Emily Dickinson for Upper KS2

Teaching Pack

This pack provides several different resources to teach Emily Dickinson to year 5s and 6s.

It mostly focuses on working through the English National Curriculum for upper KS2[1] (an English curriculum ladder is provided) but also offers some supplementary sessions for PSHE, philosophy, art, maths, and PE.

All the poems used in this pack are taken from Thomas Johnson's *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*[2].

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[1] Department for Education. *The national curriculum in England: Key stages 1 and 2 framework document*. September 2013.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425601/PRIMARY_national_curriculum.pdf. Accessed on 24th April 2020.

[2] Johnson, Thomas H, editor. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Little Brown and Company: Boston, 1960.

Contents

	All can	Most can	Some can
Reading Words	Apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes (morphology and etymology), both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new words that they meet		
	Be able to read new words with growing automaticity	Look up new words in the dictionary and understand their meaning without help*	Discover the meaning of the new word from the context of the text they are reading
Reading Comprehension	Read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks		
	Read books that are structured in different ways and read for a range of purposes	Recognise why books are structured in different ways	Explain the uses of different structures in books and how they benefit the purpose of the text*
	Increase their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions		
	Recommend books they have read to their peers	Give valid reasons for their recommendation	Recommend books using person-specific reasons
	Identify and discuss themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing		
	Make comparisons within and across books		
	Learn a wider range of poetry by heart		
	Prepare poems and plays to read aloud and to perform so that the meaning is clear to an audience*	Use suitable intonation, tone and volume when reading out loud*	Learn their own composition by heart and perform it so that the meaning is clear to an audience*

	Make sense of a book after discussing their understanding and explaining the meaning of words in context	Make sense of a book through discussing their understanding	Lead a discussion on their understanding of a book
	Ask questions to improve their understanding	Ask specific questions using technical language to improve their understanding	Be able to find their own answers for questions they have
	Draw inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions	Justify their inferences with textual evidence	Justify their inferences with contextual evidence
	*Identify how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning	Identify, with evidence, how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning of a specific text	Evaluate how language, structure and presentation are used to construct meaning
	Discuss how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader	Identify different types of figurative language that can be used to impact on the reader	Evaluate the effectiveness of figurative language used to impact on the reader
	Distinguish between facts and opinion	Understand when facts and opinions are appropriate for use	Can distinguish between facts and opinions through independent research
	Retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction		
	Participate in discussions about books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, build on their own and others' ideas and challenge views courteously		
	Explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary	Explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read through formal presentations and debates, with a strict focus on the topic	Explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read through formal presentations and debates, with a strict focus on the topic informed by independent research
	Provide reasoned justifications for their views		
Writing Transcription	*Use dictionaries to check the spelling and meaning of words		

	Use the first three or four letters of a word to check spelling, meaning or both of these in a dictionary		
	Use a thesaurus		
Writing Composition	Plan their writing		
	Draft and write		
	Evaluate and edit		
	Proof-read for spelling and punctuation errors		
	*Perform their own compositions so that meaning is clear	*Use suitable intonation, tone and volume when reading their own poem out loud	*Learn their own composition by heart and perform it so that the meaning is clear to an audience

<u>Emily Dickinson Context</u>

This is mostly a reading comprehension activity, but it also gives relevant historical information about Emily Dickinson that other sessions in this pack draw upon.

Ask the students to read through the information on the handout and answer the questions.

Then their task is to pretend they are teachers and think of some different ways to teach this information to the other members of the class. They can do this in groups if that is more manageable. They should consider how they would convey the information and design an activity that will represent their 'students' understanding of the information.

Emily Dickinson

Learning Objectives:

* Read and understand non-fiction text

** Retrieve key facts from non-fiction text

*** Present information retrieved from non-fiction text in order to teach someone else

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson was born on December 10th, 1830. She was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA. Her father was Edward Dickinson and he was a lawyer. Her mother was Emily Norcross. Emily had one older brother, Austin, and one younger sister, Lavinia. She had a warm relationship with her father but felt that her mother was sometimes cold.

When Emily was 9 years old, she went to school at Amherst Academy. Amherst Academy was originally a boys' school, but they had been open to girls for 2 years when Emily started. Emily spent 7 years at Amherst Academy and was considered very clever and enjoyed going to school. It was at Amherst Academy that Dickinson became fond of flowers and gardening, through her lessons on botany.

In the 1800s, less was known about medicine and disease. This meant that people often died a lot younger than they do nowadays. Emily was very aware of death and often wrote poems that featured death and mourning.

Emily's poems were also inspired by people around her. She wrote poems about her siblings, her mentors, and her friends. Most of her poems were written just for her friends and were sent in letters to them. Particularly she wrote most to her sister-in-law, Sue Gilbert who married Austin. Her poems were also influenced by writers such as William Wordsworth, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Charlotte Bronte, and William Shakespeare.

Between the years 1858 and 1865, Emily wrote her poems up into 40 notebooks. These notebooks had 800 poems in them. It was only after Emily had died, that Lavinia found the poems and published them. During her own lifetime, Emily only saw 10 out of nearly 1800 poems she wrote published. Emily chose to withdraw from society and stay in her room at home. It is not known why she did this, modern researchers believe she was ill. However, the time she spent shut in her room was some of the most productive time in her life.

Emily never got married and stayed in her family home with Lavinia until she died. Emily continued writing throughout her whole life but became more and more withdrawn from society and did not often leave the house. She died in 1886 at the age of 55.

4 years after her death, the first volume of Emily's poems was published and since then her poems have always been in print. Now she is known as one of the most influential American poets to have ever lived.

Read through the information above and answer the following questions.

