

NATIONAL POETRY DAY
THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER 2015

assembly resources

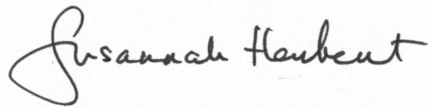
National Poetry Day, 8 October 2015, is a nationwide celebration of poetry: a day to think of a poem and brighten life by sharing it. Everyone is invited: everywhere the starting point is you.

This year's theme is Light, so let poetry shine from the nation's streets, shops, trains, playgrounds, schools, airwaves through events, chants, songs, parties, happenings, conversations, broadcasts, tweets and spontaneous uncontrollable outbursts of verse.

Use the hashtags **#nationalpoetryday** and **#thinkofapoem** to share your celebration in pictures, words, music and film.

National Poetry Day is 21 years old this year: it is run by the Forward Arts Foundation, a charity that celebrates poetry and promotes it as part of everyday life. We award the annual Forward Prizes for Poetry and publish the Forward Book of Poetry, an indispensable anthology of the year's best poems.

These teaching resources, on the theme of Light, are produced by Forward Arts Foundation and its partners for National Poetry Day 2015. They are available at **www.forwardartsfoundation.org**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susannah Herbert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susannah Herbert

Executive Director, Forward Arts Foundation

Conception and production
by Thirteen Ways

Illustrations throughout by
Matthew The Horse
www.matthewthehorse.co.uk

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Consider the possible interpretations of the theme 'light'. You might compare light and dark, or different types of light, such as sunlight and moonlight, natural and artificial light, literal and figurative light. Older pupils could look at the properties of light, or the metaphorical and spiritual treatment of light in literature and religion.

Find poems to suit your chosen interpretation of the theme. Some suggestions are given below.

Preparation

Key Stage 1

The Moon
by Robert Louis Stevenson

When the Sun Shines, So Do I
by Celia Warren

My Glow-in-the-Dark Bedroom
by Celia Warren

Silver (81)
by Walter de la Mare

Bed in Summer
by Robert Louis Stevenson

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star
by Jane and Ann Taylor

Key Stage 2

Moonlit Apples
by John Drinkwater

Shine Out, Fair Sun
anonymous

Reminiscence (67)
by Laurence Binyon

Nod (97)
by Walter de la Mare

Key Stage 3

The Cat and the Moon
by W B Yeats

Futility
by Wilfred Owen

The Sun has Burst the Sky (90)
by Jenny Joseph

Do Not Stand at my Grave and Weep (39)
by Mary E Frye

Shut Out That Moon
by Thomas Hardy

Assembly

An activity by Celia Warren for Schofield & Sims, for National Poetry Day

www.schofieldandsims.co.uk

- Poems followed by a number appear in the Schofield & Sims anthology, *A Time to Speak and a Time to Listen*. Many of the other poems are out of copyright and readily available online, while Celia Warren's own works are included on the next page.

Poems copyright Celia Warren 2015

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Example Poems

When the Sun Shines, So Do I

I skip and run
in the morning sun.
My heart is light
when the sky is bright.

*When the sun shines,
so do I.*

Hard sums are fun
in the morning sun.
I get them right
when the sky is bright.

*When the sun shines,
so do I.*

Kind deeds are done
in the morning sun,
for who can fight
when the sky is bright?

*When the sun shines,
so do I.*

by *Celia Warren*

My Glow-in-the-Dark Bedroom

I have glow-in-the-dark curtains
With glow-in-the-dark cars
And, stuck all over the ceiling,
Glow-in-the-dark stars.

My glow-in-the-dark slippers
Are grinning beside my bed,
And there sits my teddy
With his glow-in-the-dark head.

I'm sick and tired of counting
Glow-in-the-dark sheep:
Their shimmering and shining
Won't get me off to sleep.

They can all glow on without me,
If anybody cares,
I've found a no-glow area:
I'm sleeping under the stairs!

by *Celia Warren*

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Assembly

Before the assembly, encourage the pupils to look through anthologies to find suitable poems or to write their own to fit the theme. They should also research idioms that use the theme of light to convey meaning.

Decide on a script to use at the start of the assembly. The example below may be used directly, or pupils may wish to substitute the idioms they found in their own research. The narrators' text may also be adjusted to suit the age group.

Eight pupils cross the stage in twos, alternating entering left and right, so that the audience catches snatches of conversation. Younger pupils could skip or run on stage holding hands, while older pupils could walk with intent and gesticulate as if in deep discussion.

- Pair 1** **A** The darkest hour is nearest dawn.
 B You're right – there's light at the end of the tunnel.
- Pair 2** **C** Hope shines eternal!
 D Yes, every cloud has a silver lining.
- Pair 3** **E** We must make hay while the Sun shines.
 F Absolutely – I am on fire today!
- Pair 4** **G** You are the light of my life.
 H (laughing) Well, I'm glad you've seen the light!

Narrator 1 We need light to live.
 Plants turn light into energy in a process called photosynthesis.
 Without sunlight there would be no life on earth.

Narrator 2 After the dark night, the Sun shines through.
 Just like the Sun, we can shine, too.

Pupils should then read or recite the poems they have found or written to reflect aspects of light. Ask pupils presenting poems to introduce them with a brief sentence, beginning 'Light can...'. For example; Light can... be comforting, ...create a mood, ...cast beautiful shadows, ...set scenes, ...enhance description, ...be reflected, ...seem magical.

Invite the pupils to write their own concluding script related to the tone or message of their chosen poems. Whatever angle you have taken on the theme of light, aim to close with a positive message. You may wish to use or adapt the following.

Narrator 1

Some days are better than others. Some days we feel happy; some days we feel sad. Whatever our mood we can find comfort in the daily rising of the Sun, the regular waxing and waning of the moon, and the familiar twinkling of stars in the night sky.

Narrator 2

Today we have shared poems that were happy/sad/funny/moving. We hope that you found something in their words to capture your imagination and leave you with food for thought.

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