



Activity 2 – Write an environmental poem

Read and interpret existing environmental poems before constructing your own poem on an environmental topic, using a range of poetic devices.

Use this English activity to fulfil the **Share your woodland words and images** challenge.

woodlandtrust.org.uk/support-us/act/your-school/green-tree-a-award/woodland-words-and-images/

Worth two points on the award.



Curriculum requirements KS3

Students should learn:

- to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including books, short stories, poems and plays
- the purpose, audience and the context of the writing and be able to draw on their knowledge to support comprehension
- how language, including figurative language, vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features, presents meaning
- to recognise a range of poetic conventions and understand how these have been used
- to write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through stories, scripts, poetry, and other imaginative writing.

Learning outcomes

After completing this activity, students will have:

- spent time outside near trees or in a woodland, and collected a natural item
- described the colours of the natural object, as well as identified the smells and sounds they associate with nature, and recalled how it makes them feel



- read and interpreted poems that have an environmental topic
- identified and explained poetic devices and how they are used to create meaning
- picked an environmental topic they want to write about, for example trees, woodland, climate change or habitats
- used the objects they collected to reflect on their experiences with nature in the poem they construct
- written a poem discussing their ideas and opinions on their chosen environmental topic, using poetic devices and with a clear intended audience.

Preparation and resources

The following materials will help you deliver this activity successfully.

Outdoors – in a local woodland, park or your school grounds

- risk assessments
- health and safety equipment
- outdoor clothing and footwear suitable for all weathers

In the classroom

- AV equipment to show the film ‘What is ancient woodland?’
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/habitats/ancient-woodland/ (this will help to give context if students are unable to visit a real woodland)
- writing equipment, for example notebooks, pens and highlighters
- poems with an environmental focus (these will need to be printed prior to the lesson or devices with internet access will need to be provided)



Location

Different parts of this activity can be carried out in different places.



On a woodland visit

If possible, go to a woodland before the lesson so students can find an object to take back to school, for example a fallen leaf, pine cone or acorn.



In your school grounds or a local park

Alternatively, go into your school grounds or a local park with trees before or as part of your lesson. Sit underneath some trees and discuss why British trees are valuable. Pupils can take photographs of nature or find an object to take back to school, for example a fallen leaf, pine cone or acorn.



In the classroom

The main activity and plenary activity can be done in a classroom. Students can also watch the 'What is ancient woodland' film to provide context if they are unable to visit a woodland.



Starter activity (10 minutes)

Making a nature poem together

Students should have the opportunity to go outdoors, either on your school grounds, to a local park with trees, or to a local woodland. Students are required to find a fallen leaf, acorn, pine cone or another piece of nature that has fallen from a British tree. (Please encourage students to be considerate of the natural environment and not damage or break things off trees.)

In pairs, ask students to describe their object to each other:

- What are the colours and textures of their object?
- What smells do they associate with trees?
- What do they hear when they go out on a walk in the woods?
- Finally, how do trees and nature make them feel?

Responses from all the students can be collated into a word cloud to show the most popular words that used to describe nature. Share the final word cloud with the class.

Ask each student to pick one word from the word cloud and make one rhyming couplet. Take each rhyming couplet and collate it into a poem

Main activity (40 minutes)

Students are required to read at least one poem that has an environmental focus. The poem could be about climate change, British woods or habitats. Students are then required to highlight the poetic devices that the writer has used. Poetic devices include alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance, rhyming and personification. Students also need to discuss who they think the intended audience is.

Examples of poetic devices can be used to inspire students if needed such as simile, acrostic poem, metaphor or alliteration. Here's a good example of a woodland metaphor: gatheringaroundthetable.blogspot.com/2008/02/what-is-white.html



Students should decide on an environmental topic to write about. They can think of ideas that cover the poetic devices they want to include and their intended audience based on their experiences with nature. Students should create their own poem and it should clearly show what audience they are writing for, and the key opinions they are trying to communicate.

Plenary/evaluation (10 minutes)

To end the lesson, students could read another pupil's poem and identify the writer's intended audience and the poetic devices used. They could also explain the opinions the writer is trying to communicate about the environmental topic.

Extension

Students can further develop their poetry skills by researching other poems on British trees and woods. They can choose their favourite to analyse.