

Express yourself creatively

Workshop 2
June 2026





Early bird activity

Create tiny poems in the [Wayfinder app from the National Film Board](#).

[Web version English](#)

[Web version French](#)

[Apple App](#) (sorry, no Android app)



Links

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jJC5wqbj3QKGdqc7znZMCS91yeTQuVUdtrwINhwpII8/edit?usp=sharing>



Welcome

It is lovely to see you all.

To get us started,

- Share your “homework poem.”
- Or tell us something you read last week that made you happy.

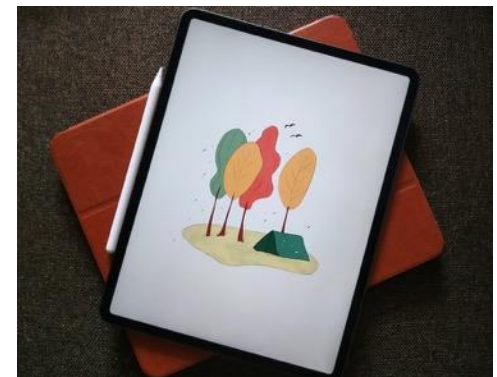
Learn together

Quiet observations and form poems

Today we are going to look at some ways we can create poetry from our own experiences and our own lives.

We are going to look at

- a poem created from an observation and a question;
- how that poem inspired action;
- how images can inspire creativity;
- how form poetry can help us start creating;
- and a little on how to find images that we can use.



Why poetry?

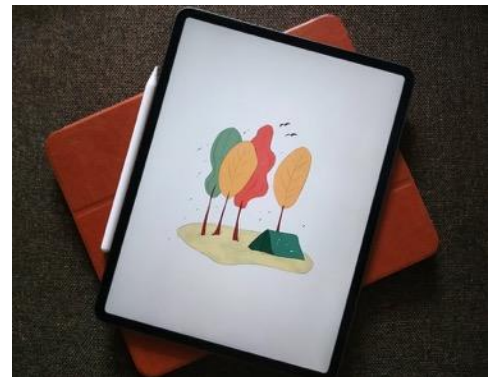
For literacy learners, poetry can be a pathway to creative expression.

In poetry the focus is on feeling, rhythm, creative use of language rather than on grammatical correctness and perfect spelling.

Poetry gives learners a space to develop their writing voice free from some of the constraints of other types of writing.

Great poets know all the rules and can break them to great effect.

To be a learner-poet one can get started with **a quiet observation** and a **feeling** or a **question** about the observation that evokes a feeling.



A quiet observation

One day Gwendolyn Brooks walked by a pool hall in her neighbourhood. She peeked in and saw a group of young people playing pool.



Illustrations are screenshots from a Poetry Foundation [video](#) by Eve Ewing and Nate Marshall.

A question

Instead of asking myself,
“Why aren’t they in school?”

I asked myself,
“I wonder how they feel about
themselves?”





We Real Cool

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The Pool Players.

Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We

Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.



Questions: We Real Cool

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What does this poem make you think about?

- What did the poet observe?
- What did the poet feel?
- What do we feel?

What do you think these pool players will be doing next year?





We Real Cool

Read the poem and listen to Gwendolyn Brooks read the poem here:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetry-magazine/poems/28112/we-real-cool>

Gwendolyn Brooks talks about how she came to write We Real Cool and reads the poem.

<https://youtu.be/oaVfLwZ6jes?si=4KAZD0dR72qzCCPB>

An animated version

<https://youtu.be/0USvSvhue70?si=7f980umJb1lvx4s4>



A favourite poem

What does this poem mean to modern people?

John Ulrich, a student from Boston, talks about why *We Real Cool* is his favourite poem.

The Favourite Poem Project: <https://www.favoritepoem.org/poems/we-real-cool/>



Questions: Favourite Poem

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What did John Ulrich feel?

How does what Gwendolyn Brooks says about her poem relate to what John Ulrich says about why the poem is important to him?

Would you add this poem to your favourite poems list?



Rhythm and metre: We Real Cool



Why does Gwendolyn Brooks break each line after “We” instead of at the end of the sentence?

What do you think of when you hear the poet read the poem?

How does the rhythm and metre of this poem help us picture the scene?