1. When was Emily Dickinson born?

2. Who were her parents?

3. Did she have any siblings? If so, how many?

4. What was special about Emily attending Amherst Academy?

5. How long did Emily attend Amherst Academy?

6. Did Emily like going to school? What was her favourite lesson?

7. What did Emily often write poems about, and why?

8. Who did she write most to?

9. Name two influences on Emily's poems.

10. How many poems did Emily write in her lifetime?

11. How many poems did Emily write between 1858 and 1865?

12. Why do researchers think Emily stayed in her room?

13. When did Emily get married?

14. How old was Emily when she died?

15. What year did Emily's first volume of poems get published?

Pretend you are a teacher. Plan a lesson and an activity to teach the rest of the class the information you have just learned about Emily Dickinson.

Fact and Opinion

This session is best delivered immediately following the History session about Emily Dickinson (p. 7).

Read the poem aloud to the students and give them time to read through it themselves.

Then as a class, discuss what a fact is and what an opinion is. Ask them how they think Emily Dickinson felt about them, using quotes from the poem to explain.

Have them fill out the table to show the differences between fact and opinion. Following this, have them answer the questions about the statements. Go over the answers with them and correct where any errors are made.

Then ask them to write 5 statements of their own, some being facts, others being opinions, then swap their questions with the person next to them. Let their partners answer the questions and the original student can peer mark them.

Discuss different situations where using fact or opinion would be appropriate and ask them to fill out the table with their own examples.

Fact and Opinion

Learning Objectives:

* Decide whether a statement is a fact or an opinion

** Understand when it is appropriate to use facts or opinions

*** Work out what is a fact or an opinion through independent research

Listen to and read the poem.

1455

Opinion is a flitting thing,

But Truth, outlasts the Sun-

If then we cannot own them both-

Possess the oldest one-

What is the difference between a fact and an opinion?

Fact	Opinion

Read the statements below and decide if they are facts or opinions.

1. Emily Dickinson is an American poet.
2. Emily Dickinson is the best poet ever.
3. Poetry is the only good thing to read.
4. Emily Dickinson was born in 1830.
5. Emily Dickinson had two siblings.

Write 5 facts or opinions of your own about Emily Dickinson and give them to your partner to answer.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In what situations would it be appropriate to give a fact or an opinion?

Fact	Opinion

<u>Understanding New Words</u>

This session introduces the students to the kind of language Dickinson uses and prepares them for the rest of the topic. They will need to utilise this skill often.

Read through poem '41' as a group and get the students to write down what they think the poem is about.

Have them go through the poem again, highlighting any words they do not understand. Working in pairs, the children can attempt to decipher the words based on the poem. Once they have gone through their words as a pair, they can look up what the words mean in the dictionary.

Afterwards discuss if their understanding of the poem has changed based on their new understanding of the words. Get them to give specific examples of changed meaning based on the new words.

As an additional task, students could be given their new words as a homework spelling exercise.

Name: _____

Understanding New Words

Learning Objectives:

* Recognise unfamiliar words

** Look up new words in the dictionary and understand their meaning without help

*** Discover the meaning of the new word from the words around it

41

I robbed the Woods -

The trusting Woods.

The unsuspecting Trees

Brought out their Burs and mosses

My fantasy to please.

I scanned their trinkets curious -

I grasped - I bore away -

What will the solemn Hemlock -

What will the Oak tree say?

What do you think this poem is about?

Highlight any words you do not understand.

Working with the person next to you, discuss what you think the words could mean.

Look the words up in the dictionary and see if you were close.

New word	What you think it might mean	What it does mean

Has your understanding of the poem changed? What do you think the poem is about now?

Feelings, Thoughts and Motives

Read the first poem aloud and give the students chance to read it through themselves. Either discuss what they think about her feelings, thoughts and motives as a class or allow the students to work independently then feedback to the group. You may want to give some recap information regarding Dickinson's life before discussing the final question but allow the students to make assumptions based on their own knowledge.

Do the same with the second poem.

An additional task, or homework, could be for the students to write a poem about something that is happening in their own lives at the time.

This session could also link with the PSHE session on healthy expressions of feeling (p. 49).

Name: _____

Feelings, Thoughts and Motives

Learning Objectives:

* Identify the poet's feelings, thoughts and/or motives in the poem

** Use evidence from the poem to explain your ideas

*** Use evidence from your wider knowledge of Emily Dickinson to explain your ideas

Listen to and read the poem.

<u>33</u>

If recollecting were forgetting,

Then I remember not

And if forgetting, recollecting,

How near I had forgot.

And if to miss, were merry,

And to mourn, were gay,

How very blithe the fingers

That gathered this, Today!

What do you think the poet is thinking about? What evidence is there of this?

What do you think the poet is feeling? What evidence is there of this?

Why do you think the poet wrote this poem? What evidence is there of this?

What could be happening in Emily Dickinson's life to make her write this poem?

Listen to and read the poem.

<u>563</u>

I could not prove the Years had feet-

Yet confident they run

Am I, from symptoms that are past

And Series that are done-

I find my feet have further Goals-

I smile upon the Aims

That felt so ample - Yesterday-

Today's - have vaster claims-

I do not doubt the self I was

Was competent to me-

But something awkward in the fit-

Proves that - outgrown - I see-

What do you think the poet is thinking about? What evidence is there of this?

What do you think the poet is feeling? What evidence is there of this?

Why do you think the poet wrote this poem? What evidence is there of this?

What could be happening in Emily Dickinson's life to make her write this poem?

<u>Poetic Language</u>

This session is a good way to go over figurative language devices that the students should know. It could also be the beginning of a teaching unit on figurative language however Dickinson may be a difficult poet for the students to explore without prior knowledge.

Either way, begin the session by going over language devices, asking students to provide examples of how they are used. Have a group discussion about how language can be used to affect the reader, in terms of how they read the poem, how they decipher meaning and how the poem makes them feel.

Once the students have a good grasp on the language devices, read the poem aloud and then give them chance to read the poem for themselves. Then ask them to pick out the language devices used within the poem. If the students do not have much confidence with this, it can be used as a group exercise.

