

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

AT A GLANCE
• LEARNING BY HEART
• PERFORMANCE
• QUICK EXERCISE
• SOUND
• STORYTELLING

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POETRYCLASS: FRESH IDEAS FOR POETRY LEARNING FROM THE POETRY SOCIETY

THE ART OF REMEMBERING BY HEART

BY STEVE TASANE

Poetry has always been used as a learning tool because it's easier and more fun to remember facts, figures and stories using poems. Remembering by heart is no different to having a sing-along to a favourite song. For this reason, you may wish to ask a class which favourite poems they would most like to recite.

This lesson plan introduces exercises and tips that will fill a lesson or two, and may be reused as warm-up exercises for drama or poetry activity. It's aimed at **years 3 and 4** and allows the **learning of poetry by heart**, as specified in the National Curriculum for English (2013).

Timing it right

Remember that learning something confidently takes time and repetition, so it is best to spread the process out over as many school days as possible. Nervousness is a huge barrier to recollecting poetry in front of others, and the deeper our memorising (so it becomes 'muscle memory' for the tongue; like playing a musical instrument) the more confident our performance.

Enjoying sound

Here are some quick exercises to help pupils feel confident about using their voices:

- **Volume conductor**

Nervous about pupils making noise? Or making noise yourself? Use your hand (held horizontally) as a volume conductor. Ask the class to hum or ahh together, explaining that the volume increases the higher you

hold your hand. Play around at controlling the group volume. If you have pupils who are less confident, ask them to have a go at being volume conductor – it's surprisingly empowering. You can refer back to this Volume Conductor when practising volume of recitation at a later stage.

- **The copying circle**

Spread the class out into a circle and lead them in a copying game. Make a sound or phrase accompanied by a clear movement for the pupils to copy; be as daft as you like. Then ask the pupils to go round the circle and each make one sound and movement for everybody else to copy. If a pupil can't think of something, they can simply clap a rhythm for others to copy. Even though clapping is wordless, pupils will still benefit from listening and repeating a rhythm, and the pupil leading will benefit from hearing the beat they've created coming back at them.

- **The rhyming circle**

Give the pupils a word that has lots of easy rhymes (such as 'hat'). Going round the circle, each pupil adds a new word that rhymes. The aim is to see how much the class can score before they run out of new rhymes. If, for instance, they find 12 rhyming words for "hat" before getting stuck, you then introduce a new rhyme for the pupil who got stuck to begin again. The class can try and break their own record. You can also play this game with alliterative words instead of rhyming words.

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 This resource was produced by the Poetry Society with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. It is one in a series of four, each addressing different sections of the Primary National Curriculum as announced in 2013 and designed to support teachers in using poetry to teach the new curriculum creatively.

• **Sharing tongue-twisters**

These are a great way for you to introduce the idea of learning poems. These are easy to find online (the British Council's Learn English pages for kids at <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org>) and most of us know one or two anyway. Pupils can take turns trying to get them right, before making an attempt as one group.

Story and movement

The rest of the lesson will focus on a story poem called 'Grumblebum'. Texts of a short opening section and the full poem are included on the handouts overleaf.

Many poems tell a story, and a good way to learn the poem is to first recall the plot of the story. Listen to 'Grumblebum' (available through the Poetry Society's Soundcloud page at: <http://soundcloud.com/poetrysociety/steve-tasane-grumblebum-poem>) and then discuss the way the story unfolds, writing key plot points on the board. Ask the class if they can recall what was said in the poem during any of these plot points. Is there repetition in the poem, and does this help shape its structure?

Listen again to the first section of the poem, this time giving the pupils a copy of the lines. Ask them to picture the person reciting the poem. Is he pulling an angry face? Looking sad? Jumping for joy? Banging a drum? Ask the pupils if they can remember which lines in the poem might lead to the above movements.

Opening ears

Poets write by very carefully choosing which words go where, and remembering them uses the same kind of thinking.

Ask the pupils to find as many onomatopoeic words as they can ('growl', 'bark', 'bangs', etc) and to consider how they might perform these words. Use the verse below to look for examples of alliteration ('wails and weeps') and internal rhyme (a rhyme which is in the body of the verse, not just at the end of the line; here it is found in 'home alone, on his own'):

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He gnashes his teeth, he wails and weeps,
he's home alone, on his own for keeps.
Now Grumblebum's all gloomy and glum –
when counting chums he's not got 1,
so Grumblebum just sucks his thumb –
when playtime comes he has no fun.

Both of the hardest verses to learn in 'Grumblebum', those listing toys and games, contain alliteration and internal rhyme, and this will assist the pupil in remembering why the different games have been placed next to each other.

Watching and sharing

The class can be split into small groups or individuals to perform different part of the poem and then come together for a special performance. It's helpful to have a final showcase in mind – why not share with another class from the same year group, perform in assembly, create a film, or be part of a special event with invited parents. This increases the motivation for performing well, and allows pupils to use acting skills, synchronised movement and facial responses to the words.