[A description of rhythm and metre in poetry](#) (Creative Writing Now)

['It's Got a Backbeat, You Can't Lose It': The Rhythm of 'We Real Cool'](#)

Rhyme: We Real Cool



Can you find all the rhyming words in the poem?

What is the rhyming pattern in this poem?

How would this poem be different if it was made up of classic rhyming couplets?

[Rhyme Schemes](#) (Creative Writing Now)

[Shared Poetry Reading: Teaching Print Concepts, Rhyme, and Vocabulary](#) (Poetry in Voice)

The link to the example poem doesn't work. You can use this activity instead.

[A Dust of Snow by Robert Frost](#)

Next steps: Quiet Observations

What do you observe in your neighbourhood?

Can you take some pictures?

What do you feel?

What questions do you have?

Try to write a poem in the style of We Real Cool.

(These poems are sometimes called Golden Shovel poems.)

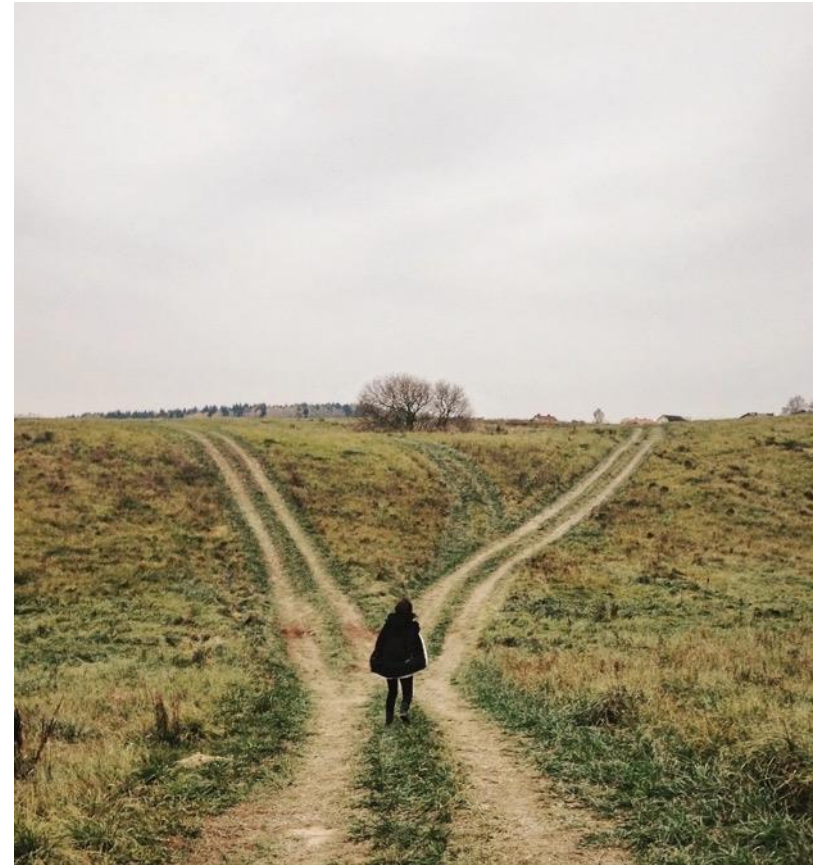


Next steps: Haiku

Trying Haiku is a good way to write about quiet observations that evoke a feeling or a question.

Learning about Haiku will help learners think about rhythm and metre without having to worry about rhyming words.





Choose a picture

Click a picture to open a larger version

Write a Haiku 1

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What do you see in the picture?

What do you feel when you look at the picture?

What do the creatures in the picture feel?

What is a question you have?

Brainstorm 8 or 10 words for your poem.

Beside each word, write the number of syllables.

Find this activity here:

[Read Write Think
Interactives](#)

You can try it on paper, [slides](#) or go to the interactive for a guided approach.

[Copy slides](#)

Write a Haiku 2

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Start combining the words into lines for your poem.

Haiku has 3 lines and a specific number of syllables in each line.

Line 1 = 5 syllables

Line 2 = 7 syllables

Line 3 = 5 syllables

Write your lines and then check to see how many syllables each line has.

Play with your words until your poem fits the pattern. You can add words that are not on your list.

Line 1: _____ / 5 syllables

Line 2: _____ / 7 syllables

Line 1: _____ / 5 syllables



Find this activity here:

[Read Write Think Interactives](#)

You can try it on paper, [slides](#) or go to the interactive for a guided approach.

