

Poetryclass Fresh ideas for learning from The Poetry Society

Ways of Looking

By Ben Bransfield
Teacher Trailblazer

This lesson plan explores ways of writing unusual list poems, inspired by '6 Ways to Look at The Very Hungry Caterpillar', a commended Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award winner 2015. The activities in this plan could be used in one lesson or spread across a series of lessons to inspire poetry writing in the classroom through individual and group work.

You will need:

- A4 plain paper
- Scissors
- A copy of the nouns helpsheet (page 4 of this resource) per group
- Copies of '6 Ways to Look at The Very Hungry Caterpillar' (page 5 of this resource)



KS3

KS4

KS5

Topics at a glance

- List poems
- Structure
- Metaphor

Getting started

Definition Dreams

This activity works best when students work on their own with the teacher modelling an example on the board as the different stages are completed. You may wish to recap abstract and concrete nouns before starting.

1. Ask students to fold a sheet of paper into quarters, open it back out, and label with the letters TIME, in the same corners as in the diagram below.

E	I
T	M

2. Turn the page over along the vertical edge (so the letters stay the right way up).
3. Write a concrete noun in the top-left quarter.
4. Without including the noun, write its definition in the top-right section, starting '...is'. Ask students to be as precise as they can with definitions and to write more than just a few words.
5. In the bottom-left quarter write an abstract noun and its definition in the bottom-right quarter. You may decide to distribute the helpsheet to students to refer to in helping them choose their words.

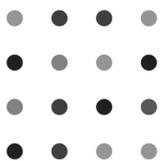


Table	is a support to write on or eat breakfast on. It has four legs and is usually wooden.
Fear	is a very anxious state of not really knowing what will happen next or when.

6. Ask students to cut their pages into quarters and put them with the letters facing up. Each letter should have a word or definition on the back.
7. Spell out 'TIME' on the desk, being careful not to reveal any writing.
8. All turn over 'IT' and read new object definitions to the rest of the class.
9. All turn over 'ME' and read new abstract definitions to the rest of the class.

Turn over 'IT'

Table	is a very anxious state of not really knowing what will happen next or when.
-------	--

Turn over 'ME'

Fear	is a support to write on or eat breakfast on. It has four legs and is usually wooden.
------	---

10. Celebrate and make a note of the most entertaining and imaginative results.

Students can then work in groups to swap and shuffle the cards, coming up with new pairings. As long as each student has the word TIME, turning over IT and ME in pairs, then they will keep throwing up unusual matches.

Discussion point

Your students have made metaphors. How do exciting metaphors make us think differently?



Set short time limits for each step to maintain focus



Ways of Looking

Now ask six students (or in smaller groups) to read aloud Andrew Telford's poem, '6 Ways to Look at the Very Hungry Caterpillar'. For those who don't know, explain that the title refers to a picture

book for very young children. Ask other students to recall the plot – the poem should help.

Discussion points

Why might each of the six 'Ways to Look' seem so different? Do they suggest different voices? Which do you prefer and why? How might a list like this also be a poem?



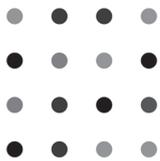
6 Ways to Look at Time

Using 'T' and 'E' cards from the 'Definition Dreams' activity, pick a selection of the class' definitions to create a whole-class poem called '6 Ways to Look at Time'.

Example:

1. Time ... is a very anxious state of not really knowing what will happen next or when.
2. Time ... is a support to write on or eat breakfast on. It has four legs and is usually wooden.
3. Time ...
4. Time ...
5. Time ...
6. Time ...

Pause to explore the ways in which the idea of 'time' is now more thought provoking than it was previously. How did you decide on your six definitions? If the lines are re-ordered, does the poem change?



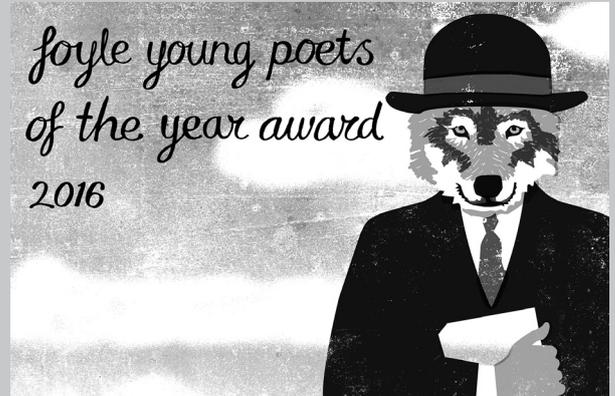
Going Solo

Ask students to lay all their definitions face up on the desk for all to see. They should then think of a subject for their own poem (they may decide to choose a concrete or abstract noun from earlier, or something entirely new).

Students can now create their own '6 Ways to Look at ...' poem by walking round the classroom and writing down five definitions that work best with their chosen title. The sixth definition should be a new creation of their own. They can share these in groups, with the class, or write them up.

Extension activity

For homework or as an extension in class, ask students to write their own '6 Ways to Look at...' poem about a book, film or text being studied in class.



Enter the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award

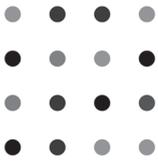
Andrew's poem was commended in the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2015. Now your students are writing their own poetry they can enter the competition themselves.

The Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award is the most prestigious award for writers aged 11-17. It is an annual competition which welcomes poems on any theme and entry is completely free.

Since it began the Award has kick-started the career of some of today's most exciting new voices.

Winners receive a fantastic range of prizes, including publication, mentoring, a residential Arvon writing course, Poetry Society membership and books. The Poetry Society also continues to support winners' development with performance, publication and internship opportunities.

Find out more and enter your students' work at foyleyoungpoets.org



Helpsheet: Nouns

Nouns

Nouns are words used to identify people, places or things.

Concrete nouns

A concrete noun is a noun which can be identified through one of the five senses (taste, touch, sight, hearing, smell).

For example:

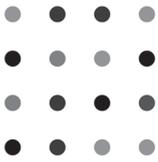
Backbone	Circle	Cake
Clock	Water	Letter
London	Window	Table
Computer	Kiss	Earth
Phone	Mouth	Home

Abstract nouns

An abstract noun is a word that denotes an idea, quality, or state rather than a concrete object.

For example:

Love	Slavery	Agony
Fear	Peace	Honesty
Happiness	Freedom	Danger
Sorrow	Truth	Confusion
Bravery	Jealousy	Fame
Friendship	Hatred	Doubt
Beauty	Justice	Greed
Loneliness	Addiction	
Success	Curiosity	



6 Ways to Look at the Hungry Caterpillar

by Andrew Telford

A commended winner of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2015

1. An educational story about the natural process of a maturing caterpillar.
2. A tragic tale of a teenage caterpillar with a love for food, who becomes obsessed about her appearance, overeats when trying to lose weight, goes into depression and dies but ascends to heaven.
3. The insect world's version of Man vs Food.
4. A thriller about a caterpillar and his race against time to become a butterfly within one week, breaking the previous world record.
5. A children's story that I think about far too much for a seventeen year old.
6. A comedy about a grumpy, jealous little man who finds himself through his love for food and blossoms in later life.