

## Six steps to expanding your knowledge of children's books

1. Make a habit of reading or borrowing a children's book every time you visit your college library or local public library. Children's books are a pleasure to read - you'll soon build up a list of your own favourites.
2. Read reviews of new books for children in newspapers such as the *Times*, the *Saturday Guardian* and the *Sunday Times*. These reviews are also available online.
3. Go to your local bookshop and ask for advice from the person in charge of children's books. Booksellers love to talk about great books: use their knowledge to build your own.
4. Ask others to tell you about their favourite books for children. Speak to children, parents, your course tutor, college librarian and other students. Keep a note of their suggestions.
5. Visit [www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk](http://www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk) to find independently recommended books for children as well as author interviews and special book features. This user-friendly database of books for children is searchable by theme, genre and age range.★
6. Visit [www.writeaway.org.uk](http://www.writeaway.org.uk) to follow themed discussions about children's books and to find out about conferences and seminars on children's books and reading.

## Finding the best new books for children

Every year the best new books for children are awarded prizes. A small number of books make it on to the shortlist before the winning book is selected. These shortlists make great reading lists.

### Booktrust Early Years Awards ★

This prize will be of particular interest to those focusing on early years and foundation stage. Categories include:

- The best book for babies under one year old
- The best picture book for children under five
- The best emerging illustrator of a book

[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

### Roald Dahl Funny Prize ★

This prize celebrates the books that make children laugh. It has two different age categories:

- The funniest books for children aged six and under
- The funniest books for children aged seven to fourteen

These books can be particularly effective in capturing the interest of boys and reluctant readers.

[www.roalddahlprize.org](http://www.roalddahlprize.org)

### Blue Peter Book Awards ★

These awards recognize children's books in three different categories:

- Best book with facts
- Most fun story with pictures
- Best book I couldn't put down

[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

### Kate Greenaway Medal

This award is for outstanding illustration in books for children. The age range is fairly open, but winning books tend to be picture books for younger children.

[www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk](http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk)

### Carnegie Medal

The Carnegie Medal is awarded annually to the most outstanding book for children. Again, the age range is open, but winning books tend to be challenging texts for young people.

[www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk](http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk)

### Red House Children's Book Awards

These awards are judged entirely by children and include the following categories:

- Best book for younger children
- Best book for younger readers
- Best book for older readers

[www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk](http://www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk)

### Booktrust Teenage Prize ★

This prize celebrates the best new books for teenagers. Its shortlist is often challenging and always varied.

[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

*"A reluctant reader is a child who hasn't yet found the right book."*

Lucy Bakewell, School Librarian of the Year (2009)

## Events and activities that promote books

### Children's Book Week ★

This national celebration of reading for pleasure is held in the first full week of October each year. The website and related free resources feature:

- quick and easy reading activities and games for schools
- ideas for book-themed events, assemblies and displays

[www.childrensbookweek.org.uk](http://www.childrensbookweek.org.uk)

### World Book Day

This annual event is held in March and schools can register to receive free book tokens for pupils.

[www.worldbookday.com](http://www.worldbookday.com)

### Literary festivals

Dozens of literary festivals are held around the country every year and many include talks by authors of children's books as well as events for children and school groups. Visit the Everybody Writes website to find a festival near you.

[www.everybodywrites.org.uk](http://www.everybodywrites.org.uk)

### The Children's Laureate ★

The Children's Laureate is an honorary role which is awarded to a different children's author, illustrator or poet every two years. The role of the Children's Laureate is to champion children's books and reading. Each Laureate has his or her own special area of interest. Visit the website for:

- resources for teachers
- Laureate news and events

[www.childrenslaureate.org.uk](http://www.childrenslaureate.org.uk)

### National programmes to give free books to children ★

Did you know that there are national programmes giving children at the transition into primary and secondary school their own books to keep?

Booktime gives free books to Reception pupils and Booked Up gives a free book to Year 7 students. Both programmes provide targeted provision for children with additional needs and a range of free resources and guidance materials for teachers.

[www.booktime.org.uk](http://www.booktime.org.uk)

[www.bookedup.org.uk](http://www.bookedup.org.uk)

# Learning about children's books and poetry

## Tips and resources for trainee teachers



*"You may be the person who switches a child on to reading - that's incredibly powerful."*

Liz Chamberlain, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Winchester



## Learning to love poetry

If you are already an enthusiast, you'll know how much fun you can have with poetry. But if you have found poetry a little bit daunting, there are lots of resources out there to help you find your way.

