

KEY STAGE	AGE
KS1	5-7
KS2	7-11 ✓
KS3	11-14 ✓
KS4	14-16 ✓
KS5	16-18

AT A GLANCE

- MUSIC
- MEMORY
- DRAMA
- GROUP POEMS
- PERFORMANCE

POETRYCLASS: FRESH IDEAS FOR POETRY LEARNING FROM THE POETRY SOCIETY

INSPIRING CREATIVITY

BY ANJUM MALIK

The idea of this workshop is to approach writing as a physical activity. At each stage I use music to help the participants relax, so that their minds can start doing what they do best: creating thoughts and ideas.

Stage 1. Focusing

The music for this stage can be anything that will help the students to relax. Make sure that they all have pens and paper for writing.

Tell everyone to sit comfortably or even lie down with their eyes closed. Play the music and ask them to just let it take them wherever. The music should last two to three minutes. When it finishes tell everyone to stay with their mood and write down ten words or so – just words at this stage.

After the time is up, ask everyone to read out their words. The idea is to create a word bank. Encourage everyone to jot down any word they like the sound of as they listen. At this point it's important not to spend too much time dwelling on the words.

Stage 2. Warming up

Next play a medley of different sounds everyone can move to for three to four minutes. As the music finishes, ask the students to write down more words (or sentences, if they wish). They may have remembered a place or a memory because of the music or the mood – tell them to grab the words off

the tops of their heads and get them onto paper. Go round the group again. This time people can take their time and say where the words are coming from.

Encourage them to think about the music, the rhythm and the repetition as they start to expand on what they have in their word banks.

Stage 3. Writing and performing

By now everyone has started writing. Students might choose to work on poems or prose, in groups or on their own. After fifteen minutes get everyone back together – sitting in a circle works well at this point. Encourage readers to stand when they're performing what they have written. Get everyone to clap and comment if there is time.

