

– Teaching Guide –

COURAGE

in a poem



Suitable for:
Ages 7–9 (LKS2)

What's included:

Five lessons giving students the opportunity to develop spoken language, reading comprehension and creative writing skills.

Teaching resources © Rosie Hayes 2023 | Design © Little Tiger Press Limited 2023

Illustrations copyright © Masha Manapov 2022

Made available for free use and distribution



Lesson 1

National curriculum links:

- Reading – comprehension – listening to and discussing a wide range of poetry
- Reading – comprehension – discussing words and phrases that capture the reader’s interest and imagination

Task 1

Show the children the front cover of *Courage In a Poem* and explain that it is an anthology of poetry. Ask the children if they can define the word “anthology” and if they cannot, then use the opportunity to look up the definition together. Discuss the similarities and differences between an anthology of poems and a story. Encourage the children to consider that the poems are all based around one theme – empowerment.

Ask the children:

- Do you know any poems?
- Do you have any favourite poems? If so, what do you like about them?
- What are the key similarities and differences between a poem and a story? Do you think a text can be both?

Task 2

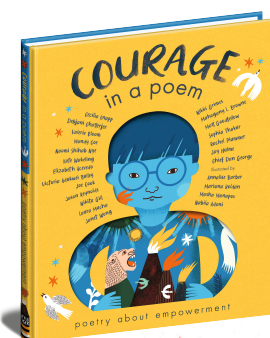
Ask the class: what do you already know about poetry?

Encourage the students to contribute any words and phrases they know or feelings they have about poetry. Gather all the ideas on the board. Then, ask the class for any features of poetry they know, such as alliteration, personification, metaphor, simile or rhyme. Each time a feature is suggested by a student, ask them to explain to the class what it means or give an example.

Task 3

Show the children the poem “The Cancan” by Mandy Coe. Ask them as a class to identify any of the features they had listed on the board and model how to annotate the poem with these features: personification, similes, rhyme.

Provide copies of the poems in the anthology on tables and ask the children to look through the poems and annotate on each poem where they see any of the features discussed in the group session.



Lesson 2

National curriculum links:

- Reading – comprehension – listening to and discussing a wide range of poetry
- Reading – comprehension – recognising some different forms of poetry
- Spoken language – give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- Spoken language – select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

Task 1

Choose two or three poems from the anthology to read aloud to the class.

Ask the students:

- What are the similarities between these poems?
- What are the differences?
- How do the poems make you feel?

Discuss how poems can have different themes, tones and structures. Some poems might make us laugh while others might make us feel hopeful or reflective or empowered.

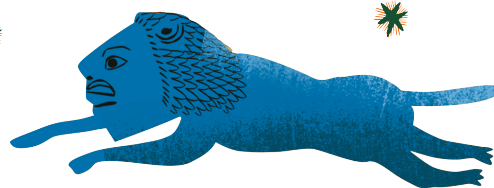
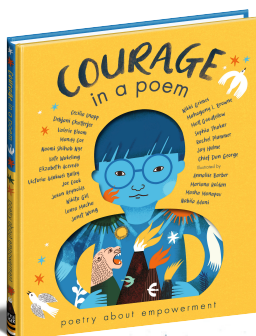
Task 2

Ask the children to choose two poems from the anthology that they feel are different from one another. Explain that they will present and explain their ideas to a group, so in this part of the lesson they will plan what they are going to say. Model structuring the presentation on the board for the children to see. Write headings on the board: theme, tone, structure, features. Explain that the students do not have to use the same headings but they are there as a guide if they want it. Model outlining the similarities and differences using bullet points under each heading. Then give the students time to choose their poems and write their presentation.

Task 3

Before asking the class to present their ideas, discuss what makes a good presentation and an effective public speaker. Remind the students that they need to speak loudly and clearly. They should also consider the register they are using to present the information. Explain that even though they will be talking to their peers, they are now giving a presentation rather than participating in a conversation. Therefore, they need to use appropriate technical and formal language.

Put the class into smaller groups so each student is presenting to four or five people. Give each student five minutes to present their ideas and encourage the class to ask questions and give positive feedback.



Lesson 3

National curriculum links:

- Spoken language – gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- Reading – comprehension – develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by preparing poems to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action

Task 1

Explain to the class that poetry is not only meant to be read but to be spoken aloud. Watch some videos of poetry being read aloud. Ask the class to consider what they notice about the performer and how they read the poem. How quickly or slowly do they speak? Do they maintain the same pace all the way through? Do they pause? At what point? What does the pause signify? Encourage the class to reflect on how the performer tries to convey the meaning of the poem to the audience.