### Some recommended poetry books

There are many collections for you to enjoy, but to get you started here are ten poetry books for primary age children:

1. Michael Rosen's *A to Z* by Michael Rosen
  2. *New and Collected Poems for Children* by Carol Ann Duffy
  3. *Revolting Rhymes* by Roald Dahl
  4. *Collected Poems* by Allan Ahlberg
  5. *J is for Jamaica* by Benjamin Zephaniah
  6. *Cloud Busting* by Malorie Blackman
  7. *Sensational! Poems Inspired by the Five Senses* by Roger McGough (Ed.)
  8. *Collected Poems for Children* by Ted Hughes
  9. *Red Cherry Red* by Jackie Kay
  10. *Heartbeat* by Sharon Creech
- [www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk](http://www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk)

### Tips for teaching poetry ✨

This website from children's poet Michael Rosen will help you to build up your confidence in teaching poetry. It features a wealth of ideas on how to encourage children to really enjoy poetry and includes:

- Film clips of simple tips to make your classroom poetry-friendly
  - Free, downloadable poetry activity sheets
  - A poetry discussion forum for teachers
  - Links to poetry articles and resources
- [www.poetryfriendlyclassroom.org.uk](http://www.poetryfriendlyclassroom.org.uk)

### Running interesting writing projects ✨

Everybody Writes provides teachers with inspiring ideas and practical resources to get children excited about writing. Visit the website to find over a hundred model writing projects and CPD opportunities. Trainee teachers are invited to join the network and receive free printed resources.

[www.everybodywrites.org.uk](http://www.everybodywrites.org.uk)

### A message from Michael Rosen

*"If we are serious about literacy, then poetry should be seen as one of the most important parts of the process. When children hear it, they are hearing feelings, thoughts and ideas coming at them with, through and as a result of how the language can sound. When they read it, they are helped by the echoing effects of rhyme, rhythm and musical sounds. When they write it, they get a chance to play with language, and discover that they can control language instead of being controlled by it. And when they perform and publish their poems they get a chance to be real authors and discover what 'audience' means and how it affects what we write.*

*All this is why it's vital that teachers of all kinds, but especially newcomers to the profession get access to a range of poets and poetry so that they can make their classrooms full of the richness of poetic thought and language."*

### Poetry Society

This charity is dedicated to the study, use and enjoyment of poetry. It offers resources to support students and teachers.

[www.poetrysociety.org.uk](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk)

### Perform a Poem ✨

This e-safe poetry performance website is packed with resources to help teachers and pupils to write, choose, perform, film, edit and upload poetry videos.

[www.performapoem.lgfl.org.uk](http://www.performapoem.lgfl.org.uk)

### National Poetry Day

Held in October each year, this special day provides a national focus for the celebration of poetry in all its forms. The website offers free poetry resources.

[www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk](http://www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk)

## Useful contacts

### Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE)

Classroom-based research, training and publications.  
[www.clpe.co.uk](http://www.clpe.co.uk)

### Children's Poetry Bookshelf

This part of the Poetry Book Society is dedicated to children's poetry.

[www.childrenspetrybookshelf.co.uk](http://www.childrenspetrybookshelf.co.uk)

### National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE)

National directory of writers who work in schools.  
[www.nawe.co.uk](http://www.nawe.co.uk)

### National Literacy Trust

Building whole-school reading communities.  
[www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk)

### Poetry Society

Taking the fear out of teaching poetry with Poetryclass.  
[www.poetrysociety.org.uk](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk)

### School Library Association

Produces guidelines and book lists for school libraries.  
[www.sla.org.uk](http://www.sla.org.uk)

### The Reading Agency

Promotes reading through public libraries.  
[www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

### United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA)

Promotes good practice in literacy and language teaching.

[www.ukla.org](http://www.ukla.org)

### Write Away

Online children's books resource for teachers and students.

[www.writeaway.org.uk](http://www.writeaway.org.uk)

**booktrust**  
Inspiring a love of books

Dedicated to encouraging people to enjoy books and reading. Booktrust:

- Runs national programmes to give free books to children
  - Manages prizes for the best new books for adults and children
  - Recommends books and offers advice on reading
  - Runs national projects to support reading and writing in schools
- [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

**Booktrust** is an independent charity dedicated to encouraging people of all ages and cultures to engage with books. The written word underpins all our activity and enables us to fulfil our vision of inspiring a lifelong love of books for all.

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