

## ***Big Green Crocodile: Rhymes to Say and Play***

**Written by Jane Newberry, illustrated by Carolina Rabei  
(Otter-Barry Books)**

*Big Green Crocodile* is a collection of sixteen contemporary action rhymes brought to life through bright and playful illustrations which are as active and joyfully noisy as the poems themselves. Illustrations of colourful animals, young children, dinosaurs and vehicles buzz, sneeze, wobble, squeak, tap and zoom through the poems and off the pages. Each rhyme is thoughtfully accompanied by an invitation to play through a 'Let's Play' section which contain actions, and interactions which children can perform with a supporting adult. The collection combines relatable childhood experiences rooted in young children's daily lives such as playing with sticks, bath time and celebrating birthdays with whimsical anthropomorphic characters.

**This collection was shortlisted for the CLPE Poetry Award in 2021**

### **Overall aims of this teaching sequence.**

- to listen with enjoyment, join in and respond to poetry
- to develop spoken language and understanding through play, visualising, artwork, drama and dance
- to talk about personal experiences of the world in relation to those of the poems
- to bring a poem to life by reading aloud together, responding to rhythm, rhyme and pattern
- to clarify word meanings and understanding of poetic language and devices through recital and performance
- to explore and play with language
- to compose own poems

**This teaching sequence is designed for a Nursery, Reception or Year 1 class.**

### **Overview of this teaching sequence.**

This collection is an immersive introduction into poetry for young children. The rhymes are short, rhythmic and full of memorable repetition. They are all action rhymes, providing children with ample opportunity for movement, dance and performance. Many of the poems involve living creatures and nature, therefore large portions of this teaching sequence can be delivered and enjoyed in the outdoor environment.

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This teaching sequence focuses on a selection of poems from the collection and suggests ways in which to take inspiration from each poem to support appreciation, performance, response to, and writing of poetry through play, art, discussion and performance. It is beneficial to expose the children to the full poetry collection over the sessions, allowing opportunities to revisit any of the rhymes which capture your children’s interest.

There are ten sessions split into two parts. Children will have plenty of opportunity to hear, chime in and lift the words off the page through performance of all kinds. They will be inspired to compose their own poetry using familiar structures, revel in their play with words, and respond to the imagery through talk, artwork, dance and drama.

The start of the sequence focuses on the children being immersed in poetry, responding to illustrations and connecting their own life experiences with the poems and performing poems. As the sequence progresses the focus moves on to responding to, co-authoring and composing their own poems. It explores specific poetic devices and encourages children to use these in their own writing. The sequence is intended to cover a two-week teaching period. However, as this sequence is written to accommodate Nursery, Reception and Year 1, practitioners will need to use their professional judgment as to how to adapt the sessions and how long their children remain engaged in the sequence, based on their age and experience.

### Teaching Approaches

- Reading aloud and re-reading
- Shared reading
- Word collections
- Responding to illustration
- Book talk - responding to poetry
- Visualising
- Drawing and annotating
- Performing poetry
- Freeze frame and drama
- Shared writing

### Outcomes

- Understanding and appreciation of the use of language and vocabulary by creating word and phrase collections and playing with words
- Deeper understanding of meanings and poet’s intent through performance of poems
- Understanding of poetic devices and structure and seeing oneself as a poet by composing poems inspired by the collection

### Cross Curricular Links

#### Art and Design:

- Throughout the sequence, children use drawing and three-dimensional model making to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination in response to poetry.
- Children might explore in greater depth the accompanying illustrations in the collection responding to colour and form and how these impact their interpretation of the poems.

- Children can develop ability to read pictures and develop appreciation of how the relationship between text and image creates layers of meaning.

### Physical Development:

- Children will be encouraged to engage in dance and large gross motor movements, practising moving their bodies in expressive ways.
- One of the sessions focuses on controlled throwing skills, developing gross motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination.

