

'Family Tree' Lesson Guide

Building Blocks

Children will have read some nursery rhymes and poetry before and are therefore likely to associate poems with rhyme. In KS1 classes they will have discussed their family members and what their role is, as well as what each family member means to them. This poem builds on the importance of family and having people around you that you trust and love and as a result has a PDMU perspective as well as a literacy based one. In particular, it focuses on childhood innocence and memories which are typically associated with childhood, making it relevant to the target audience.

Prior learning before encountering this poem may include:

- Watching videos about poetry e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vSYNa2UNH4>;
- Reading other poems: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poems/children/>;
- Visiting poetry based websites such as: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/children>

It is useful to have a bank of other poems from websites such as the one above: KS2 children will be able to analyse and compare between them, looking for similarities or new techniques.

Key aspects of learning

'Family Tree' is a reflective poem which focuses on childhood memories and the impact of familial love. It encourages children to think about their own family as well as their own memories and things that they enjoy. The alliteration throughout the poem grants the opportunity for teaching of poetic techniques eg alliteration and rhyme. The children will also consider character study.

Main Literacy Focus

- Following a reading of the poem and class discussion, in pairs children are to come up with their own definition of what alliteration is. Encourage children to pick out the examples of alliteration within the poem before trying to create their own. Examples of topics which may include animals, places or people in their lives e.g. 'Marvellous Matthew'. Can you pick one example of alliteration for each letter in the alphabet? Can the class collectively come up with an alliterative name for each child in the room?
- Similarly, children may be encouraged to take inspiration from 'Family Tree' to write their own short *poem*. Try to include a few poetic techniques e.g. alliteration or a rhyming couplet. If writing about family, children do not have to write about their own – perhaps a made up one, a family that they know or write about a group of people who provide them with the same sense of belonging. Not all children will feel comfortable writing about their own family. The teacher may use scaffolding to aid the children, asking questions such as 'What are your childhood memories?', 'Is there anyone or anything in particular that you remember?' and 'Who would you like to include in your poem?' Higher ability groups may begin to look at the of their work to create a more complex poem. Writing in the first person is a fantastic way for children to express their thoughts and feelings through literacy.
- Children may also use this poem as inspiration to write their own *story*. By using their writing skills, children should be encouraged to write about their favourite memory or experience: What happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Who was there? Why do you like this memory? Use of the 5W's will ensure that children cover enough detail and do not omit any information. Writing stories and recounts are a fantastic way to develop children's literacy skills as well as foster their creativity.



Additional activities

- Children are to select a friend or a member of their family and create a character study of them: mother, grandfather, sister, dog etc. Drawing and annotating an image of their chosen person will help children to develop writing skills as well as their art skills. Resources may include space for children to write a little bit about said person e.g. facts about them, reasons why they are so special to the child, their talents and hobbies. Whenever children have finished their character studies, give time for colouring in and showing their work to the class.
- Interview: children to have a discussion at home with an older family member or guardian and talk about their family tree/childhood memories and experiences. This will develop their talking and listening skills. What similarities and differences are there? How have times changed? From this they may be encouraged to create a table, for example 'then' vs 'now'.
- Drama: can the children come up with actions for specific words and perform/act out the poem? Resources such as flow chart paper and markers will give children inspiration and the opportunity to note down their ideas. Performing poetry to their class or small groups will help to develop children's confidence and spoken communication skills as they participate in discussion and turn taking.
- Cross curricular skills may be introduced by encouraging children to incorporate the arts into their work. This may include activities such as inviting the children to draw a timeline of their lives. Begin at birth and draw images associated with their favourite memories through the years, up to their current age. What do you hope happens in the future? Do you have any goals? Is there anyone in particular you would like to do it with? Literacy skills can be enhanced by annotating timelines and asking the children to write descriptions of each event. Numeracy skills are also enhanced through sequencing of the timeline.
- Children to create their own family tree as illustrated within the poem. This grants them the opportunity to be creative, enhance meaning and complete a more practical activity related to their writing. Asking questions at home about older family members and generations will give children a more sound understanding of their family background.
- A younger Foundation Stage/KS1 class may be encouraged to watch 'The Present' video below and have a discussion about the dog. Who are his family? How does he feel? Talking and listening will help to boost children's literacy skills. This activity may lead onto children writing their own stories, perhaps from the perspective of the dog.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjqIU5FgsYc>
- All writing tasks may incorporate ICT skills by encouraging the children to type up their work: for example their stories and poems. Using Microsoft Word, children are able to write their work on a computer and edit the text size, style and colour as well as add images.

Reference Section

CEA (2007) *The Northern Ireland Curriculum*, Primary edn.

(2019) *Family friend poems*, Available at: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poems/children/> (Accessed: 1st December 2019).

(2019) *Poetry Foundation*, Available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/children> (Accessed: 3rd December 2019).

(2019) *YoungMinds*, Available at: <https://youngminds.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/> (Accessed: 20th November 2019).

(2019) *YouTube*, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/> (Accessed: 5th December 2019).