

Poetry is a horse we all can ride
Poetry is a horse with a rhythmical stride
Poetry is a horse with ears that listen
Poetry is a horse that can go the distance
Poetry is a horse with un-blinkered vision
Poetry is a horse
A horse that moves us

Y6 All Saints CEVA Primary School

Poetry is a Horse

An educational resource.

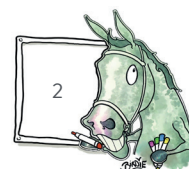
This resource contains notes for teachers with ideas for activities before and after a visit to Place House and two activity booklets which you can download and modify for your pupils. The ideas in these resources came from a project which was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund 'The Palace House Literacy Project'. The project was run by performance poet Justin Coe who worked with years 2, 4 and 6 from All Saints CEVA Primary School in Newmarket and some of the poetry written by the children who took part in the project is included. We have indicated which year group worked on which activity as a guide and generally the Poetry Passport has more activities which may suit KS1 whereas 'Roll up for the Races' has more for KS2 or 3 although you can pick and mix from both to make the best resource for your class.

Booklet 1 - Poetry Passport

Every horse must have an equine passport. It helps to identify an animal by its markings and height. It should be with the horse at all times and can be checked by various authorities including vets and at racecourses. The activities in the Poetry Passport look at how horses are named and how they can be described. You can encourage pupils to write poetry during their visit or ask them to collect ideas in the passport to help them write their poems back at school.

Booklet 2 - Roll up for the Races.

This booklet looks at how poetry can capture some of the excitement of watching horses galloping in a race. It encourages children to look closely at paintings and photographs and listen to commentaries and use these as an inspiration for their writing. Again there are opportunities for them to collect ideas during the visit and finish poems back at school or you can encourage them to create finished poems during the visit.



Introduction

Justin Coe

Whilst I have been compiling this resource, the comedian Frankie Boyle has tweeted “Anytime you see an interesting concept, novel or historical figure trending on twitter it turns out to be a horse that’s won a race.”

As I discovered while working with children and teachers at Palace House, there’s plenty of poetry to be found in horse racing too, and not only in the names of horses, but in the banter from the grandstands and the commentary box, in the sport’s rich history and the art that it has inspired, in jockeys’ anecdotes and a jockey’s kitbag, and not least from the perspective of the horse itself.

This booklet is a resource, primarily aimed at teachers, to help you to inspire and engage your young people with literacy through interaction with the museum, hopefully enabling greater fluency in talking, reading and creative writing. It has been crafted from the experience of working with the children and teachers at All Saints Primary School, using the museum both as a starting point for research and creative inspiration and as a final venue for three wonderful promenade poetry performances.

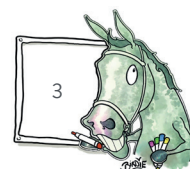
As I am primarily a performance poet, much of the project centred on creating original poetry for publication and recital, but the ideas in this resource could also help to inspire wider literacy activity including story writing and journalism – as well as drama and performance, and have the potential to link across the curriculum to embrace history, science, maths and the visual arts. Although I worked with pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6, many of these exercises should work equally well with much older (and sometimes younger) students.

It was a real honour to work with such an enthusiastic and talented group of teachers and pupils at All Saints and I am delighted to include some examples of the fine work produced by the children. I worked directly with the children for only six days but I am thankful to Anne Jordan and all the class teachers and teaching assistants who were able to consolidate and extend our ideas in between my sessions. We hope that their success and the project’s legacy – the pupils’ poetry and this resource - will inspire your school to use the museum to create your own original horse-powered poetry and stories.

Good Luck!

Justin Coe

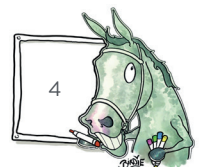
www.justincoe.co.uk



Racehorse rhythm Games

All rhythm related games can remind students of what poetry and horses have in common.