### Music:

- Children will use their voices expressively and creatively by speaking chants and rhymes in reading and performing poetry.
- Children will explore simple beats and rhythm with instruments and body percussion to accompany performances.
- When rehearsing poetry recitals and performances, children could be encouraged to experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music.

### Science:

- There are plentiful opportunities to explore the natural world, particularly plants, animals and minibeasts, linked to poems in the collection.
- They can also use this collection as a stimulus to find out more about dinosaurs and modes of transport.

## Links to other texts and resources

### Collections that support and encourage performance:

There are many collections that can inspire children to experience and tune into language, enjoy and play with to inform and shape their own interpretations and performance of poetry. The following titles provide the children with a broad range of poetry to listen to, read aloud and perform, as well as enabling children to choose poems when creating their own anthologies on given themes.

- *Here's a Little Poem* collected by Jane Yolen and Andrew Fusek Peters, illustrated by Polly Dunbar (Walker Books)
- *The Puffin Book of Fantastic First Poems* edited by June Crebbin (Puffin)
- *A Great Big Cuddle*, Michael Rosen, illustrated by Chris Riddell (Walker Books)
- *Zim Zam Zoom*, James Carter, illustrated by Nicola Colton (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Caterpillar Cake*, Matt Goodfellow, illustrated by Krina Patel-Sage (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Poems to Perform* edited by Julia Donaldson, illustrated by Clare Melinsky (Macmillan)

### **Nursery Rhyme Collections:**

- *Honey for You, Honey for Me*, Michael Rosen, illustrated by Chris Riddell (Walker Books)
- *Little Miss Muffet and other rhymes* illustrated by Patrick George (PatrickGeorge)
- *The Oxford Treasury of Nursery Rhymes* compiled by Sarah Williams and Karen King, illustrated by Ian Beck (Oxford University Press)
- *My Favourite Nursery Rhymes* selected and illustrated by Tony Ross (Andersen Press)

### **Books written by Jane Newberry:**

- *A Sackful of Songs*, Jane Newberry (Cramer Music)
- *A Sackful of Christmas*, Jane Newberry (Cramer Music)
- *Hey, What's in the Sack?* Jane Newberry (Cramer Music)

### **Books illustrated by Carolina Rabei:**

- *Silver*, Walter de la Mare (Faber & Faber)
- *Snow*, Walter de la Mare (Faber & Faber)
- *Summer Evening*, Walter de la Mare (Faber & Faber)
- *The Ride-by-Nights*, Walter de la Mare (Faber & Faber)
- *Little Lost Fox*, Carolina Rabei (Egmont)
- *Sea Lights*, Ruth Symons (Templar)
- *The Book Without a Story*, Carolina Rabei (Egmont)
- *Crunch!*, Carolina Rabei (Child's Play)

The poetry section on CLPE's website contains a wealth of resources including videos of poets performing their poems and talking about their writing process, which will inspire children in their own performances and writing. This can be found at: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry>

Here you can:

- Look up poets by age range or themes, enabling you to access a wide range of poetry to inspire budding poets.
- Find examples of children's work around poetry, including videos of performances submitted for the CLiPPA School Shadowing Scheme.
- Find resources to support subject knowledge around poetic forms and devices.

Jane Newberry has a dedicated poet page where you can find her poems and videos:

<https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/jane-newberry>.

### **Before beginning the Sequence:**

One of the best ways of involving children in poetry is to make a habit of reading aloud to them as often as possible from a wide range of books and anthologies. This experience of being read to is likely to be the real foundation of their knowledge of poetry and is also going to be a major influence on

how they write themselves. Children will benefit from being immersed in a wide range of poetry; routinely listening to poems read aloud, sharing enjoyment by joining in, revisiting and playing with language, and deepening understanding by performing poems.

Invite parents to read or tell poems and to talk about them afterwards, enriching and enlarging the children's experiences of poetry; poems that speak of their personal experiences, home lives and heritage as well as those that increase their understanding of the wider world.

