

Writing Poetry

KS3 English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Turn an abstract idea (nervousness before a match) into concrete images.

Step 1 · List what you see, hear and feel

Laces double-knotted, studs clacking on the tunnel floor, the ref's whistle, a dry mouth.

Step 2 · Choose the strongest two or three

Double-knotted laces, studs clacking, dry mouth.

Step 3 · Write them

I double-knot my laces, twice. / Studs clack like teeth on the concrete. / My mouth is a desert.

Answer: Specific images (laces, clacking studs, a dry mouth) show nervousness without using the word.

Check: The word 'nervous' never appears.

2. Now try one with the steps

Use line breaks to give weight to a key word.

Step 1 · Sentence

Step 2 · Find the key word

Step 3 · Break before and after it

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. What is the difference between a concrete and an abstract word? [1]

2. What is enjambment? [1]

3. In Version B of the line-break activity, how many lines are there? Write the number. [1]

4. Rewrite 'I was happy' concrete image. [1]
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5. What is assonance? Give an example. [2]
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6. Why might a poet end a line on an important word? [1]
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7. What is half-rhyme? Give an example. [1]
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8. What is an extended metaphor? [1]
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9. Write two lines of a poem about a school corridor at the end of the day, using one sound device. [2]
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10. Why is forcing a rhyme often a mistake? [1]
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11. Explain the effect of putting 'quiet.' alone on the final line in Version C. [2]
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12. Choose an object from your home and write three lines showing a feeling through it, without naming the feeling. [3]
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13. Why might a poet choose a strict form, like a sonnet, for a chaotic or painful subject? [2]
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14. Describe two things you would check when redrafting a poem. [2]
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4. Before you hand it in

Writing about huge ideas in general words: 'Love is wonderful and makes everything better.'

Find one small, specific image that holds the feeling.

Chopping prose into random lines.

Break lines where you want a pause, emphasis or surprise.

Forcing every line to rhyme.

Use rhyme only where it helps, or try half-rhyme or free verse.

Never reading the poem aloud.

Read every draft aloud; change any word that trips you up without a reason.