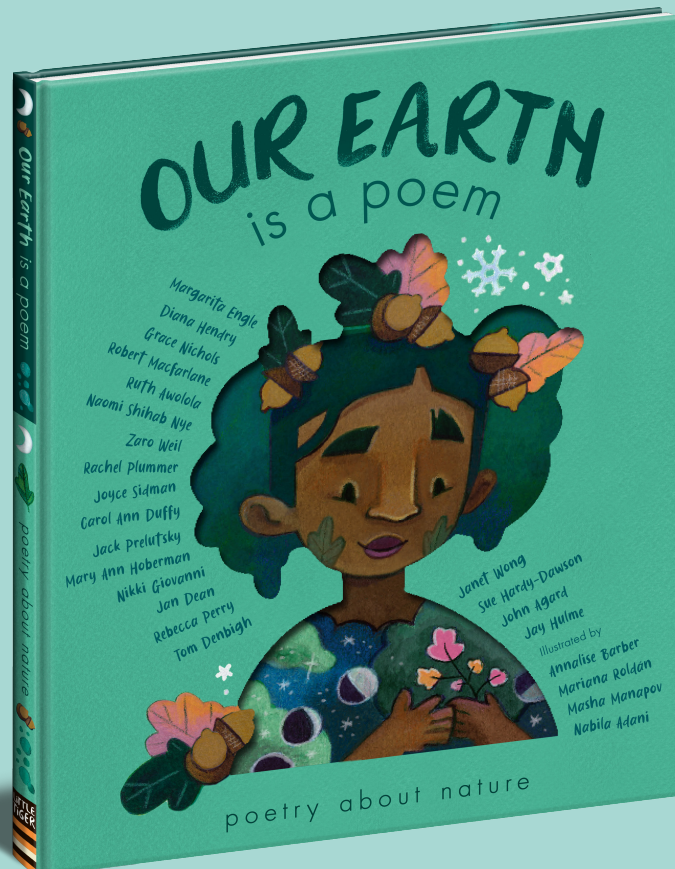


– Teaching Guide –

# OUR EARTH is 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.

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# 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 *Our Earth Is 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 – nature.

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 "Otter" by Robert Macfarlane. 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 also should 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.



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# 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 develop 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 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 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. Together, go through 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

Look at the poem “What Is the Pond Doing?” by Diana Hendry together.

Ask the class:

- How does the poet use alliteration and onomatopoeia?
- Can you describe how the poet makes the pond seem like a thinking being?
- What is your favourite line of the poem?

Discuss the verbs she has used in the poem and her language choices. Encourage the class to reflect on what kind of mood the poet has created in the poem. Is it serious and emotional or is it fun and light? Have a copy on the board and annotate with the students’ ideas.

## Task 2

Show the class a range of images based around nature, such as mountains, streams and jungles.

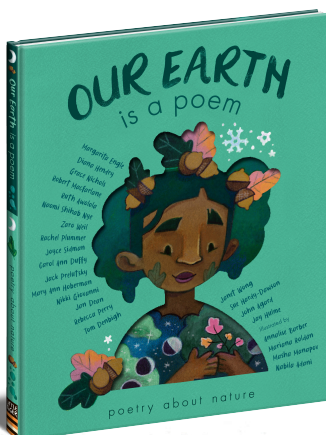
Explain that they are going to write their own poems inspired by Diana Hendry, so first they are going to build an ambitious vocabulary bank. Look back to the original poem and highlight the verbs such as “cheeking”, “plopping” and “hiding”.

Go through the images on the board in turn. Challenge the students to create a line about the image. For example, in response to the jungle image, the students may suggest “Sheltering the jaguar from the shimmering sun”.

## 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 like. They could use the examples from the board and base their poems closely on Diana Hendry’s or you could give them the option to use a setting of their choice. 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 way as in the book but reflecting the content of the students’ own poetry.



# 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 *Our Earth Is 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:

- Why do you think the river is illustrated as a dress in “Little Blanco River”?
- Why might the illustrator have used lots of colour in “I Wonder”?
- 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 and hair? Encourage the class to look closely at each image and suggest what it could mean. Why might one side of her body be in the light and the other in the dark? What does it represent? Discuss the way in which the image is representative of nature and our environment.

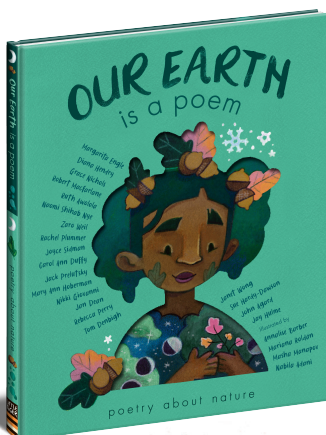
Ask the children to consider how they might illustrate their own concept of nature in this way. Draw a blank outline similar to the one on the book cover and fill the outline with the children’s ideas. For example, they may want to include the sun or animals or the ocean.

Give the children time to consider what aspects of nature they would like to include and how to illustrate them. They could make a note of these to keep them in mind for the next part of the lesson.

## Task 3

Give the children time to draw their own images. 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 already or you could 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 to take care of our environment.



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