Engage the enthusiasm of a wider audience by creating a poetry area in which members of the school community can display their favourite poem, recommending it to others alongside poetry books, poem cards, rhymes and posters. Compile and present anthologies of these poems with the children to be revisited and enjoyed; in printed form or as an audio recording, perhaps to be distributed in some way. Find photographs of some of the poets; laminate them and display them alongside their work. Make a listening corner in which children can listen to audio recordings of poems. Some of these could be made by the children themselves or recorded 'live' during class read aloud times.

It would also be nice to invite parents in to record some of the poems; these could also be translated into home languages for bilingual children to enjoy or drawn from their own cultural source. You might raise the profile of poetry by asking the children to create illustrated poetry posters which present poetry or publicise a school poetry event in which poetry is shared through drama, performance or reading aloud. Make a class collection of poetry books; collections by the same author and anthologies, planning in regular browsing and independent reading time when the children can access the books.

Become familiar with the poet performances on CLPE's website as well as looking at poets' own websites and other sites that enable the children to watch the poet reading their own poems, bringing them alive. Through hearing poetry read aloud and told in a variety of languages, regional accents and styles, the children will be inspired to find their own voices and to express themselves in poems of their own.

Use other classes in your setting to share the learning they might have already done around poetry with your class. Arrange for children from the upper key stages to visit your class to perform their own poems. Other Early Years classes or younger children can share their favourite nursery rhymes.

If you already have a book sharing system in place for children to take home story books regularly, include illustrated poetry collections in these so that children are sharing poetry at home and in school.

## Teaching Sessions:

### Part 1: Initial Response and Performance

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*This section provides opportunity for children to share what they already know and like about poetry, songs and rhymes. It explores creative immersion into five poems from the collection, relating these to their own personal life experiences through recital, drama, artwork, dance and performance.*

### **Session 1: Introducing the Book and Developing Reader Response: ‘Spots and Stripes’**

*Children’s prior experience of rhyme and song may already be vast and varied it is important at this stage to gauge and celebrate your children’s unique starting points. It is possible that they already have a collection of familiar nursery rhymes that they can join in with when recited aloud. They may know some familiar finger rhymes or ring songs that they use in their play. Adults can begin to notice and draw children’s attention to these as they play. Children may also may have memorised choral responses used around the school day to indicate daily routines such as greeting or ‘goodbye’ songs.*

*It is important to provide plentiful opportunities for children to share what they already know about poetry, what songs, nursery rhymes and poems they most enjoy and why they cherish those. From there, and over time, you can create exposure to, and immersion in, a rich variety of poetry, building children’s poetic repertoire. Teachers, children and parents can work together to create poetry friendly classrooms and begin to nurture a love of language through engagement with rhythm, rhyme and play with words. Additionally, regularly hearing the poets perform their own work provides a valuable opportunity to expose children to hearing poetry through voices other than the teacher’s, and in doing so exposes pupils to a range of accents, dialects and voices; allowing further contextualisation to the poems and authentic voices to be heard.*

- Prior to this session, create a poetry corner in which to display a range of poetry collections, anthologies, nursery rhyme cards/ posters, stories and picture books with repeated and patterned language.
- Introduce the poetry area to the children and share a range of nursery rhymes and invite the children to discuss, reflect on and select their favourite nursery rhyme.
- Encourage them to share their choices and discuss the reasons for these.
- Share the front cover of the poetry book *Big Green Crocodile* with the children, keeping the title hidden.
- Gather the children’s initial responses to the illustration. What does the cover make them think about? How does it make them feel? What makes them feel this way? What do they notice about the children in the illustration? How do they think the crocodile is feeling? What do they think this book may be about?
- Open the book to show just the colourful endpapers. Discuss what the children can see, how the colours and patterns make them feel. Do they have any more ideas about what the book might be about?
- Record the children’s initial responses to the title page and the endpapers in a large class Poetry Journal.