After the language devices have been identified make sure their meanings are understood by the students. Then get the students to write an explanation of how the language has impacted how they have read and understood the poem.

Push students to evaluate whether Dickinson makes good use of language devices and allow them to make suggestions of any improvements they might feel they could make as an extension task.

Name:_____

Poetic Language

Learning Objectives:

* Discuss how authors uses language to impact the reader

** Identify language devices used by the author to impact the reader

*** Evaluate how well the language devices are used by the author

Listen to and read the poem. Identify where the language devices are in the poem.

Metaphor	Personification	Religious imagery
Rhyming pair	Emotive language	

475

Doom is the House without the Door-

'Tis entered from the Sun-

And then the Ladder's thrown away,

Because Escape - is done-

'Tis varied by the Dream

Of what they do outside-

Where Squirrels play - and Berries die-

And Hemlocks - bow - to God-

Explain how the language devices used impact on you as a reader.

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Do you think the author makes good use of language devices and why?

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Personification

Ask students to explain what personification is.

Read the poem aloud and give the students chance to read the poem to themselves.

Ask the students how they see personification being used in the poem and what effect it has. Ask them about the narrative the poem is trying to create.

Give the students time to write a response explaining and evaluating the use of personification in the poem.

When they have finished this, ask the students to plan, draft and write a short story with a similar theme, i.e. using personification of months.

You can ask students to read out their stories if they want to.

Name:_____

<u>Personification</u>

Listen to and read the poem.

<u>386</u>

Answer July-

Where is the Bee-

Where is the Blush-

Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July-

Where is the Seed-

Where is the Bud-

Where is the May-

Answer Thee - Me-

Nay - said the May-

Show me the Snow-

Show me the Bells-

Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay-

Where be the Maize-

Where be the Haze-

Where be the Bur?

Here - said the Year-

Explain and evaluate how personification is used in the poem. Give evidence from the poem in your answer.

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Plan and write a short story based on this poem.

Poem Structure

This can be a helpful session to recap poem structure or can be a good way to introduce the topic in more depth.

Start the session by discussing different structural aspects of poetry. It is important for students to understand stanzas, rhyme schemes and how punctuation is used in poetry for this specific session.

Once they understand this, read the two poems aloud and then give the students time to read the poems for themselves. Discuss what they think the poems are about and any themes they might have spotted. Ask how the poems made them feel or if it made them think about anything.

The students should then be able to make a list of the key structural similarities and differences between the two poems - length of lines, stanzas, rhyming pattern etc.

Then discuss why they think structure is important and why Dickinson may have used different structures in her poems to convey certain messages.

Name: _____

Poem Structure

Learning objectives:

* Read poems that are structured in different ways and for a range of purposes

** Recognise why poems are structured in different ways

*** Explain why different poems have different structures and how that shapes the purpose

26

It's all I have to bring today-

This, and my heart beside-

This, and my heart, and all the fields-

And all the meadows wide-

Be sure you count - should I forget

Some one the sum could tell-

This, and my heart, and all the Bees

Which In the Clover dwell.

249

Wild Nights - Wild Nights!

Were I with thee

Wild Nights should be

Our luxury

Futile - the Winds-

To a Heart in port -

Done with the Compass -

Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden -

Ah, the Sea!

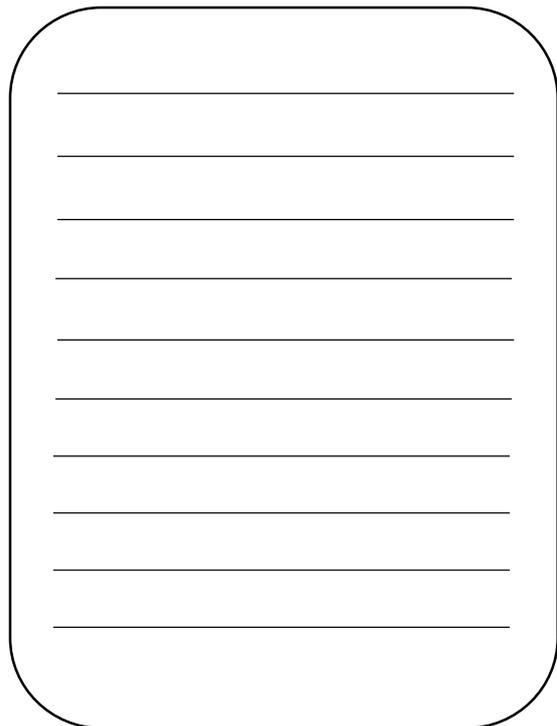Might I but moor - Tonight -

In Thee!

Listen to and read the two poems. What do you think they are about? How do they make you feel?
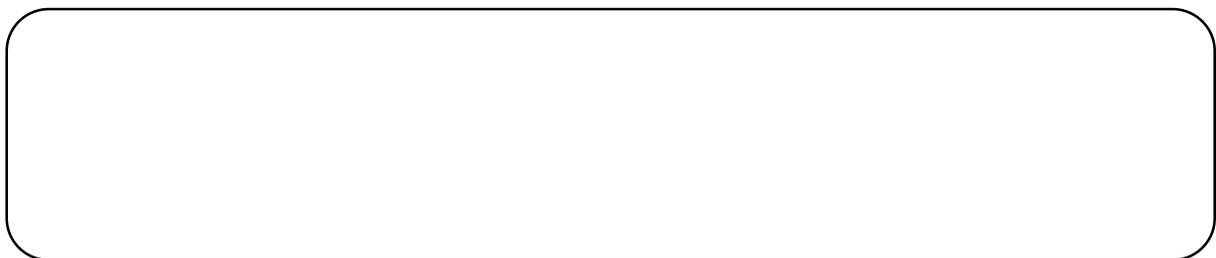
Think about how they are structured.

What are the similarities between them?

