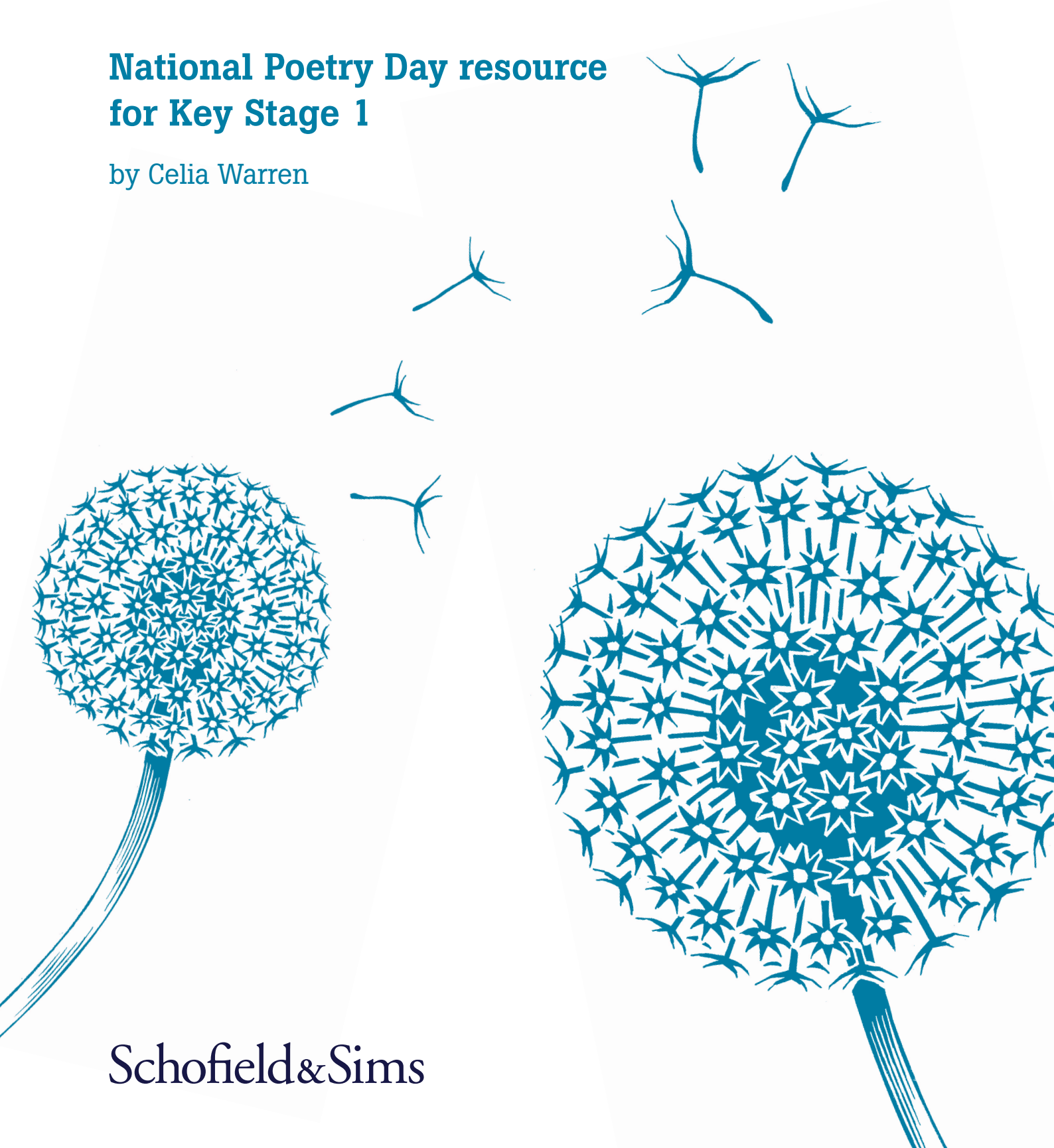


# A Time to Remember

National Poetry Day resource  
for Key Stage 1

by Celia Warren



Schofield & Sims

## At the Seaside

When I was down beside the sea  
A wooden spade they gave to me  
To dig the sandy shore.  
My holes were empty like a cup,  
In every hole the sea came up  
Till it could come no more.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)



## Introduction

This memory of a day at the beach is one that many children and adults will recognise. Whether with a wooden spade or a plastic one, the timeless experience of digging a hole and watching it fill with water is fascinating and appealing at any age.

## Reading aloud

Make sure that the pace of your reading and your tone of voice convey the child's sense of wonder. Encourage the children to read the poem aloud with you and see if they can learn it by heart. Its compactness and simple rhyme scheme make it easy to remember.

## Understanding the poem

Discuss the poem with the children, prompting with questions.

- How old do you think the child is in the poem?
- Who are 'they'? Why is that not important enough for the poet to tell us?
- Did the child dig many 'cups' in the sand? How do we know?
- How does the last line show that every hole had been filled?

If the children have access to a sandpit, let them experiment with digging holes and pouring water into and around them, observing the result.

## Further activities

- Some children will have vivid memories of the seaside, while others may have similarly clear memories of another place. Ask them to recall an early memory in their lives – one that impressed them strongly at the time. It could be a place, an occasion or a person. Can they remember any smells, sounds or strong feelings associated with their memory?
- Invite the children to share their memories with a partner, prompting them to ask one another questions to encourage stronger recall. Display a list of question words on the board to support them: When? Who? Where? What? How? Why?
- Ask the children to create a bank of key words about their memory, drawing on all their senses, any emotions they felt, any sense of wonder or surprise, fear or delight. Make sure they include plenty of descriptive words, including adjectives and possibly some adverbs.
- Challenge each child to combine some of their words into phrases to build a detailed description of their memory. Help them to craft their phrases into a short poem that begins 'When ...' – it does not need to rhyme. Encourage more able children to include a simile, as the poet did here with 'like a cup'.
- Return to the original poem the following day and see if the class (or smaller groups of children) can recite the whole poem without the written words. Prompt them if necessary.

This Schofield & Sims poetry resource has been written by Celia Warren for National Poetry Day. To find out how you can make the most of National Poetry Day in your school, please visit [www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk).

Celia is a poet and writer of educational materials for children. Her poems and stories have appeared in hundreds of anthologies, and she is a frequent contributor to BBC Television and Radio. She has written a number of books for Schofield & Sims, including the best-selling series *KS2 Comprehension* and *A Time to Speak* – an illustrated poetry anthology for children and young adults, complete with accompanying Teacher’s Guide.