- As an introduction, get everybody to clap four times. After clapping, the first student says “My name is..... (say name, let’s call her Annie). Everybody repeats this as “Your name is Annie”. Clap four times again and move on to the next student in the circle. Get faster, like you are nearing the end of an exciting race, as you move to end of the circle.
- Introduce your horse’s name and use alliteration. “My horse is called Goldilocks and she likes galloping”.
- Everybody stands up. Leader introduces four actions. Leader says “When I say neigh – neigh. When I say snort – snort. When I say Gallop – run on the spot. When I say Jump – Jump.” When the group have mastered this, the leader says “We are going to make this more difficult. Now when I say neigh – snort. When I say snort – neigh. When I say Gallop – jump. When I say snort – neigh.” You can play for fun for a few minutes or as a competition with those who perform the wrong action sitting down until there is a winner.
- The Minister’s Horse. The Minister has lost his cat, but never mind, he now has a horse! All the rules are the same as The Minister’s Cat with everybody sitting in a circle and clapping in rhythm. As you go around the circle each participant has to add an adjective that begins with the different letter of the alphabet, in order of the alphabet. When somebody can’t think of one in time to keep the rhythm, you move on to the next person. So...The Ministers Horse is an angelic horse....The Ministers Horse is a bouncy horse....The Ministers horse is a crazy horse....The Minister’s Horse is a dirty horse....etc. Or alternatively start with the letter A and ask everyone to think of an adjective beginning with A until somebody can’t think of one and move on to the next letter. You might want to leave out some of the more difficult letters like X though!



Rhythm and Rhyme – Horsey Horsey

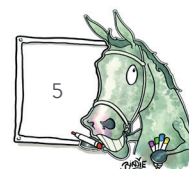
***Horsey, Horsey, don't you stop
Just let your hooves go clippet-clop
Your tail goes swish, your wheels go round
Giddy-up, we're homeward bound***

Reciting this verse together reminds us again of the rhythmic link horses and poetry share.

Looking at the verse you can talk about the use of rhyme and also repetition (“horsey, horsey”), alliteration and onomatopoeia (“clippety-clop”).

Poet Justin Coe worked with some children from Y2 and used this poem’s structure to create their own original verse.

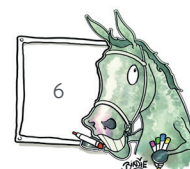
***Horsey, Horsey, at the start
In your stalls to do your part
Your hooves can move, your legs have pace
Giddy up to win the chase***



The Counting Rhyme

Using Justin Coe’s template for the poem, ask your class to come up with different ideas about why the different horses didn’t finish the race. There is an example of a poem created by him and a Y2 class using this template

The Template	This became
<p>10 racehorses 10 racehorses at the starting line One and then there are nine Racehorses at the starting gate One and then there are eight Racehorses. The going here is even One and now there are seven Racehorses about to jump the sticks One and now there are six Racehorses racing for the prize One and now there are five Racehorses racing jaw to jaw One and now there are four Racehorses all galloping on free One and now there are three Racehorses with one jump left to do One and now there are two Racehorses how quickly now they run One and now there is one Racehorse with 100 yards to go And he’s and now there are no Racehorses left for our race-horsing rhyme No racehorses at the finishing line</p>	<p>10 racehorses 10 racehorses at the starting line One slipped on a banana skin and then there are nine Racehorses at the starting gate One was bitten by a snake and then there are eight Racehorses. The going here is even One stopped to dance a jig and now there are seven Racehorses about to jump the sticks One was abducted by aliens and now there are six Racehorses racing for the prize One stopped for a photograph and now there are five Racehorses racing jaw to jaw One went to visit Donald Trump and now there are four Racehorses all galloping on free One was chased by a rabbit and now there are three Racehorses with one jump left to do One was stung by a wasp and now there are two Racehorses how quickly now they run One stopped to see the Queen and now there is one Racehorse with 100 yards to go And he’s sat down for a rest and now there are no Racehorses left for our race-horsing rhyme No racehorses at the finishing line</p> <p><i>All Saints CEVA Primary school Y2 with Justin Coe</i></p>



