LOVE TO WORK WITH APPLES AND SNAKES AGAIN IN THE FUTURE AS THE EXPERIENCE WAS FANTASTIC."

TEACHER, ARK EVELYN GRACE ACADEMY

EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

THE ACTIVITIES BELOW GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF THE WORK OUR POETS CAN DELIVER IN YOUR CLASSROOMS. WHY NOT TRY THEM OUT WITH YOUR CLASS?



FRANCESCA BEARD'S TOP POETRY TIPS FOR KEY STAGE 2

I love working with poetry techniques in the classroom. For me, exploring poetry in schools is all about being playful with words and giving each young person permission to experiment with and explore self-expression through language. The magic of poetry in the classroom is that it is often the pupils who struggle with literacy that most blossom when creating and sharing their own work. Poetry offers a different way into language. I hope that the two exercises I describe here will be simple and strong enough that you can adapt them to your own strengths and with your own particular students.

BEAT ROUTES

A very quick and simple warm up activity leading to a writing exercise that gets the group listening to each other, working collaboratively, thinking in terms of rhythm and rhyming patterns and using their own voices to write poetry.

If space permits, ask your class to stand in a circle.

One at a time, each person decides on and then performs a simple rhythm, using claps, clicks or stamps, which the others repeat back as chorus, as precisely as possible.

Once you have gone around the circle, ask each person to put words to their rhythm. For example, if someone's rhythm was three hand claps, the words could be 'I am nine' or 'It's not fair' or 'We love games'. If the rhythm is the common football stadium chant rhythm, the words could be 'We are in Year Five and in Year Five, we are!' or 'I like broccoli, it is like eating trees!'

Again, go around the circle and have each person call out their rhythmic phrase and have the class repeat it.

To develop this into a group writing exercise, divide your class into groups of four, ask each group to choose their rhythm and have them each come up with a line to create a four line group stanza which they then share with the class. If you want to introduce rhyme, you can ask them to choose a simple rhyme scheme - A B A B or A A B B - and work to that.

INSPIRATION ISLAND

This is great for supporting and nurturing your students' imaginations.

School can be a challenging physical environment - students are surrounded by so much stimulus in the classrooms. Creative writing can offer a moment of

calmness and grounding. In my own writing practise, I often start with a simple breathing exercise - literally connecting to inspiration to feel inspired - and I like to be transparent about my process and share what works for me as a writer within workshops. Bringing poetry into a classroom is an opportunity to allow teacher and students to share something of their inner worlds and 'be themselves' in an appropriate and empowering way, so of course you could incorporate other mindfulness techniques or physical stretches you use to calm your mind.

For this, students can be seated at desks, on the carpet or in a circle. Ask each student to close their eyes and to feel themselves breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. You can count to four for each breath. The aim is to get them to focus on their breathing and to see if they can deepen their breath so that it is even and steady. When they are calm and focused on their breathing, ask them to imagine that they are on a magical island, they can feel sand and then grass under their feet, they can feel a soft breeze through their hair, they can hear the sound of water, it could be the sea or a waterfall. Ask them to see if they can start to picture in their imagination what they can see, smell, hear and sense in this place.

The aim is to create just enough structure for them so that they are then able to use their own imaginations to build a world of sensory details which they can then begin to explore through their writing.

Depending on your class, you can move directly to an individual free write or straight to writing individual poems or stories or you can add a drawing element, asking them to work individually or even in pairs, providing them with a large piece of plain paper for them to draw their worlds. After mapping their worlds they can then create a piece of imaginative writing together which describes this world. You can ask them to use the techniques you have been working on in literacy - similes, alliteration, adjectives etc.



"YOU COULD BE CREATIVE AND WRITE ANYTHING THAT CAME INTO YOUR MIND."

PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES



BREIS' BEST POETRY WARM-UPS FOR KEY STAGE 3

There are a number of different ways to get students writing but it can be quite daunting having to write about something on the spot. I find it useful to have discussions first about the themes we're exploring. I always stress to students that it's a lot easier to write about things that you feel passionate about. The more emotion or opinions you have about something, the more likely it is you'll be able to speak on it, and when you can speak on it, writing becomes easier.

To see if a student has enough things to write about, I sometimes carry out this litmus test. I ask a student to talk for one minute about their chosen topic. If they achieve that, then they can probably write quite a bit on that topic.

Discussing a topic can loosen up a class, create a safe space for the students and give them permission to contribute an opinion. Each point made can inspire another thought. Here are a few ways I conduct discussions.

"IT HELPED ME LEARN MY FAVOURITE THING IS TO TAKE A RISK."

SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT



"IT WAS FUN!"

SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

THE WHOLE CLASS

If we're writing about a particular topic, we'll discuss it as a class. I'll ask various questions to get them thinking about different perspectives and to get them sharing their opinions and outlooks. As this is happening, I make note of their answers on the board. These pool of answers can then be used later on as raw material for their writing.