[Copy slides](#)

Tracey wrote a Haiku

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waves 1
crashing 2
memories 3
forever 3
laughing 2
carefree 2
friends 1
sublime 1



Line 1: Waves crash in and over

5 / 5 syllables

Line 2: Friends laugh, forever carefree

7 / 7 syllables

Line 1: Sublime memories

5 / 5 syllables

What it looked like at RWT Interactives

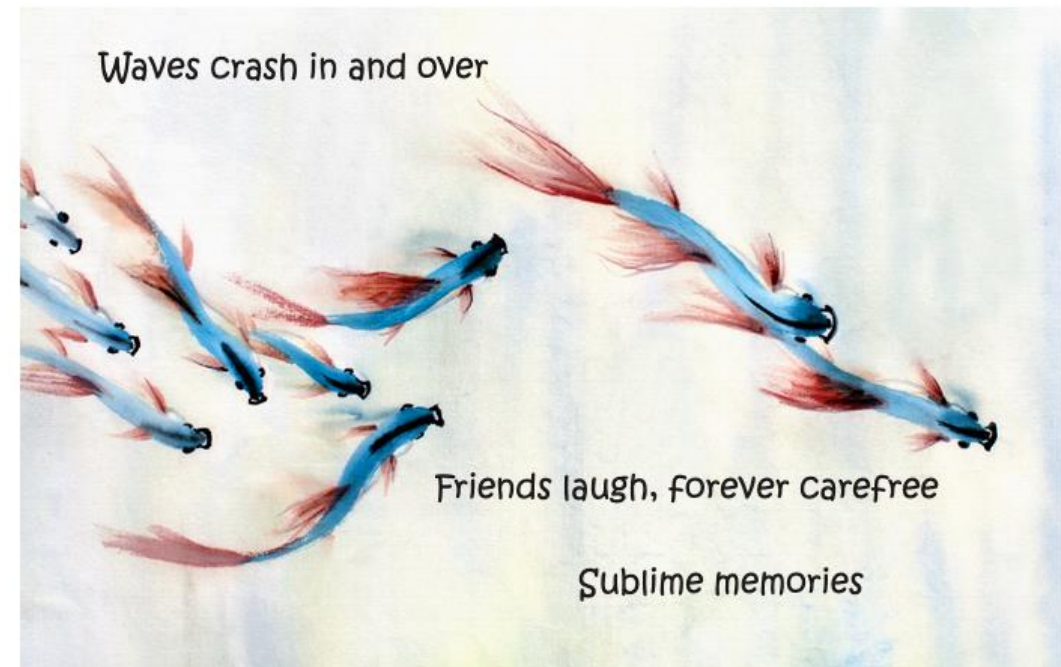
words:	syllables:	words:	syllables:
waves	1	memories	3
crashing	2	forever	3
laughing	2	carefree	2
friends	1	sublime	2

title:		brainstorm words:
		waves
		memories
		crashing
		forever
		laughing
		carefree
		friends
		sublime

poem:	syllables:
1. Waves crash in and over	5 /5
2. Friends laugh, forever care	7 /7
3. Sublime memories	5 /5



[Read Write Think Interactives](#)



Haiku lesson background

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To write Haiku, learners need to know how to count syllables.

(They do not need to know all the different types of syllables).

If learners don't know how to count syllables, here are some online tools to help:

- [Syllable counter](#)
- [How many syllables](#)

And if you want to teach learners how to count syllables:

- [Counting syllable lesson](#) (BBC – a simple counting syllables lesson)
- [Syllables lesson plans](#) (LINCS – a more complex and detailed lesson)



Haiku lesson plans and activities

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A lesson plan

- [Poetry Snapshots: Using Images to Get the Big Idea](#) (Poetry In Voice)

Another lesson plan

- [How to Write a Haiku Poem, with Haiku Examples](#) (Creative Writing Now)

An activity

- [Read Write Think Interactives](#)

A haiku template

- [Poetry templates](#)

Some learner examples

- [Haiku Poems](#) (The Westcoast Reader)



