

# Poetry Sort

This activity encourages children to read poems together and make judgements about them. This was an issue we worked together on at the NATE conference in February 2002. We have been trying this out in class and have subsequently come up with a set of sorting boards (some easier than others) which different groups in the class could use with the same set of poems and then feed back to each other. We would also welcome more short poems that you would like us to include, and we hope to start including poems in other languages. If you send us poems please mention if they are in anthologies and let us have the title, name and ISBNs of any anthologies you have found good to use. We'd like to promote them especially if they have been produced by small independent publishers. If this activity really succeeds then all the class will be reading and talking about anthologies and the cards become superfluous! This activity has used many poems from the Oxford University Press 'Short Poems' collected by Michael Harrison ISBN 0-19-276253-2. It is an excellent anthology and at £4.99 well worth having enough copies for groups to read.

Our second activity online is a connect four game, which encourages collaborative browsing through anthologies. Some colleagues have preferred using the smaller cards from this activity for the sorting, but that is up to you.

The webaddress for this activity is:

<<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/poetrysort.pdf>>

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The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project publishes a catalogue of activities plus lists in selected subject areas, and a newsletter available by post or internet: "PAPERCLIP".

\*These activities were influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in mixed classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers opportunities for spoken language and other assessment.

\*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts and move them about physically they help to develop thinking skills.

\*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in mother tongue and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

\*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

\*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

\*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials

# Poetry Sort

## Extra Teachers' Notes

Poems come in different shapes so we have produced poem cards in both wide and tall flavours with spaces for you or your students to add their own.

You might want to make up your own sorting boards on larger sheets of paper.

Many students will enjoy making up their own poem cards to include in the activity. These, of course, can be more elegant and decorative than the ones we have produced on line.

# Poetry Sorting Board 1

Poems which make fun of spelling, words or language.

Poems where very different and surprising things are compared.

Poems where people talk to things or animals.

Poems where things or animals talk and think.

Poems that make your tongue twist.

Poems that tell a story.

# Poetry Sorting Board 2

Poems which give you some advice on how to behave or live.

Poems which make you shiver.

Poems written a long time ago.

Poems which tell a story.

Poems about the seasons.

Nonsense poems.

# Poetry Sorting Board 3

Poems about the weather.

Poems about plants or animals.

Poems which ask a question.

Poems which are difficult to understand.

Scary or creepy poems.

Poems that tell a story.

# Poetry Sorting Board 4

Poems with very unusual words (and some of them aren't even in the dictionary!)

Poems where the same rhyme is used over and over again.

Poems which make you laugh or smile.

Poems written by a poet who has written another poem we know.

Poems that paint a picture.

Poems that give you instructions.

# Poetry Sorting Board 5

Poems which do not rhyme.

Poems about the seasons.

Poems which are conversations.

Poems written by a woman.

Poems that are sad.

Poems with alliteration, assonance or onomatopoeia.

# Poetry Sorting Board 6

Poems that  
paint a picture.

Poems which use  
comparisons.

Poems which are  
a bit rude.

Poems written  
by a man.

Poems translated  
from another  
language.

Poems you could  
skip to.



# Poetry Sorting Board


### **Night Lights**

There is no need to light a night-light  
On a light night like tonight;  
For a night-light's light's a slight light  
When the moonlight's white and bright.

ANON

### **Selling home**

Walking through the house,  
Now empty, echoing, life gone,  
I look into my mother's mirror  
All that is left of her stares back.

MICHAEL RICHARDS

### **The Tin Frog**

I have hopped, when properly wound up, the  
whole length  
Of the hallway; once hopped halfway down the  
stairs, and fell.  
Since then the two halves of my tin have been  
awry; my strength  
Is not quite what it used to be; I do not hop so  
well.

RUSSELL HOBAN

### **The Toaster**

A silver scaled dragon with jaws flaming red  
Sits at my elbow and toasts my bread.  
I hand him fat slices, and then, one by one,  
He hands them back when he sees they are  
done.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH

### **The Blue Room**

The room is blue, the carpet's blue,  
The chairs are blue, the door's blue too.  
A blue bird flew in yesterday,  
I don't know if it's flown away.

RICHARD EDWARDS

### **The Butterfly**

A book of summer is the butterfly;  
The print is small and hard to read,  
The pages ruffle in the wind,  
And when you close them up they die.

JOHN FULLER

### **The Tickle Rhyme**

'Who's that tickling my back?' said the wall.  
'Me,' said a small  
Caterpillar. 'I'm learning  
To crawl.'

IAN SERRAILLIER

### **Nature Poem**

Skylark, what prompts your silver song  
To fountain up and down the sky?

