

Unit guides: Unit 6 My world in a poem

Writing objectives for first language English	Writing and Use of English objectives for second language English
<p>Draw on the range and variety of your own vocabulary to make different effects.</p> <p>Experiment with different ways of structuring and presenting texts.</p>	<p>Use exclamations with <i>What</i> and <i>How</i>.</p> <p>Learn about synonyms.</p> <p>Use correct punctuation: commas for pauses.</p>
<p>Cambridge lower secondary English resource links</p> <p>Cambridge Global English: Stage 8: Unit 8: Habitat interactions</p> <p>Cambridge Checkpoint English: Stage 8: Unit 7: Time and history</p>	<p>Aim: To write a poem about an aspect of your life</p>
<p>International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme links</p> <p>Language acquisition: Phase 4</p> <p>Language and literature: MYP1</p>	<p>Key terminology: Refrain, rhythm</p>

Warmer

- Ask: Do you read poems? What poems have you read? Encourage learners to tell the rest of the class about them. If possible, ask them to look up the poems on the internet and read them to the class.
- Read a poem to the class. Ask learners if they liked it. Encourage them to justify their answers.
- Bring some more poems and offer them to volunteers to read aloud. Help learners read with appropriate rhythm.
- Elicit reactions from the class and discuss the meaning of the poems.

Noticing

- Ask: What is poetry? Does it have to rhyme? Elicit ideas and definitions.
- Draw a spidergram on the board. Write the word 'POEM' in the hub and brainstorm vocabulary, expressions or ideas that learners associate with poems and poetry. Many learners may mistakenly associate poems only with love or sorrow. They may also think that poetry is something that only experts understand or assume that poems should always rhyme.
- Ask: What different forms of poetry are there? Remind the class of the ballads, animal poems, rhymes they read in Stage 7. You may add others, e.g. sonnet, haiku, tanka, free verse. You may wish to visit the Bookriot website
- Bring copies of different kinds of poems and ask learners to work in groups and compare them. Ask them to focus on the theme, structure (e.g. the number of verses), the language used, etc.

Useful sites:

- Yourdictionary.com – examples of haiku poems
- Thehypertexts.com – examples of popular sonnets

Pre-reading

- Focus on the questions: What things give learners pleasure or enjoyment every day? Explain that even small, unnoticed events or experiences can be very important sources of enjoyment.
- Ask them to note down three of these 'little enjoyments' on a piece of paper and then swap them around in a small group.
- They should read out the slip they have received and together work out whose it was.
- Focus on the photo: What do they think the girl is enjoying?
- Share a few personal poems with the class, both by published poets and by learners to demonstrate a variety of ways in which a personal poem can be written. Encourage the class to compare and contrast them, e.g. the theme, the focus, how they are laid out on the page, etc.

Effective poems about everyday life

- Focus on the characteristics of a good personal poem and ask learners to compare them with their ideas. Are there any they didn't think of? Can they add more?
- Ask them to re-read the poems you have shared with them and choose words and phrases they find particularly effective.
- Do they think the shape of a poem can add to its effect on the reader?

How the text works

- Ask the class what makes a good personal poem. Encourage learners to recall the characteristics they discussed before reading the text.
- Focus on this section. Ask learners to work in pairs or small groups and turn the items into questions, e.g. Does the poet write about simple experiences? Does he divide the poem into verses? Is there a refrain? etc.
- They should re-read the poem and highlight the parts of the poem where they can find these features.
- Encourage them to discuss whether the writer used those techniques effectively.

Suggestions for further reading

‘Miniature Delights’ – Anne Ryland

‘This Life This Life I Cannot Leave You Again’ –
Luo Zihai

‘My Earlier Life’ – Charles Baudelaire

‘Today Is Sunday’ – Nazim Hikmet

‘A Brand New Life’ – Sukasah Syahdan

Active learning

Post reading: reacting to the text

- a** After the class has read the poem, discuss their reactions to it. Give learners a few questions and ask them to work on their own. They should reflect and think of the answers. After a few minutes, ask them to pair up with a partner to compare and contrast their answers. Finally, have an open-class discussion.

You may wish to use the following questions:

- What’s your first thought now that you have read the poem?
- How does the poem make you feel?
- Why does it make you feel like that?
- What is the poet saying?
- How is the poet expressing himself to make you feel this way?
- Are there particular parts of the poem that stand out for you? Why?
- How did the poem make you feel?

- b** Once learners have thought about their own personal response and other learners’ possible responses, invite them to think in more detail about how the poem is achieving its effect. Ask a few questions for them to notice how language is used. For example:

- Is it clear what the poem is about? Is there a clear theme?
- Are there key lines or phrases that stand out to you as saying something strongly?
- What words, phrases or lines do you remember? Why are they powerful?

- c** Ask learners to re-read the poem and respond to it visually. Ask them to describe and draw images or symbols they associate with the whole poem or with a particular verse.

Differentiation strategies

- a** Free writing is an invaluable technique to develop learners’ readiness to write. All learners will benefit from this technique but less confident learners may benefit the most. Free writing consists of writing about a subject without stopping to think, edit or correct. Learners don’t need to read what they have written out loud to others unless they want to. This exercise gives them time to collect and develop ideas.

- b** One of the most difficult things for less confident learners is knowing where to start. This applies to any kind of text they have to write so providing a choice of opening lines can help, e.g. The first time I ..., I remember ..., this time (last year) Alternatively, they can pick opening phrases from poems they have read.