Images to inspire Haiku

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You can pair

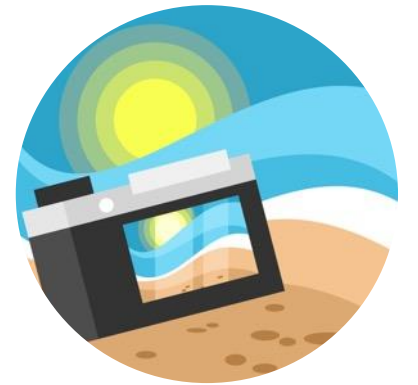
Poetry Snapshots: Using Images to Get the Big Idea (Poetry In Voice)

with

145 Picture Prompts to Inspire Student Writing

We used

- In the Waves
- Two Roads
- Up in a Tree
- Little Red House
- Around the Fire





More form poems

Form poems

Form poems can be a good way to scaffold poetry writing.
Haiku are form poems.

Another example of form poems are **Acrostic** poems.

POEMS

Pictures painted with words

Observations quietly explore the human condition

Emotions and thoughts, woven in composition

Music and meter, rhythm and rhyme; poems

Sing like birds



Acrostic poems



A lesson plan

[Building Classroom Community through the
Exploration of Acrostic Poetry](#)

(Poetry in Voice)

An acrostic template:

[Poetry templates](#)

An activity

[Read Write Think Interactives](#)

Some famous (fancy)
Acrostic poems

[10 of the Best Examples
of Acrostic Poems
Everyone Should Read](#)

Diamante poems



A lesson plan

- [Slipping, Sliding, Tumbling: Reinforcing Cause and Effect through Diamante Poems](#)

(Poetry in Voice)

An activity

- [Read Think Write Interactives](#)

A diamante template

- [Poetry templates](#)

Learner-poet examples

- [Diamond Poems](#) (The Westcoast Reader)

Spring
 Green, beautiful
 Planting, seeding, budding
 Flower, bud, leaves, mountains
 Harvesting, raining, falling
 Red, windy
 Fall



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Other places to find images

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When using copyrighted materials

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- [Fair Dealing Decision Tool](#)

Helps teachers decide how fair dealing applies to various types of published work

- [Copyright questions and answers for teachers](#)



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— creativecommons.org

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1)



4)



2)



5)



3)



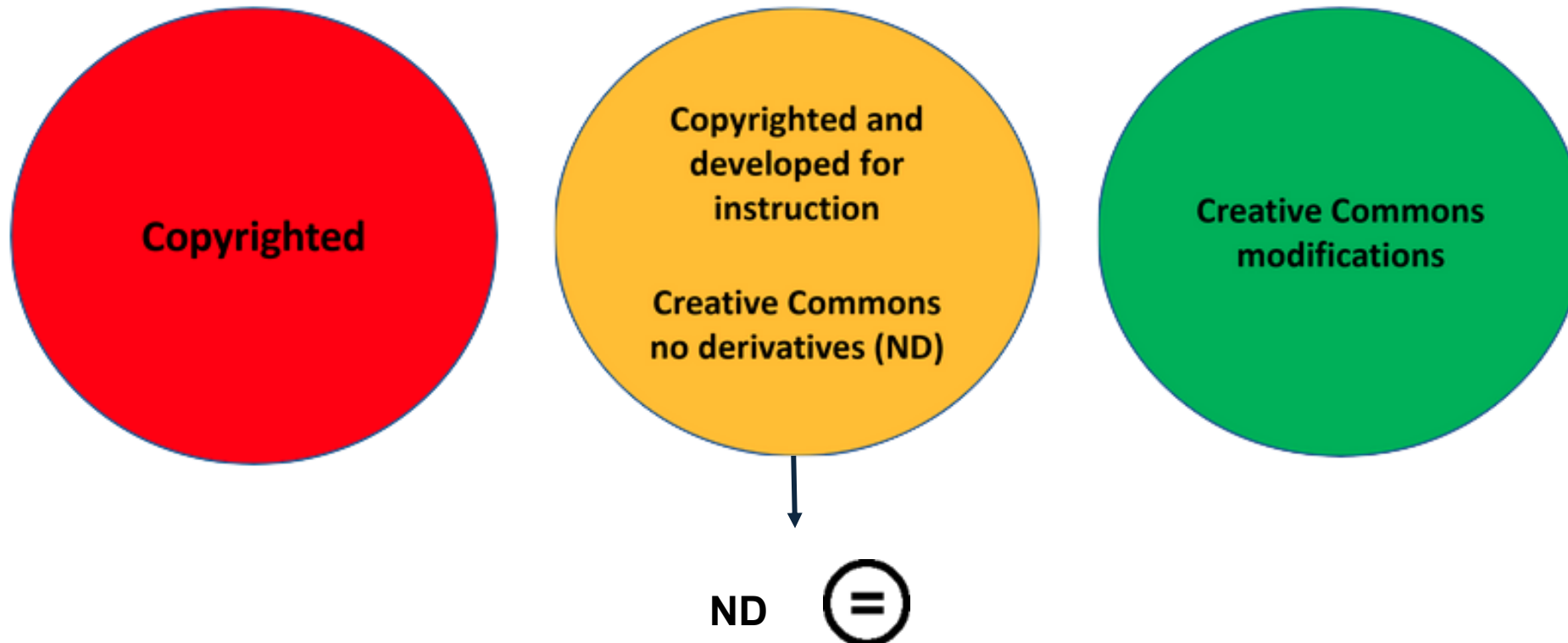
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There are 3 categories of licence in the AlphaPlus OER collection.