- Explain to the children that this is a collection of poems written by a poet, Jane Newberry, and that each of the pictures on the endpapers are created by the illustrator, Carolina Rabei, and will appear in poems throughout the book.
- Turn to the contents page and spend some time with the children noticing the page numbers and reading a few of the poem titles. Do they sound similar to any rhymes or stories they might already know?
- Before moving further, reflect with the children about their experiences of hearing poems and rhymes and how they feel about them. Do they have a favourite nursery rhyme? Why do they like that rhyme in particular? Spend time valuing children's starting points and experiences of rhyme and poems. You can record these in your Poetry Journal or the children can draw and write their own and add these to a classroom display celebrating your class's favourite poems and rhymes, which can be added to over the teaching sequence.
- Turn to pages 6 and 7. Use an enlarged A3 picture to support the children to notice some of the smaller creatures in the illustration. Which animals and creatures can she see? What do they think the animals are doing? Do the pictures remind them of any other stories or songs they know? You might refer for instance, to the story *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* by Judith Kerr (HarperCollins) or the rhyming text *Rumble in the Jungle* by Giles Andreae, (Orchard). If any children have visited a zoo recently they can share their personal experiences with the animals. Scribe these responses around the A3 image.
- Now introduce the poet and allow the children to hear the poem 'Spots and Stripes' performed by Jane Newberry in full: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/jane-newberry>
- Give the children the opportunity to respond to hearing the poem for the first time. Did they enjoy hearing the poem? Did they feel surprised by the ending? Why? Where there any words or phrases that were particularly memorable to them?
- Reread the poem again, this time modelling the 'Let's Play - Jungle' actions from page 7. Encourage the children to join in with the actions along with you as you read each line slowly, exaggerating the movements.
- As you re-read the poem with actions, encourage the children to chime in with memorable words, phrases or repeated refrains as they begin to familiarise themselves with hearing it read aloud.
- Once the children feel confident joining in with words and actions, you can video record the children and watch the footage back together, so the children can see and hear themselves performing and celebrate this shared performance as a class. This can also be achieved by splitting the class into groups and allowing the children to film themselves and share the recording with the whole class. If you do this before 19th November 2021, the film could be submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition](#) to win poetry prizes.
- To allow children the opportunity to revisit the poem a jungle themed small world area can be created with colour copies of the poem available for the children to read while they explore and play with the animals.



- To extend this session further the concept of camouflage can be introduced through showing children videos of camouflaged animals in the jungle:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p011mr07>
- The children could further investigate animal patterns and camouflage in linked creative activities, hiding children's own illustrations of animals in backgrounds that reflect their habitats.

### Session 2: Performance and Movement: 'Fish Tale'

*The experience of performing poetry enables children to respond to the rhythms, patterns and wordplay in poems. Giving voice and sound to poetry is an important key to unlocking the meanings and music contained in each poem. It is through reading poetry aloud that the quality of rhyme and verse form, and the power of language can be explored and realised. In preparing for presenting poetry to an audience, and in the performance itself, children gain deeper understanding of vocabulary meanings, bring their own interpretations to the poem, begin to inhabit characters and reflect more thoughtfully on its message.*

- Prior to the session ensure that there is plenty of opportunity for water play such as bathing babies, sea creatures in the water tray and bubble play to enrich and broaden their reading and experience of this poem.
- Turn to the poem 'Fish Tale' on pages 24-25 and allow the children to explore and respond to the illustrations. *What do you notice? How do the illustrations make you feel? What are your experiences of sea creatures and being in water? Do you have toys in your bath at home like the children in the picture? How do you play with them?*
- Share the title with the children. *What do they think about when they hear it?* You can explore the play on words between fish tales and fish tails, clarifying with the children the difference in meaning between the two and what this might mean the poem is going to be about.
- Now read the poem aloud. Allow the children to respond and in particular to connect their ideas with any personal experiences they have had of fish, aquariums, or bath time. Record these in your class Poetry Journal.
- Next, hand out ribbon sticks to the children. These could be pre-bought or made by the children using sticks collected on nature walks with lengths of recycled fabric attached.
- Model possible body movements you can make with the ribbon sticks, repeating the words *Fishy in the ocean, Fishy in the sea*, as though making large waves with your ribbon.
- As you re-read the poem, pause at *Splish, Splash*. Repeat the words with the children, emphasising the onomatopoeic quality of the words. Allow the children to think of their own movements to these words based on their prior experiences of splashing water - *how would they represent the water movement with their bodies and ribbons?*
- Continue to re-read the poem as the children move. Pause at *Fishy swimming free*. *What might swimming free feel like for the fish?* Relate this to their own experiences of running freely outside. If space allows, have the children run freely with their ribbon sticks trailing