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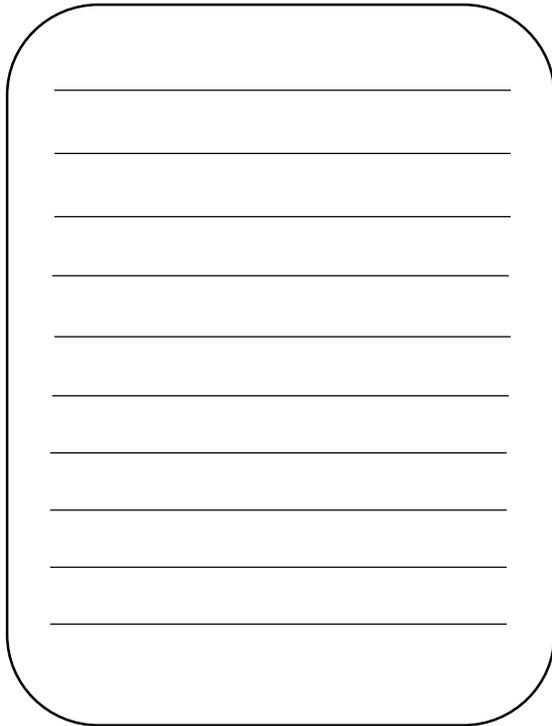
What are the differences between them?

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How does the structure change the way we read the poem?

How does the structure help deliver the message of the poem?

29

Themes in Poetry

This lesson uses the Dickinson poem '585' to explore the concept of themes in poetry.

Start the lesson with a discussion on what kind of themes they think poems should have and get them to name specific poems they have remembered.

Read the poem '585' aloud and spend some time making sure they understand what the poem is about.

As a whole class, or in small groups, discuss what they think the theme of '585' is and get them to pick out places in the poem where this is evident.

Provide each table with different poems with similar themes (animals, nature, etc.). These can be from other poets you have, or will, teach, or not. Get them to write a small essay on the themes of the two poems. Emphasise that they should try and use quotes from the poem to make their points.

As a class discuss if anyone can think of any poems they can remember that also have similar themes.

Now the students will be given the opportunity to write their own poem exploring a similar theme. These can then be performed to the other students and the students can evaluate the themes in each other's poems.

Name: _____

Themes in Poetry

Learning Objectives:	
Reading:	Writing:
* Identify and discuss themes in a poem	* Write your own poem with the same theme
** Make comparisons within and across poems about themes	** Read your poem aloud with good intonation, tone, and volume
*** Compare the theme of this poem to a poem you remember by heart	*** Remember your own poem by heart and perform it

585

I like to see it lap the Miles-

And lick the Valleys up-

And stop to feed itself at Tanks-

And then - *prodigious* step   [impressive]

Around a Pile of Mountains-

And *supercilious* peer   [arrogant]

In Shanties - by the sides of Roads-

And then a Quarry *pare*   [remove the edges]

To fit its Ribs

And crawl between

Complaining all the while

In horrid - hooting stanza -

Then chase itself down Hill-

And neigh like *Boanerges*-   ["sons of thunder"]

Then - punctual as a Star

Stop - docile and *omnipotent*   [unlimited power]

At its own stable door-

Listen to and read the poem.

What do you think the themes are?

Look at the other poems. Choose one and compare the themes of the two poems.

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Can you think of any other poem you know that has a similar theme to 585?

Write your own poem using a similar theme.

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Perform your poem for the class. You can read from your sheet if you prefer to.

<u>Emily Dickinson Presentations</u>

Using the computers, allow students to work independently to create presentations to demonstrate their understanding of one Dickinson poem of their choosing.

The main focus of the presentation should be to explain their own understanding of their poem however some students may want to include other analysis they have found through independent research or include some historical context about Dickinson.

Depending on how much else you have covered on the topic, the students may want to focus their presentations on how structure or language has shaped their understanding of the poem.

Have the students present to the rest of the class, allowing other students to ask questions regarding the presentation.

<u>Recommending Poetry</u>

This should be used at the end of the unit on Dickinson so they can call back upon a wide selection of her poems.

You can either remind them of the poems or if they have been stuck into their exercise books the students can look back through them themselves.

Ask them to choose a poem to recommend. They do not necessarily have to have someone in mind to recommend it to at this point, it can just be one they enjoyed.

Have them fill in the first half of the worksheet, filling in the reasons they would recommend the poem they have chosen.

Explain the second half of the worksheet, asking them to think of someone specific who they believe would enjoy the poem. Emphasise that there should be valid reasons for choosing this person. Have them fill out the rest of the worksheet.

Name:_____

Recommending Poetry

Learning objectives:

* Recommend a poem to someone else

** Give good reasons for recommending the poem

*** Recommend a poem to a specific person, giving good reasons why *they* would enjoy it

Look back at the poems we have read by Emily Dickinson. Write about a poem you would recommend for someone else to read.

Title:_____

Who would you recommend this poem to?

_____

Why would you recommend this poem?

Why do you think they would enjoy this poem?

<u>Fame and Identity</u>

This session can be blended with History elements (Dickinson's publishing history [p. 7]) as well as English elements (exploring motivations within texts [p. 17]).

Begin the session by discussing what the students understand the word famous to mean. Talk about reasons that people can become famous as well as infamous. Discuss how fame can be seen to change a person's identity, ask them to think of specific examples from popular culture.

Ask the students to write a paragraph about whether they would like to be famous, providing reasons for why they would or would not want to be. Ask them to also consider if being famous would change their identity and to explain why they think that.

As a class discuss if there are times or situations where a person would rather not be famous or whether they believe there are certain people who would rather not be famous. Ask them to write an explanation about whether they think everyone wants to be famous.

Read the two Dickinson poems aloud to the class and give them time to read through themselves. Discuss with the students what they think they mean, asking for specific examples from the poems. Then ask them to write a paragraph using evidence about Emily Dickinson's views on fame.