oercollection.alphaplus.ca/about



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No derivatives example

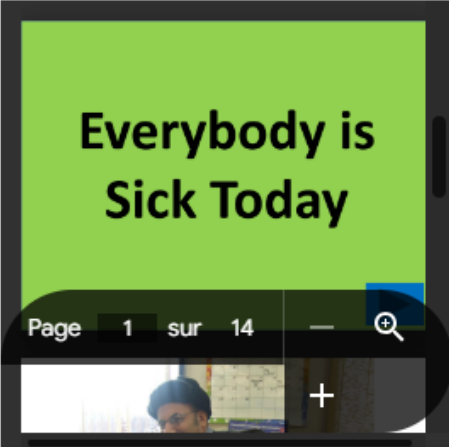
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The screenshot shows a digital interface with a green background and the text "Everybody is Sick Today" in bold black font. Below the text, there is a navigation bar with "Page 1 sur 14" and a magnifying glass icon. At the bottom, there is a small video thumbnail of a person and a plus sign icon.

This is a completed example of a digital language experience story that accompanies the slide presentation from Bow Valley College.

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Level - Beginner

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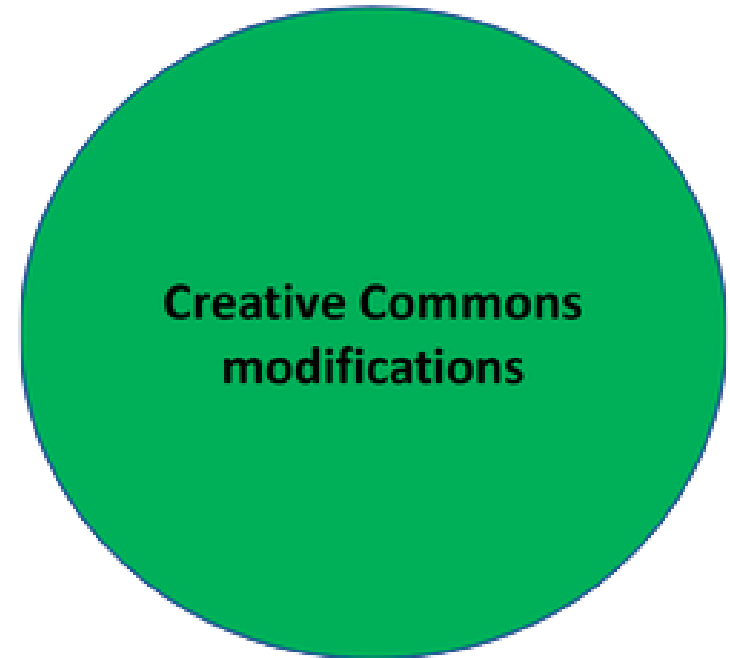
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Modifiable OER

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- ✓ Reading instruction workbooks and modules
- ✓ General knowledge content
- ✓ Literacy development supports
- ✓ Writing instruction
- ✓ Mathematics and numeracy
- ✓ Foundational digital skills and knowledge
- ✓ Job preparation and hiring
- Test and exam preparation