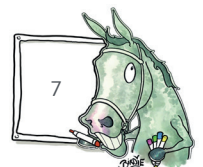
Kenning Poems – The Horse in Norse

The word kenning is derived from the Old Norse phrase kenna eitt við, which means “to express a thing in terms of another”. Kenning poems are usually comprised of a series of two-word phrases separated by a hyphen, describing a concrete noun in more figurative language. Sometimes they contain two nouns, such as “sea-horse” meaning ship, or (and this is easier for children to replicate) with a noun and a verb such as “oat-eater” (one of the phrases children came up with to describe the horse)

The poem below is an example of a kenning poem created by Justin Coe and a Y4 group

Carrot-cruncher
Hay-muncher
Fence-jumper
Hoof-stomper
Apple-eater
Opponent-defeater
Heart-racer
Champion-chaser
Dust-snorter
Race-slaughterer
Jockey-bucker

Introduce the idea to your pupils and ask them to collect ideas for a kenning poem during their visit. Download the page ‘Describing your horse’ from the Poetry Passport to give them space to collect ideas during their visit.



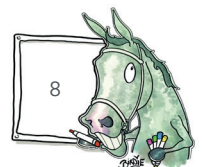
Poetry Is A Horse – Metaphor

The Y6 group were keen to find creative ways of exploring metaphor and below is an activity Justin ran with the group.

We enjoyed a warm up exercise to start with. I gave the young people one sheet of blank A4 paper, divided and cut into quarters. On one of the quarters they wrote a concrete noun (a noun that we can experience through our senses). As we were focussing on horse racing I asked for something to do with horses like “trot” or “hay”. On another sheet they were asked to give their own definition of the word without mentioning the word itself (for instance “it is something akin to a gentle jog” and “it is something that can be eaten by a horse”). On the other two pieces of paper I asked for an abstract noun (for instance “love”) and a definition (for example, “it means total adoration or affection for something”). We collected all the nouns together, abstract and concrete, and all the definitions together in a separate pile and had fun mixing them up by getting somebody to ask the questions “what is a saddle?” or “What is love?” (or whatever the noun was). Then I gave the response from the definitions in random order... “a trot is something that can be eaten by a horse” or “love is akin to a gentle jog”. Usually these random metaphors seem nonsensical, but are often very amusing and surprising and a class exercise will sometimes provide one or two memorable lines that could inspire a whole poem.

After this warm-up, we explored the comparison between poetry and horses and listed ways in which poetry and horses could be linked. This eventually resulted in a really evocative rhyming poem. This was the first and last stanza...

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Reading

As well as being interesting reads in themselves, books like *War Horse* (Michael Morpurgo) and *Black Beauty* (Anna Sewell) can serve as great models of how you can write from a horse's point of view

In *The Poetry Grand National*, **Roger Stevens** has written the perfect horse race commentary poem which helps introduce young people to some poetic styles (such as haiku) and literary techniques (such as metaphor). Available in *The Monster That Ate The Universe* (Macmillan)

Jan Dean's lovely poem *An Apple for Ash*, found in *The Penguin in Lost Property* (also Macmillan) will help young people see how they can turn their first observations and reflections on horses into poetry.

Not a horse poem, but **Rachel Rooney's** *The Language of Cat* (In *The Language of Cat* published by **Frances Lincoln**) can be used as a model to help young people write from the horse's point of view (or even to write about themselves.)

Charles Bukowski is not a poet I would usually recommend for children! But he was a fan of horse racing and he wrote very well about the crowds and the experience of being at races in the U.S. Poems which we got away with reading in the workshops included **No. 6**. Like **Michael Rosen's** poetry, but on theme, this was a good introduction to ways of writing narrative poems using everyday language.

For an introduction into the theme of horse racing and to emphasise the rhythmic link between poetry and horse racing we recited an extract from *The Right Royale*, a classic ballad poem from **John Masefield**. We found the perfect short extract from *Let's Play! Poems About Sports and Games From Around The World* edited by **Debjani Chatterjee and Brian D'Arcy** (Frances Lincoln).