As an extension task you can ask students to write a paragraph about how they think Dickinson would react to her posthumous fame.
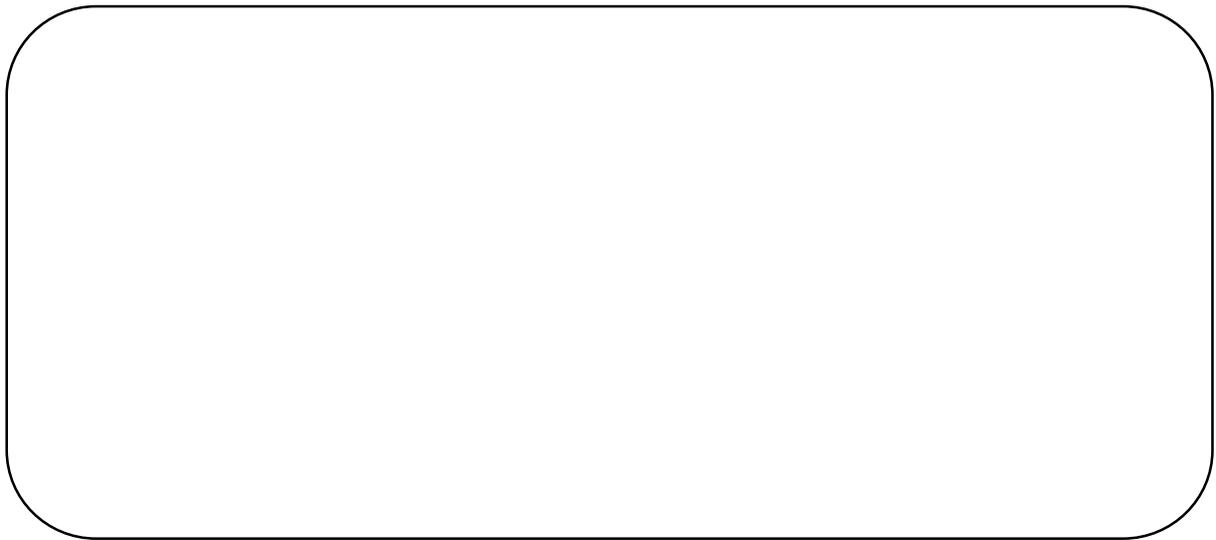
Name:_____

Fame and Identity

Learning Objectives:

* Understand what fame is and how it can change identity

** Understand how fame can be viewed by other people

*** Explain different interpretations of fame and identity

Would you like to be famous? Explain your reasons why.

How do you think being famous would change the person you are?

Do you think everyone wants to be famous? Explain your reasons why.

Listen to and read the two poems.

<u>288</u>

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

Are you - Nobody - Too?

Then there's a pair of us?

Don't tell they'd advertise - you know!

How dreary - to be - Somebody

How public - like a Frog-

To tell one's name - the livelong June-

To an admiring Bog!

<u>1763</u>

Fame is a bee.

It has a song-

It has a sting-

Ah, too, it has a wing.

Do you think Emily Dickinson wanted to be famous? Give evidence for your answer.

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Historical Word Problems

This is a fun way to introduce a history session into your Emily Dickinson topic whilst also working on some mathematical word problems.

The worksheet looks at:

- Subtraction
- Calendar maths
- Fractions
- Multiplication
- Division
- Decimals
- Averages
- Addition
- Money
- Percentages

Whilst also providing historical facts about Emily Dickinson which can be carried forward into a Topic/History session.

Historical Word Problems

Learning Objectives:

* Solve word problems using basic mathematics techniques

** Solve word problems as fractions, and to find averages

*** Solve multi-step word problems

1. Emily Dickinson was born on December 10th, 1830. She died on May 15th, 1886. How old was she when she died?

   a. How old would Emily Dickinson be if she were alive today?

2. Emily Dickinson's father died on June 16th, 1874. How old was Emily when he died?

3. Lavinia Dickinson, Emily's youngest sister, died in 1899. How many years after Emily's death was this?

4. During her lifetime, Emily Dickinson published 10 out of 1800 poems that she wrote. Express this as a fraction in its simplest form.

5. Emily Dickinson's poetry has been in print since 1890. How many years have they been in print now?

   a. If 500 copies have been sold every year they have been in print, how many copies have been sold?

6. Emily Dickinson's largest selection of poetry was made between the years 1858 and 1865. The collection had 800 poems in it. The poems were kept in 40 bundles. How many poems were in each bundle? [ ]

   a. What was the average amount of poems she wrote each year to two decimal points? [ ]

7. In the last 15 years of her life, Emily Dickinson wrote an average of 35 poems a year. How many poems did she write in these 15 years? [ ]

8. Emily Dickinson was known to enjoy gardening. She kept a 66-page book with 424 flowers pressed in it. What was the average amount of flowers on each page to two decimal points? [ ]

9. After Emily's death her remaining family fought over her 800 poems. They were split between her brother, her brother's wife, and her sister. If her brother had 300 poems and her sister had 250 poems, how many poems did her brother's wife have? [ ]

   a. Write how many poems all three people have as fractions in their simplest form. Her brother: [ ]   Her sister: [ ]

   Her brother's wife: [ ]

10. A copy of Emily Dickinson's poems was sold in 2007 for $4800. When it was first published in 1890 it sold for $2. What is the difference in price from 1890 to 2007? [ ]

   a. In percentage, how much has the price increased? [ ]

   b. What is the average price increase each year between 1890 and 2007? [ ]

<u>Drawing from Poems</u>

This session gives the students to explore a creative side to poetry.

Read each line out individually and give students the chance to draw a picture based solely on that line of the poem. Do this for every line of the poem.

Once you have done this, read out the whole poem and give the students chance to read it through for themselves.

Then ask them to draw a picture that shows what they understand the whole poem to mean.

After this, ask the students to consider how the poem makes them feel and ask them to draw a picture that summarises their own experience of the poem.