Beetles roast  
With fleas on toast  
And earthworm pie.

ADRIAN MITCHELL

### **Selling Home**

Walking through the house,  
Now empty, echoing, life gone,  
I look into my mother's mirror:  
all that is left of her stares back.

MICHAEL RICHARDS.

### **The Fall-Out**

A quarrel is a pair of scissors  
Scoring points that go too deep,  
And with steel in their cold hearts  
Two people cut each other to shreds.

SANDY BROWNJOHN

### **Others**

'Mother, oh, mother! where shall we hide  
us?  
Other there are in the house beside us -  
Moths and mice and crooked brown  
spiders!'

JAMES REEVES

### **Harlech Castle**

Here, decayed, an old  
Giant's molar. It ground men's  
Bones; their blood its bread.

JOHN CORBEN

### **The Parent**

Children aren't happy with nothing to  
ignore,  
And that's what parents were created for.

OGDEN NASH

### **A Maltese Dog**

He came from Malta; and Eumelus says  
He had no better dog in all his days.  
We called him Bull; he went into the dark,  
Along those roads we cannot hear him bark.

TYMNES  
200BC

### **I Saw Esau**

I saw Esau sawing wood,  
And Esau saw I saw him;  
Though Esau saw I saw him saw,  
Still Esau went on sawing.

ANON

### **Winter Wise**

Walk fast in snow, in frost walk slow,  
And still as you go tread on your toe;  
When frost and snow are both together,  
Sit by the fire and spare shoe leather.

TRADITIONAL

# Poems for sorting

## A Dragonfly

When the heat of summer made drowsy the land,  
A dragonfly came  
And sat on my hand,  
With its blue jointed body,  
And wings like spun glass,  
It lit on my fingers  
As though they were grass.

ELEANOR FARJEON

## If You Should Meet a Crocodile

If you should meet a crocodile,  
Don't take a stick and poke him;  
Ignore the welcome in his smile,  
Be careful not to stroke him.  
For as he sleeps upon the Nile,  
He thinner gets and thinner;  
And when'er you meet a crocodile  
He's ready for his dinner.

ANON

## A Good Queen?

I am good queen Bess.  
I earn the title more or less.  
I walk through all the mud and slosh  
On Walter Raleigh's mackintosh.

ANON

# Poems for sorting

## Fog

The fog comes  
on little cat feet

It sits looking  
over harbour and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

CARL SANDBURG

## On Bonfire Night

On bonfire night  
seeing a wigwam of planks  
being burnt  
and concerned  
about its future  
the nearby fence  
looks tense.

JOHN HEGLEY

## The Radish

The radish is  
the only dish  
that isn't flat  
but spherical.

Eating small  
green peas off it  
could make you quite  
hysterical.

N.M.BODECKER

## Butterfly

Butterfly  
Butterflies  
Butterflown

SIMON FOREST

## At the Land's End

On the beach  
as waves sigh  
two figures stand.  
On the beach  
hand in hand  
three shadows lie.

JOHN FENNIMAN

## In the Eggs

In the eggs  
the chickens say,  
'Don't count  
your foxes  
before  
you're hatched.'

JOHN CORBEN

## Wasps

Wasps in brightly  
Coloured vests,  
Chewing wood,  
To make their nests.  
Wasps like rockets,  
Zooming high,  
Then dropping down  
Where peaches lie.

ANNE RUDDICK

## Three Little Ghosties'es

Three little ghosties'es,  
Sat on three posties'es,  
Eating buttered toasties'es,  
Greasing their fisties'es,  
Up to their wristies'es.  
Weren't they beasties'es!

ANON

## The Sow Came in with the Saddle

The sow came in with the saddle,  
The little pig rocked the cradle,  
The dish jumped up on the table  
To see the pot swallow the ladle.  
The spit that stood behind the  
door  
Threw the pudding stick on the  
floor.  
Odsplut! said the gridiron,  
Can't you agree?  
I'm the head constable  
Bring them to me.

ANON

# Poems for sorting

## Little Pig

Little pig,  
Pillimore,  
Grimithistle,  
Pennywhistle,  
Great big Thumbo,  
Father of them all  
Eye winker,  
Tom thinker,  
Nose smeller,  
Mouth eater,  
Chin chopper,  
Guzzlewopper.

JAN ORMEROD

## Ode to Twelve Chocolate Bars

Oh glorious doz  
That woz.

VALERIE BLOOM

## The Spider

I'm told that the spider  
Has coiled up inside her  
Enough silky material  
To spin an aerial  
One-way track  
to the moon and back.  
Whilst I  
Cannot even catch a fly.

FRANK COLLYMORE