If your school has YouTube access, you could show the class this link of pupils performing 'Grumblebum': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSNlleZLaf0>. Discuss the performance in the film. Which bits work best, and why? You may wish to watch this film on your own, prior to the session, to give you further ideas and confidence about using the poem in class.

GRUMBLEBUM

(SECTION 1)

Who never asks nicely, growls and barks?
Whose teeth are as sharp as a great white shark's?
It's Grumblebum, Grumblebum –
Playtime Enemy Number 1!
It's Grumblebum, Grumblebum –
when you hear his thunder – RUN!

If we're enjoying Hide and Seek,
Grumble's beady eye will peek.

If we're in a circle playing Snap,
Grumble's fist bangs down like a trap.

Whose feet can stamp like an elephant's can?
Who hisses and spits like a frying pan?
It's Grumblebum, Grumblebum –
the humpy, grumpy Foe of Fun!
It's Grumblebum, Grumblebum –
when you hear his thunder – RUN!

If we play soccer in the dining hall,
Grumble fouls and flees with the ball.

If we're running a three-legged race,
Stumbling Grumble tries to give chase.

Who's got spare eyes in the back of his head
and batlike ears that are burning red?
It's Grumblebum, Grumblebum –
he's come to pop your bubblegum!
It's Grumblebum, Grumblebum –
when you hear his thunder – RUN!

POET'S TIP

Listen out for words that are fun to sound with our mouths, to pull faces with, or to use our arms and legs. When we remember a poem, if we've learnt a movement as well as the words, it will help us to remember it.

STEVE TASANE

GRUMBLEBUM (FULL POEM)

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Whose teeth are as sharp as a great white shark's?
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Continues overleaf



GRUMBLEBUM ctd

But if he grabs our games and hides our dice,
then Grumble has to pay the price.

There's toys in his cupboard and toys on his shelf,
but Grumble can't play by himself.

He gnashes his teeth, he wails and weeps,
he's home alone, on his own for keeps.
Now Grumblebum's all gloomy and glum –
when counting chums he's not got 1,
so Grumblebum just sucks his thumb –
when playtime comes he has no fun.

But if we offer him a gift,
Grumble's grizzly mood might lift.

If we share our sweets with him,
Grumble might not look so grim,

and if we invite him out to play,
Grumble – well, what does he say?

He shows delight he can't disguise –
no grunts, no growls, no ghastly cries.
"Yes please!" he smiles while he dries his eyes.
"Thank you all – what a nice surprise!"

Then he opens up his cupboardful
of games all weird and wonderful.
Cascading like a waterfall,
he says that we should share them all.

Continues overleaf



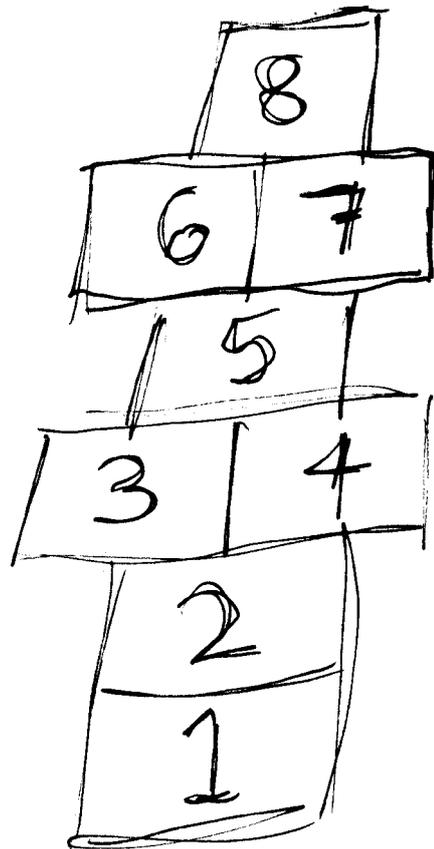
GRUMBLEBUM *ctd*

Water pistols, rubber ducks,
Hula Hoops, puzzle books,
spinning tops, skipping ropes,
stink bombs, powerboats,
plastic snakes, exploding cakes,
Barbie Dolls, roller skates,
tiddlywinks, tambourines,
jumping beans, trampolines!

He never intended to annoy,
just join the gang and jump for joy.
So girls and boys go hip hooray!
Grumble says he loves to play.

Boggle, Bingo, Battleships,
Buckaroo, Pick Up Sticks,
Pass the Parcel, Postman's Knock,
Hopscotch, Beat the Clock,
Grandma's Footsteps, Truth or Dare,
Thumb Wars, Musical Chairs,
Wink Murder, Four in a Row,
Twister, Hangman, Tic Tac Toe!

Grumble used to wear a frown,
but now we've handed him a crown,
so sound the trumpet, bang the drum
for the first official King of Fun!
Bum-Ba, Dum-Ba, Bum-Ba DUM!
Give it up for Grumblebum!



STEVE TASANE