You can ask students to share these drawings if they feel comfortable to do so.

Name:_____

Drawing from Poems

Learning Objectives:

* Draw a picture based on the words of a poem

** Draw a picture based on the tone of a poem

*** Draw a picture related to your own experience of a poem

Listen to each line of the poem and draw a picture.

Make me a picture of the sun-
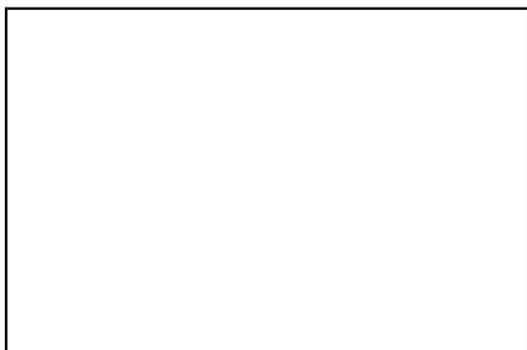
So I can hang it in my room-

And make believe I'm getting warm
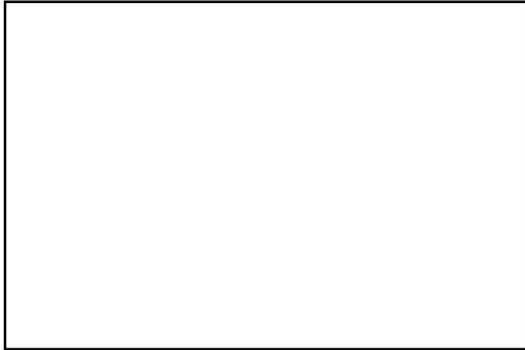
When others call it 'Day'
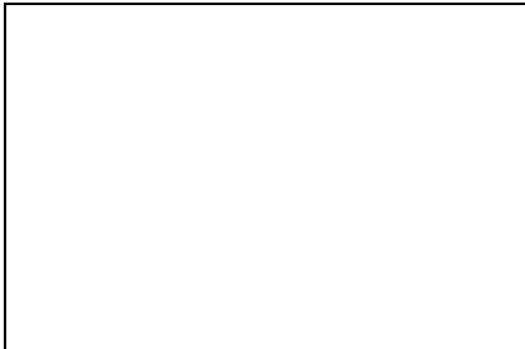
Draw me a Robin - on a stem-

So I am hearing him, I'll dream,
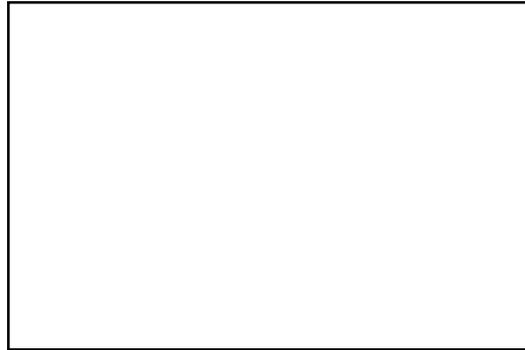
And when the Orchards stop their tune-

Put my pretense - away-

Say if it's really - warm at noon-

Whether it's Buttercups - that 'skim'-

Or Butterflies - that 'bloom'?

Then - skip - the frost - upon the lea-

And skip the Russet - on the tree-
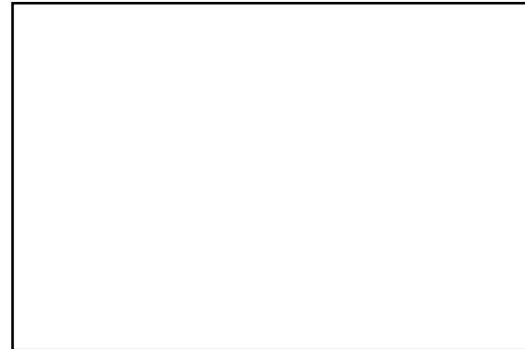
Let's play those - never come!

Listen to and read the whole poem.

<center>188</center>

<center>Make me a picture of the sun-</center>

<center>So I can hang it in my room-</center>

<center>And make believe I'm getting warm</center>

<center>When others call it 'Day'</center>

<center>Draw me a Robin - on a stem-</center>

<center>So I am hearing him, I'll dream,</center>

<center>And when the Orchards stop their tune-</center>

<center>Put my pretense - away-</center>

<center>Say if it's really - warm at noon-</center>

<center>Whether it's Buttercups - that 'skim'-</center>

<center>Or Butterflies - that 'bloom'?</center>

<center>Then - skip - the frost - upon the lea-</center>

<center>And skip the Russet - on the tree-</center>

<center>Let's play those - never come!</center>

Draw a picture that shows what you think the poem is about.