Point out that they are free to change the lines or do without them afterwards if they can come up with better or more personal options.

- c** Less confident learners may not come up with ideas about what to write about so it may help them to work in a small group. Ask them to think of a place they know well. They should close their eyes and try to ‘see’ the place. What do they hear, see, smell? They can note down these impressions and any thoughts going through their heads. When they are happy with what they have written, they can decide what ideas they are going to use.

Learning to learn

It's important to allow time for discussion and conversation before, during and after reading and writing. Encourage learners to share ideas and experiences and to listen to each other attentively. Encourage them to be themselves and have confidence in their own voice. When they say something memorable, get them to write it down so they can use it in their own poem.

Use of English – additional activities

When learners have finished the lesson, you may ask them to complete the Use of English additional activity for this unit.

Publishing learners' writing ideas

Anthologies

Anthologies are a type of collection that learners are likely to be most familiar with. They enable learners to publish their own work alongside favourites by published poets. Making an anthology also gives learners the opportunity to consider whether they would like to illustrate their poems. Class anthologies can be books or audio collections of learners reading their own or favourite poems aloud with the addition of sound effects or some music.

Answer key

Reading

- 1 a He takes pleasure in the act of reading, writing (putting pen to paper) and being on his own.
b Perhaps that he likes his own company, but also that he is observant. It could be said that he is a little vain, in understanding things others don't.

Text analysis

- 1 The poem is spread out with regular verses – neatly ordered – and with no rhyme, so the pace is slow and reflective.

Being alone	Reading texts	His own writing	The natural world or elements
Verses 1, 9	Verses 2, 6, 7	Verses 3, 4, 10	Verses 5, 8

- 2 The two most important aspects are reading others' works and writing his own work.
4 Verses 6 and 7 are both about reading a 'difficult' book.
5 There is no absolute 'right or wrong' here, but options b and c are most convincing as the poem is about different delights – so it makes sense to separate them – and the act of reading and writing can be slow and thoughtful.
6 Learners' own answers.
7 a i 'spreading'.
ii 'blow away'.
iii 'skimming through'.
iv 'Steep'.
v 'Lick'.
b i Sight – 'crimson ... fire'; sound: 'water boil'.
ii Touch: the glowing fire; perhaps also the smell of the ash and fire.
8 a On one's own; alone.
b i Verse 9. ii Verse 4.
c The best words are probably 'contented' (happy with one's life) and 'thoughtful'.
d He must be contented as he repeats all the delights (joys) in his life. He is thoughtful because he spends time thinking about his reading and writing, and also observes the world carefully.

- 9 a Learners' own answers.
b Learners' own answers.
c Check against the 'How the text works' pointers.

Use of English

Grammar

- 1 a ii b iv c iii d i
2 a and b 'How' is followed by an adjective on its own.
3 a What an amazing place!
b What gorgeous shoes!
c What loud music!
d What an enormous building!
e How lovely to see Hassan again!
4 Learners' own answers.

Vocabulary

- 5 a ii b v c i d iii e iv
6 a Leave a place, go on holiday / a trip.
b Give something to someone for free; reveal a secret.
c Look in the other direction.
d Allow someone to leave; open the door to allow someone or something to leave.
e Test something to see if it works or if you like it.
f Use something so much and for so long that you can't use it any longer.
7 a I turned my head and looked away.
b The cat scratched the door and I let him out.
c I wore out my shoes.
d I worried about my exam but it turned out fine.
8 No answer needed.
9 Even the most unemotional get excited.
So here I am, on the edge of animation,
a dream, a dance, a fantastic construction,
A child's adventure.
And nothing in this tawny sky
can get too close, or move too far away.

Independent Writing answers

Write a poem about your daily life. Write at least six verses.

Sample answer

Snowy day

Snowflakes floating, swaying,
falling to the ground,
slowly building up enormous mounds.
Snowballs riding fast
Flying in the air.
It's freezing cold out there
But we don't care.

The afternoon is cold,
All of us are told
Come inside and eat
Apple crumble – what a treat.
There's delicious chocolate
Hot and sweet.
It's freezing cold out there
But we don't care.

It's getting dark
The day is almost over.
We start to go back home
Our snowmen stay there all alone.
Snow falls, the sun goes home.
Time to go inside,
Time for stories by the fireside.

Examiner comment

The task is successfully completed, all content is relevant and the conventions of poetry writing are used effectively. The poem is divided into stanzas. There is a successful attempt at using rhyme although rhythm is broken in the last stanza. Vocabulary is simple, but is used effectively to describe the day.

Grade: 5

Model answer

Snowy day

¹Snowflakes floating, swaying,
²falling to the ground,
³slowly building up in enormous mounds.
Snowballs riding fast
Swishing past my hair,
⁴Flying in the air.
It's freezing cold out there
⁵But we don't care.

⁶The afternoon is cold,
All of us are told
⁷Come inside and eat
Apple crumble – what a treat!
There's delicious chocolate
Hot and sweet'.
It's freezing cold out there
But we don't care.

⁸Snow falling on the park,
Our snowmen will stay out there
all alone, in the dark.
The day is almost over.
Time to go inside,
⁹Time for stories by the fireside.

- 1** Poem divided into six stanzas
- 2** Refrain
- 3** Example of sentence with a clause
- 4** Comma and full stops signal pauses and line breaks
- 5** Example of sentence with a clause

- 6** Commas and full stop signal pauses and line breaks
- 7** Dash signals pauses and line breaks
- 8** Example of sentence with a clause
- 9** Example of sentence with a clause