GROUP CHATS

Split the class into 4 or 5 groups. Each group can focus on the same thing or alternatively each group can focus on a different aspect of the same topic.

Each group goes away for 5 - 10 minutes to discuss their points. At the end of the allocated time, one person from each group feeds back to the rest of the class what points or conclusions their group came up with.

It's important to hear them express in their own words the points they came up with as this allows them to hear their true voice. Without hearing or knowing their thoughts out loud, it is harder for some to write them down.

THE INTERVIEW

This exercise is an extension of the discussion, and leads into writing. It's more of a journalistic activity, great for improving listening skills, and comprehension. I use this to take the focus off of students writing about themselves and what they think and instead focusing on someone else.

Each student has to write about another student by interviewing them. The main objective is ultimately to write about the other person in a way that makes them sound awesome. They should use the interview to gather their material.

The class splits into pairs. Person 'A' and Person 'B'. Person A has to interview Person B for 5 minutes writing down the answers that B gives. The idea is to get as much important information about that person as possible.

Some guideline questions they can ask:

- Where were you born?
- What are your loves/hates?
- What music do you listen to?
- How would you describe your personality?
- Tell me an interesting fact or story about yourself?
- What are your dreams?

After 5 minutes the interviewer now becomes the interviewee. Person B has to interview Person A.

Once the interview is over. Person A writes about Person B using all the answers collected and vice versa.

Now they've gathered their material, they can begin their pieces. This can be a free verse, rap or poem, but it should aim to be uplifting and encouraging.

PREPARING FOR A POET VISIT

IT'S WORTH CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING TO MAKE SURE WE CAN ASSIST YOU IN FINDING THE RIGHT POET, AND SO THAT YOUR CLASS GETS THE MOST OUT OF THE EXPERIENCE.

BEFORE THE VISIT

PURPOSE

What's the aim(s) of the post visit? Do you want to enthuse your class about reading, work on refining particular skills, or celebrate an event like National Poetry Day? Are there any specific outcomes you want from the session? Do you want participants to each have created their own poem - or developed a class poem on a particular topic?

Often it can add a direction to the session to integrate the outcomes into other school activity. Can pupils read their poems in assembly later in the week, or can the class poem to be displayed on a classroom wall, or the school website?

The clearer you can be about what you want to achieve, the more we can help you find the right poet to meet your needs. Even if you only have a broad idea of what you're after, Apples and Snakes and one of our experienced poets can help develop this into a clear outline for a visit.

FORMAT

Based on what your aims are, think about planning a visit of the appropriate length for what you want to achieve. Would you like a short afternoon inspiration for your class, or are you after a poet-in-residence for a whole term? Do you want the poet to work with just one class, or perform for the whole school? Sometimes splitting a day's visit across two classes can help reduce costs, or spread the expense between different budgets.

It's important to allow enough time for workshops so that a poet can work meaningfully with a class, and allow a poet breaks between sessions. We suggest a minimum of 90-120 minutes for a workshop and (unless agreed with the poet in advance) recommend working with no more than two groups per day.

PREPARATION

Apples and Snakes will help to facilitate the process of booking the session, and planning for the day. We will ensure all necessary safeguarding procedures, such as DBS checks, are in place. Do help us by passing on any practical advice the poet may need in advance. This includes:

- contact details
- start and finish times
- where and when to arrive
- information about your class and any children's particular needs
- any safeguarding or health and safety requirements

You may also want to prepare your class for the visit. They might have a book in your school library, or filmed performances on YouTube (N.B. not all of a poets' material online may be child-friendly). Younger groups may want to go through what to expect from a poetry performance or workshop.



"IT HELPS EXPAND YOUR VOCABULARY AND HELPS UNLOCK YOUR CREATIVITY."

SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

PREPARING FOR A POET VISIT



“I WANT TO DO ANOTHER WORKSHOP!”

PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

DURING THE VISIT

We ask that you make sure someone is available to greet your poet when they arrive. Do please let them know where any facilities are including toilets, and somewhere they can get some water, or a hot or cold drink.

Where possible we'd encourage you to take part in the poet's activities alongside your students. Pupils don't often see creative processes in action and it can really help to see a teacher work through the same creative decision-making steps that they are also attempting.

You must ensure that a teacher or appropriate staff member is present throughout any session to maintain discipline. Managing any behavior and discipline issues is not the artist's responsibility, and so it's up to the school to oversee this aspect of the day.

AFTER THE VISIT

Discuss the visit with your class. What did they enjoy most? What did they struggle with? Did working with a poet change their outlook on any aspect of the curriculum?

Wherever possible, do allow pupils time to finish off any writing they may have begun with the artist. This presents the session, and pupils' creative output, as a meaningful part of their work, and not just a one-off to be forgotten. Perhaps you could share or display the class' finished work? Some schools have even created a school anthology, or hosted a school-wide poetry slam to showcase their pupils' talents.