47
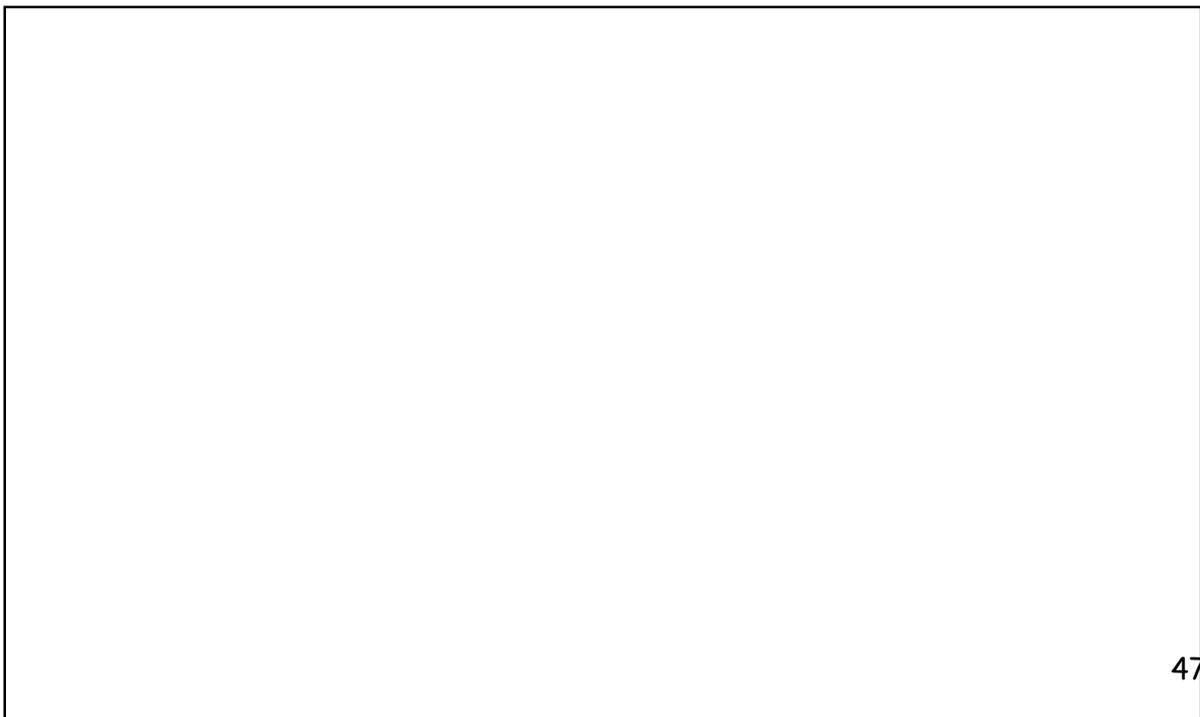
Draw a picture that shows how the poem makes you feel.
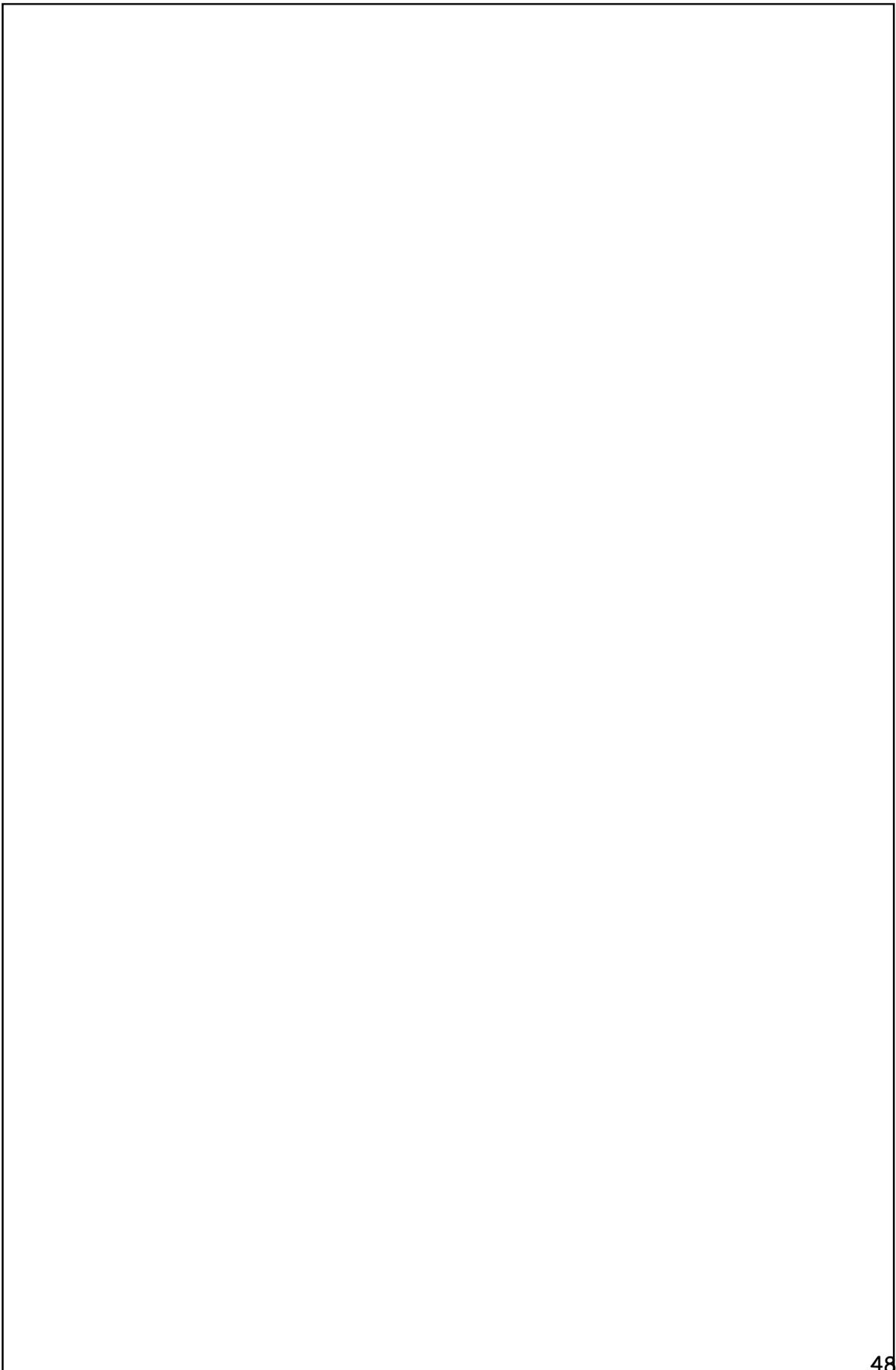
<u>Dealing with Emotions</u>

This can be used as a short PSHE session to discuss with the students the importance of healthy expression of emotions.

This poem:

<div align="center">

<u>189</u>

It's such a little thing to weep-

So short a thing to sigh-

And yet - by Trades - the size of *these*

We men and women die!

</div>

Is a good way of introducing a discussion about emotions without simply expecting the students to be open about their emotions.