behind them, allow them to find and dive under hiding spaces when you get to the line *Fishy dives beneath the weed...*

- Continue through the rest of the poem, allowing the children to explore the full range of body movements in response to the words.
- You can add accompanying music and background visuals to this either by using a premade video such as <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqklulvITIs> or spend a further session creating and audio recording your own calming music accompaniment with simple percussion instruments.
- As they perform, take photos of the children at different parts of the poem. These can be used in the poetry journal, children can write their own annotations to the pictures, linking them to some of the memorable phases from the rhyme.
- You could collect small groups of children together to record performances of the poem, using their ribbon sticks as props. If you do this before 19th November 2021, the film could be submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition](#) to win poetry prizes.
- Follow up by placing copies of the poem in the outdoor area with the rhythm sticks, and indoors in the water area, with fish, rocks, and plastic or real pondweed, so that children can engage in play around the concepts explored and recall and practise the rhyme alongside.

### Session 3: Performance and Voice Sounds: 'Tickle Beetle'

*Playing with voice sounds is an essential aspect of early phonological development. The ability to vary pitch and volume creates intonation in speech supporting young children's communication development. Song and rhyme provide ample opportunity to explore and rehearse altering voice sounds for expression and interpretation.*

- Prior to the session choose whether you wish to make beetle props from recycled materials or natural found objects. For found objects, you could set a home learning task for each child in the class to find a natural object that they can hold in one hand. This could be a stone, a piece of bark, a shell, an acorn etc. Alternatively, you can go on a nature walk to a local park and collect the small found objects with the children. Try to do this without revealing what it will be used for, to add mystery surrounding the found object and its many imaginative possibilities.
- Share an enlarged copy of the poem 'Tickle Beetle' on pages 22-23 either on the interactive white board or a printed page with space to annotate around it. Allow the children to share what they can see in the illustration, noting what they say around the page. *What is the little girl doing? How is she feeling? How do you know? Why might she feel that way?* Draw the children's attention to the bare feet in the grass. At this point you can take children outside and allow them to take their shoes and socks off. This allows them to experience the feel of soft grass between their toes first hand to enhance their knowledge, understanding and personal connection to the poem.
- Share the title 'Tickle Beetle'. Elicit the children's prior understanding of beetles and minibeasts more generally. *Have they ever held a beetle or minibeast? What was it? What does it feel like?*
- Read the poem aloud to the children and elicit initial responses to it. *Did they like the poem? Why or why not? What did it make them think about? How did it make them feel?*