As the teacher, choose a poem from the anthology and perform it twice. The first time, perform it as though you are nervous, rushing through and not using any intonation. The second time, perform it confidently, looking at the audience, pausing at thought-provoking parts of the poem. Ask the students what the difference was the second time and make a note of their responses on the board.

Task 2

Give the students time to choose the poem they would like to perform and to learn, and practise reading it aloud. Move around the room and be available for students if they have any questions about word meanings or pronunciations. If some students are very confident, you could ask them to perform two or three lines to the class while they are all practising to give them some further examples and guidance. If you notice a common error, such as students speaking too fast or not paying attention to punctuation, stop the class and give whole-class feedback before allowing them to continue their practice.

Task 3

In this part of the lesson, the students will perform their poems to the class. Depending on your class, there may be students who would feel unable to perform alone to a large group. In this instance, you could create a smaller group to go out with a teaching assistant to perform their poems to each other.

The most important thing is practising the technique and skill of performing a poem, whether it is to five students or 30. Remind the children watching the performances that they are now the audience.

Go through together what makes a good audience, such as giving your full attention and not interrupting a performer. You could turn the lights down or put a theatre background with curtains on the screen to make it really exciting.



Lesson 4

National curriculum links:

- Writing – composition – plan their writing by discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- Writing – composition – draft and write by composing and rehearsing sentences orally (including dialogue), progressively building a varied and rich vocabulary and an increasing range of sentence structures

Task 1

Together, look at the poem “My Heart Soars” by Chief Dan George.

Ask the class:

- What feelings does the poem evoke?
- How does the poet create those feelings?
- What does the poet mean by the words “speaks to me”?

Discuss the imagery he has used in the poem and the choice of language he has used. What themes can the class spot in the poem? Can they explain their ideas and justify them using the poem itself? Have a copy on the board and annotate with the students’ ideas.

Task 2

Show the class images of nature: mountains, oceans, flowers, forests. Explain that they are going to write their own poems inspired by Chief Dan George, so first they are going to build an ambitious vocabulary bank. Look back at the original poem and highlight the language such as “softness”, “fragrance” and “rhythm”.

Using the images on the board, begin to build a bank of the children’s ideas, using the same structure as in the poem – “The _____ of the _____”. Encourage the class to think of their own ideas as well as using the images on the board to support.

Task 3

Now it’s time for the class to write their own poems. This can be as guided or as creative an exercise as you would like. They could use the examples from the board and base their poem closely on Chief Dan George’s or you could give them the option to use this style to describe something other than nature, such as outer space. Alternatively, students could use the original poem and simply extend it with further ideas. Some students could be challenged to use alliteration or more ambitious vocabulary.

When the poems are finished, they could be illustrated in the same style as the book but using images and illustrations drawn from their own poem.



Lesson 5

National curriculum links:

- Spoken language – articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- Art – pupils should be taught to improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing

Task 1

Look through *Courage In a Poem* and explain that there are four illustrators of this anthology: Annalise Barber, Mariana Roldán, Masha Manapov and Nabila Adani. Ask the children to consider how the artwork and illustrations add to the poetry.

Ask the class:

- What do you think the colours represent in the illustration of “The Cancan”?
- Why do you think the background of “Dislexic Poim” is so dark?
- Which is your favourite illustration and why?

You could put the class into pairs after each question and allow them to take turns to explain and justify their answers to one another.

Task 2

Look at the image on the front cover together. What do you think is symbolised by the images inside the child’s body? Encourage the class to look closely at each image and suggest what it could mean. What could be the significance of the lion? What connotations do lions have? Discuss the way in which the child is standing. Ask the children to stand up and adopt the same stance. How do they feel? Why do they think the illustrator chose this stance? Remind the children of the topic of the anthology and how all the poems have a theme of bravery and empowerment. Ask the children to consider how they might illustrate their own bravery in this way. Draw a blank outline similar to the one in the book and fill the outline with the children’s ideas.

Give the children time to consider times they have felt brave and empowered. What kind of images would represent how that felt?

Task 3

Give the children time to draw their own front covers. Encourage the children to use the ideas they thought of in the group discussion and the example on the board to help. You could provide a template with a basic outline or give the students the opportunity to draw their own. These could remain pencil drawings or they could become multimedia pieces using various materials. These could be used as a class display to remind the children that it is important to be brave and always be yourself.