Including the poem allows the students to focus on a representation of emotion which they can debate around. It can be particularly good for exploring the extent of emotion as well as how it can potentially be belittled by those around them.

LGBT Relationships

It is frequently argued that Emily Dickinson experienced homoerotic desires for her friend, and her brother's wife, Sue. Therefore, Emily Dickinson can be a good springboard into a discussion about inclusivity and LGBT relationships in wider society.

Depending on the policy/situation within your own school, Dickinson can be used to discuss acceptance and the normalcy of LGBT individuals and relationships.

Particularly this poem:

<div style="text-align:center">

17

Baffled for just a day or two-

Embarrassed - not afraid-

Encounter in my garden

An unexpected Maid.

She beckons, and the woods start-

She nods, and all begin-

Surely, such a country

I was never in!

</div>

Can be used to open a discussion with the students about love and its many forms. Students should be given the opportunity to explore any questions they might have regarding LGBT individuals and relationships.

Philosophical Discussions

Whether you already have some form of philosophy in your teaching schedule or not, this is an excellent exercise to introduce students to discussing abstract ideas. This is a quiet/focusing session that can be used to settle students and allow them to focus on something.

I would recommend having the students in a circle during philosophical discussions as this allows for a better flow of ideas and debates.

Read the poem aloud to the students, if you want you can give them a copy of the poem too, which will allow the students to use quotes from the poem to back up their ideas more easily.

<u>101</u>

Will there really be a 'Morning'?

Is there such a thing as 'Day'?

Could I see it from the mountains

If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like Water lilies?

Has it feathers like a Bird?

Is it brought from famous countries

Of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!

Oh some Wise Man from the skies!

Please tell a little Pilgrim

Where the place called 'Morning' lies!

Allow the students to debate the ideas brought up in the poem or give them a prompt if they are reluctant to speak. Once there is a free-flowing debate, it's best to sit back and let the students follow their own ideas. If needed you can step into referee debates or insert new prompts.

If wanted, this session can be a segway into discussing figurative language in poems (p. 21).

The Meaning of Words

Read the poem aloud to the class.

<div align="center">

1212

A word is dead

When it is said,

Some say.

I say it just

Begins to live

That day.

</div>

Discuss which side of the argument they agree with or if they have an alternate opinion. Ask the class why, as a poet, Emily Dickinson would hold this view. Ask them when they believe words have meaning and how that meaning is supplied.

As an additional task, students could be asked to write a response to this poem, arguing their thoughts about when and how words have meaning. This would be a good exercise in voicing abstract ideas in writing.

<u>What is Nature?</u>

Read the poem aloud to the students and discuss what they think nature is, asking for evidence to back up their points. You could lead the discussion to include differently abled people, specifically the blind and deaf, who would be excluded from nature according to this poem. Ask the students how they feel about this.

<div align="center">

<u>668</u>

"Nature" is what we see-

The Hill - the Afternoon-

Squirrel - Eclipse - the Bumble bee-

Nay - Nature is Heaven-

Nature is what we hear-

The Bobolink - the Sea-

Thunder - the Cricket-

Nay - Nature is Harmony-

Nature is what we know-

Yet have no art to say-

So impotent Out Wisdom is

To her Simplicity.

</div>

Cat Chase - Movement

This can be used as a whole session of movement PE or elements can be taken out and used as warm up exercises.

Read the poem aloud at the beginning of the session. It could be read out whilst the children are doing quiet stretches.

<u>507</u>

She sights a Bird - she chuckles-

She flattens - then she crawls-

She runs without the look of feet-

Her eyes increase to Balls-

Her Jaws stir - twitching - hungry-

Her Teeth can hardly stand-

She leaps, but Robin leaped the first-

Ah, Pussy, of the Sand,

The Hopes so juicy ripening-

You almost bathed your Tongue-

When Bliss disclosed a hundred Toes-

And fled with every one-

Catch the Bird:

One person is the 'cat' and has to catch (tig) the 'birds'. Once the 'bird' has been caught, they become a 'cat' and have to catch the remaining 'birds' until one 'bird' is left, or everyone has become a 'cat'.

Prowl and Fly:

Set the students off jogging around the space. When you shout 'Cat', the students must prowl on the floor then return to jogging. When you shout 'Bird', the students must jump in the air and flap their arms like wings then return to jogging. You can add in other commands to make it more complicated.

Cat and Bird:

Separate the students into pairs. One is the 'cat', the other is the 'bird'. Give each pair a handout of the poem. Have them work through the actions in the poem and work out what positions the cat and bird could be in. Swap the roles over and ask them to come up with a second scenario.

Escape:

Split the class in half. One half are the 'cats', the other are the 'birds'. Ask the 'cats' to form a circle with the 'birds' in the middle. The 'birds' must try and escape the ring. To make it more difficult have the 'cats' join hands and/or spin in a circle.

Cat or Bird:

Designate one side of the room to the 'Cat' and one side of the room to the 'Bird', you could set out something to remind the students which side is which, e.g. coloured cones or signs.

Shout out a statement that can be applied to a cat or a bird.

For example:

"This animal has wings"

"This animal has four legs"

"This animal has feathers"

And ask the students to run to the area that corresponds to the correct area. If they go to the incorrect area they are out.

Ask increasingly difficult questions or questions that can apply to both animals in order to challenge the students.

Freeze Frame:

Split the students into groups of three. One is the 'cat', one is the 'bird' and the third is the 'director'. Using the poem handouts, have the 'director' position the 'cat' and the 'bird' into a freeze frame of one moment in the poem.

Give them chance to practise this in their groups, then take it in turns for each group to show their freeze frame to the rest of the class. The class must guess which moment they are trying to represent.

Swap the positions round until everyone has done each position.

Stretches:

Lead the class in stretches at the beginning/end of the session. Use stretches that can be reminiscent of cats and birds to tie it in to the lesson.