- Spend some time looking at close-up images of real beetles alongside the ones from Rabei's illustrations.
- Explain to the children that they are going to make their own 'tickle beetles' to play and perform with. Provide the children with an array of craft materials like glue, tape, pipe cleaners, string and poster or acrylic paint. Give access to the small natural found objects the children have brought in.
  - Once each child has made a small beetle, let them hold their beetle creations and move them along with the poem, miming the movements described in the poem; around their tummy, jumping on their nose and down to their toes.
  - Repeat this a few times, encouraging the children to join in to familiarise themselves with the words.
  - Now explain that they are going to play with their voices using the tickle beetles to help them. When the beetle jumps up, they will make their voices higher in pitch. Model this really emphasising the change in pitch. Allow the children to say the word 'up' repeatedly exploring how high they can make their voices. Do the opposite when the poem says the word 'down', moving the beetles down and making their voices as low in pitch as they can go.
  - Perform the poem together combining the movements with the beetles and the exaggerated pitch changes. You could, once again record children's performances of the poem, using their beetles as props. If you do this before 19th November 2021, the film could be submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition](#) to win poetry prizes.
  - The beetles can then be sent home with a copy of the poem for children to enjoy sharing and performing with their families.
  - Making minibeast models from the craft materials and found natural objects can be continued and finished models displayed in the poetry corner alongside other minibeast themed poems such as 'Five Buzzy Bees' (page 8) for children to explore independently.
  - You could also follow up by providing children with magnifying glasses, pooters, collection pots, notebooks and writing and drawing materials to go on a minibeast hunt. Talk about, take pictures, or make observational drawings of any minibeasts you find. Talk about the sounds and shapes in the names of different minibeasts to link to children's use and application in phonics. They might notice similar starting sounds in creatures like **w**asp and **w**orm, **b**ee and **b**eetle, **s**lug and **s**nail. They might notice the long vowel sounds in bee, beetle, snail, worm. They may be able to segment the names to hear the sounds and consider how to represent these sounds in their own writing to write the minibeast names, label their drawings and note other information about them.

#### Session 4: Personal connection and freeze frame: 'The Queen Comes to Tea'

*Freeze frames are still images or a tableau. They can be used to enable groups of children to examine a key event or situation from a story and decide in detail how it could be represented. When presenting the freeze frame, one of the group could act as a commentator to talk through what is happening in their version of the scene, or individual characters could be asked to speak their thoughts out loud.*

- Prior to this session, prepare 3 invitations to your class. One to a tea party with the queen, one to a picnic, and the final invitation to somebody's birthday party.
- Set up three large role-play areas or tables in your classroom with the three settings or events. Simple set ups could include a tea set with food and a crown for the queen, a picnic basket on a blanket, party balloons, hats and a cake with candles. Enlarged copies of the illustrations from the poem should be added to the areas to support children's contextual understanding of the poem.
- Share reading the invitations with the children.
- In groups, encourage the children look at each of the areas in turn and discuss their experiences. *Have they been to a tea party before? Did they enjoy it? What did they eat? Where have they had a picnic? Who with? How did it feel to go to their friend's birthday party? How did it feel to celebrate their own birthdays?* Note their responses around the illustrations.
- At each area read the verse of the poem related to the experience. Repeat the verses encouraging the children to put emphasis and excitement in their voices as they recite the repeated refrain *Ice-cream, cookies, and chocolate cake!*
- Spend time with the groups role-playing each scenario. You can enjoy sharing related songs and rhymes at each area such as singing 'Happy Birthday' or 'I'm a little Teapot' at the tea party.
- Provide writing materials alongside each area so children can write their own lists of food for each celebration.
- Once the children have had sufficient time discussing and role-playing in each area the children can create a freeze frame.
- Encourage the children to take it in turns to be the narrator of the scene, supporting them to verbalise what their friends are doing and how they are feeling at the celebrations. Alternatively, in the freeze frame individual children can speak their own thoughts aloud in role as a character from the poem, including the queen who came to tea. As teacher, you could act in role as the queen, inviting the children to think of questions they'd like to ask the Queen if she came to tea and answering these.
- Children can take pictures of their group freeze frame for the class Poetry Journal. Speech bubbles can be stuck next to children in the pictures for them to write down the thoughts of the characters. You could also record their questions for the Queen.
- Follow up by creating and hosting a picnic or tea party. The children could be involved in making sandwiches, cakes, snacks and decorations. They could write invitations for parents and carers or another class in the school to come along. As part of the celebrations, the children could perform the poem to their invited audience.