Resources

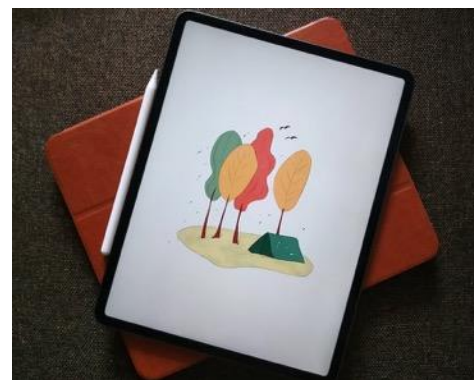
OER in this workshop – Teaching Writing

[Creative Writing Now](#)

Creative Writing Now was founded by writing teachers in 2009. You can find resources and activities for writing poetry and fiction.

* [Poetry in Voice Lesson Plans](#)

Poetry in Voice/Les voix de la poésie is a “registered charity that wants all Canadians to speak poetry.” They “provide educators with engaging content and experiences, in English and French, to inspire their students to read, recite, and write poetry.” To see the [lesson plans](#) you need to make a teacher account. (I made one and it is fine – no spam so far.)



OER in this workshop – Experiencing Writing

* [Favourite poem project](#)

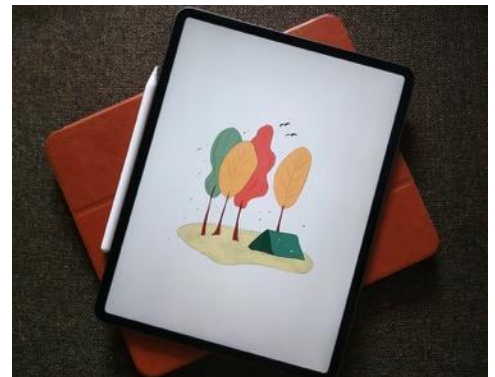
A video collection of people reading poems they love. It's designed to break down barriers and misconceptions about the inaccessibility of poetry. The project also includes [classroom resources](#) for teachers.

[The Westcoast Reader](#)

A collection of writing for and sometimes by adult literacy learners. Some entries come with audio support and some have activities.

[Poetry in Voice Videos](#)

Poetry in Voice/Les voix de la poésie holds poetry events for high school students and have a [bank of videos](#) where you can hear poems.



OER in this workshop – Prompts and Templates

* [Poetry templates](#)

An open source collection of templates for different types of poems. All files can be saved, modified and shared. A [Poetry Analysis](#) activity is also available.

* [145 Picture Prompts to Inspire Student Writing](#)

[Lesson ideas](#)

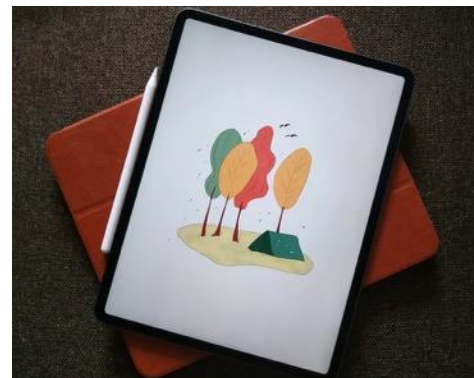
Images, prompts and lesson ideas from the New York Times.

[Read Write Think Interactives](#)

Interactive tools for learning about language from [Read Write Think](#).

[Creative Writing Now Poetry Prompts](#)

[Creative Writing Now Story Starters](#)



Next

Homework 😊

Choose one and share with us next week

- [Write a poem about a question](#) inspired by a walk in your neighbourhood
- [Write a Golden Shovel poem](#)
- [Write a haiku](#) based on a photo you took or one you like
- [Write an acrostic poem](#) about your favourite season (or something else)
- [Write a diamante poem](#) about a question with two sides
- Try an activity with learners and let us know how it went
- Bring one of your favourite poems to share

Week 3:

Places to experience poems

Image credits



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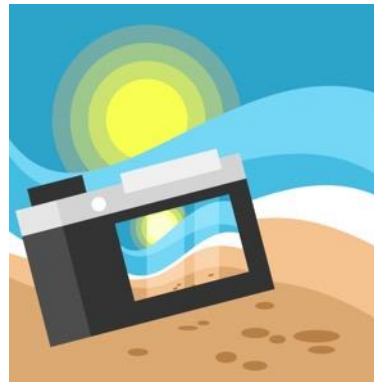


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Thank you

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