FEEDBACK

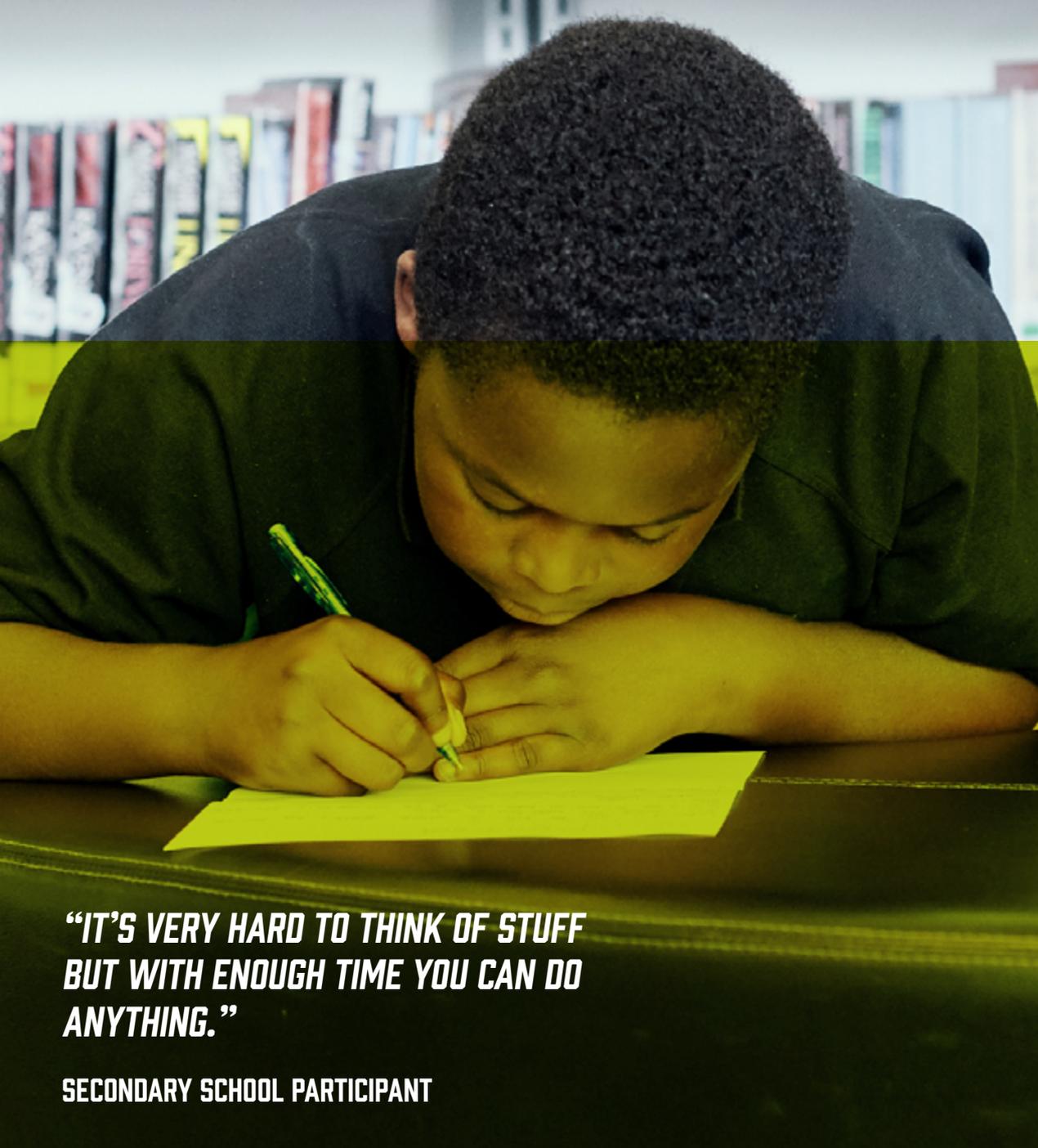
We are always looking to improve our work, and to help our poet-educators to develop their skills. Do please get in touch with us to let us know how the session went. Was anything particularly successful? Were there any issues that we could have prevented? We can pass any feedback onto the poet, and will use it to help improve any future bookings.

“IT'S EXCITING GETTING TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN WORDS”

PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

“I USED TO THINK IT HAD TO RHYME, BUT NOW I KNOW I CAN WRITE ANYTHING.”

PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT



***“IT’S VERY HARD TO THINK OF STUFF
BUT WITH ENOUGH TIME YOU CAN DO
ANYTHING.”***

SECONDARY SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

APPLES AND SNAKES

NO WORD UNSPOKEN

APPLESANDSNAKES.ORG/BOOK-A-POET

BOOKINGS@APPLESANDSNAKES.ORG

07496 393 793



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