### **Session 5: Personal Response and Performance: 'Plane Spotting'**

*Developing children's response to poetry requires teachers to be innovative and creative themselves. Teachers need to model and encourage all forms of imaginative responses for pupils, allowing them to express ideas freely through a range of approaches, such as music, drama, dance and art.*

- Take the children outside to lay with their backs on the grass, looking up to the sky.
- Allow the children to describe what they are experiencing through each of the senses in turn; sight, hearing, touch and smell.
- Spend particular attention to the environmental sounds. You can link this to any prior early phonics learning the children will have already done around environmental sounds, noticing them, describing them and mimicking them.
- While the children lie looking up to the sky read the poem 'Plane Spotting'.
- Back in the classroom, re-read the poem focusing on the final stanza. Question and wonder with the children, where do they go? Where do they fly to?
- Ask them about their own experiences of going on holiday or travelling by plane.
- Let them imagine if they were on the plane where in the world would they like to visit?
- Have the children record their imaginative thoughts in writing or drawing on pieces of white A4 paper.
- Now, share Jane Newberry's performance of 'Plane Spotting' on her CLPE poet page: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/jane-newberry>. *How did it feel hearing her read the poem? What did they like about her performance?*
- Model to the children how to fold their own piece of paper into simple paper aeroplanes.
- You can spend time re-reading and performing the poem in small groups, allowing autonomy over how they wish to perform it and use their aeroplanes as props in their performance. They could theatrically throw their own planes, one by one as they read or recite a line from the poem each. As an alternative example they may wish to begin the poem lying down then stand up to read a line or verse. You can make suggestions around how they might like to perform to support them in getting started with this group work, and then celebrate the artistic choices they make as individuals or groups.
- You can video the children's performances and use video editing software to piece these together. If you do this before 19th November 2021, the film could be submitted for the CLiPPA shadowing scheme competition to win poetry prizes.
- At the end of the session collect all the paper aeroplanes. These can be hung from the classroom ceiling or put on a poetry Working Wall around the questions from the poem written on large clouds.

### Session 6: Instrumental sounds and rhythm: 'Tap the Tree'

*There is nothing more fundamental to a language than its rhythm. Through activities focused on exploring and experimenting with rhythm, children will be introduced to pulse, syllables and stresses in the language - essential precursors to understanding how words are formed and how they are read and spelt. They will also be supported to understand intonation and prosody, which support the ongoing development of language and reading comprehension.*

*Singing rhymes with simple actions helps young children to make sense of their world and develop their gross and fine motor control. In using rhymes that encourage a call and response – either in words or by using body language – we initiate conversations which involve a 'to and fro' with pauses and*

*responses between the partners. This encourages children to look, listen and respond, to build a sense of anticipation and to experience laughter, as well as poetic and dramatic forms of speech. Building movement into rhymes using the whole body, in actions such as clapping or skipping is important as it develops a sense of rhythm and beat. A steady beat plays a hugely important role in the development of our speech, movement, thoughts and verbal organisation.*

