

## What to do today

*IMPORTANT Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and any weblinks or use of internet.*

### 1. Read a set of poems

- Read the four nature poems: *The Garden Year; First Primrose; Colouring In; Autumn Fires*.
- You could also challenge yourself to read *Snow in the Suburbs*.
- Choose your favourite of these poems. Why do you like it?

### 2. Answer questions about your favourite poem

- Use *Poetry Questions* and think about your favourite poem.
- Read each of the sets of questions, think about your answer and then carefully write it down.

Share your answers with a grown-up. Show them the poems and ask them which their favourite would be.

### 3. Practise reading your favourite poem out loud

- Read the *Top tips for reading a poem aloud*.
- Practise reading your poem out loud and then share your reading with somebody else.

### Try these Fun-Time Extras

- Can you record your poetry reading and send it to someone else?
- Read *Top tips for learning a poem by heart* and try to memorise some or all of your poem.
- Make a plan for your own poem about months of the year. Write your ideas on *Poem Ideas* and then try writing your poem.

## The Garden Year

January brings the snow,  
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,  
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes, loud and shrill,  
To stir the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,  
Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs  
Skipping by their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,  
Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings cooling showers,  
Apricots, and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,  
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit;  
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasant;  
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast;  
Then the leaves are whirling fast.

Chill December brings the sleet,  
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

*By Sara Coleridge*



## First Primrose



I saw it in the lane  
One morning going to school  
After a soaking night of rain,  
the year's first primrose,  
Lying there familiar and cool  
In its private place  
Where little else grows  
Beneath dripping hedgerows,  
Stalk still wet, face  
Pale as Inca gold,  
Spring glistening in every delicate fold.  
I knelt down by the roadside there,  
Caught the faint whiff of its shy scent  
On the cold and public air,  
Then got up and went  
On my slow way,  
Glad and grateful I'd seen  
The first primrose that day,  
Half yellow, half green.

*By Leonard Clark*

## Colouring in

And staying inside the lines

Is fine, but . . .

I like it when stuff leaks –

When the blue bird and the blue sky

Are just one blur of blue blue flying,

And the feeling of the feathers in the air

And the wind along the blade of wing

Is a long gash of smudgy colour.

I like it when the flowers and the sunshine

Puddle red and yellow into orange,

The way the hot sun on my back

Lulls me - muddles me - sleepy

In the scented garden,

Makes me part of the picture . . .

Part of the place.

*By Jan Dean*



## Autumn Fires

In the other gardens  
And all up the vale,  
From the autumn bonfires  
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over  
And all the summer flowers,  
The red fire blazes,  
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!  
Something bright in all!  
Flowers in the summer,  
Fires in the fall!

*By Robert Louis Stevenson*



## Snow in the suburbs

Every branch big with it,  
Bent every twig with it;  
Every fork like a white web-foot;  
Every street and pavement mute:  
Some flakes have lost their way, and grope back upward when  
Meeting those meandering down they turn and descend again.  
The palings are glued together like a wall,  
And there is no waft of wind with the fleecy fall.

A sparrow enters the tree,  
Whereon immediately  
A snow-lump thrice his own slight size  
Descends on him and showers his head and eye  
And overturns him,  
And near inurns him,  
And lights on a nether twig, when its brush  
Starts off a volley of other lodging lumps with a rush.

The steps are a blanched slope,  
Up which, with feeble hope,  
A black cat comes, wide-eyed and thin;  
And we take him in.

*By Thomas Hardy*



## Poetry Questions

**What do you like about the poem?** Is there anything you dislike? What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel?

**What patterns can you find?** Is there any rhyme, alliteration or assonance? Is anything repeated?

**What interesting words or phrases can you find?** What do they mean? Are there any metaphors or similes? Are there any vivid descriptions?

## Top tips for reading a poem aloud

- Work on the **tricky words**. Find out what they mean and how they are said. Practise saying them.
- Look for the **full stops**. Make sentences flow to the full stop, even when there's a new line.
- **Slow down**. Speak slowly when you're reading a poem, so that others can hear the words.
- **Project your voice**. Imagine someone on the other side of the room and speak to them.
- **Practise**. Read and read and read your poem, so that you get better each time.





## Top tips for learning a poem by heart

- Read the poem aloud several times slowly.
- Copy the poem out a couple of times.
- Be strategic. Pick a poem with a pattern, metre and rhyme are much easier to learn by heart than free verse.
- Learn and internalise the “story” in the poem
- Understand the poem by knowing every word’s meaning
- With a card, cover everything but the first line of the poem. Read it. Look away, see the line in the air, and say it. Look back. Repeat until you’ve “got it.”
- Uncover the second line. Learn it as you did the first line, but also add second line to first, until you’ve got the two.
- Then it’s on to three. Always repeat the first line on down, till the whole poem sings.



## Poem Ideas

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