- Prior to the session collect enough sticks so that you have one stick per child.
- Take the children outside and introduce the poem 'Tap the Tree' on page 16. As you read it aloud, model to the children tapping with a stick on a tree to the rhythm of the poem.
- Look carefully at the illustration of the tree – *how do you think it feels to have someone tapping on it? Why do you think the girl stops tapping and starts clapping instead? How do you think the tree might say they line "Who's that tapping on me?" to show how it is feeling?* Practise different ways of reading this to show the emotion the tree might be feeling.
- Now, re-read the poem again, inviting the children to join in with their own sticks tapping and hand clapping along.
- Using an enlarged copy of the poem, cover over the repeated occurrences of *tap* and *clap* and the two occurrences of the word *tree*.
- Linked to their phonics sessions, encourage the children to segment orally the words *tap*, *tree* and *clap*, listening to and recognising the adjacent consonants at the start of the final two words, and, if they are able, to write the words on post-it notes and take turns to stick them on the enlarged poem to share reading together as they tap and clap the tree.
- Allow the children to explore tapping on different surfaces and objects within the outdoor environment, examples of these could be the fence, ground, bench, climbing frame, wall.
- Have the children chime in with the refrains *With my stick I tap the...* and fill in the missing word as they join in. They can then move on to the next part of the verse, *But the .... says "Who's that tapping on me?" so I clap, clap, clap clap, clap, clap, CLAP!*
- Take photos of the children tapping with their sticks outside.
- Back in the classroom create a class poetry collection starting with Jane Newberry's 'Tap the Tree' then have the children's own poems about the objects they tapped written up by adults or the children themselves, with the photos of them outside to accompany these, or the children's own illustrations, if they'd like to make them. If they do, they might consider how to show how the object being tapped is feeling, linked to the original illustration.
- Place the poetry collection in the poetry corner for children to revisit and read independently.
- You could follow on by talking about feelings in more depth, investigating how we know when people are annoyed or unhappy, and how we could change our behaviour to cheer them up, as in the poem. Allow time for children to talk about the things that make them feel annoyed or unhappy and what kinds of things make them feel better when they are feeling this way. You could make a linked display, with the poem at the centre, which the children can refer back to if they need support in managing their own feelings or behaviour or in supporting others to do so.

### Session 7: Exploring Alliteration: 'Brontosaurus Ride'

*It is important to develop children's articulation of sounds through rhyme and song, encouraging them to talk about how the sounds feel in their mouths as they enunciate them. If playing with sounds or exploring alliteration and tongue twisters, elicit ways in which the sequence of words can be expressed by controlling the pace and muscles in the mouth. Provide children with opportunities to sing songs that broaden and develop their vocal range as well as the phonemes they encounter in the English language. Ask them to describe the sounds they make and hear with both their voices and instruments.*

- Show the children the spread for the poem 'Brontosaurus Ride' (pages 20-21).
- Explore the illustration together and read the poem aloud.
- Engage the children in responding to the poem:
  - *Tell me...was there anything you liked about this poem? Why?*
  - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked...? Why?*
  - *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
  - *Were there any words or phrases that you liked the sound of? Why is that?*
  - *Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed in the words...the rhythm or rhyme?*
- Draw the children's attention to the repetition and alliteration in the poem.
- To emphasise the 'bounciness' of the poem use a model dinosaur and small figurine to act out the children playing on its back as you re-read it.
- To add further personal connection, you can prepare figurines of the children in the class by laminating small cut out photos of the children and attaching these to small blocks or Lego pieces so that they stand unaided and can be played with by the children. Alternatively, the laminated pictures can be attached to lollipop sticks and used as small hand-held puppets.
- Point out all the repetition of the 'b' sound in the poem. You can highlight each occurrence on a large printed copy of the poem, noticing the capital and lower-case letters. *What other words can the children think of that start with the same sound?* Make collections of these to explore and come back to.
- Now, explain they are going to make their own poems similar to 'Brontosaurus Ride'.
- Choose a dinosaur, identify its initial sound with the children and model using one of the small figurines, or the puppets of the children, different ways they could 'ride' with the dinosaur. Talk about the prepositional language they could use to describe the travel, including the examples already seen in the original poem: *up, down, side to side*. *What other words could we use?* Explore and expand prepositional language with examples like over, under, through, across, along.
- Now explore different alliterative phrases they could link to the dinosaur, going back to the Bibb-ly, Bobb-ly description of the Brontosaurus ride. *What could we say for a Tyrannosaurus ride? How about a Diplodocus ride?*
- It is particularly useful here if children have already begun focusing on initial sounds and grapheme phoneme correspondence so that you can make explicit links between your phonics learning and this activity.



- Explore and record the alliterative words that the children suggest. You can then begin to mirror the poetic pattern, for example with a Stegosaurus the children might come up with the words stomp and stamp which can be co-authored into:  
*Stomp-y, stamp-y, stomp-y stamp-y*  
*Stegosaurus ride.*  
*Stomp-y, stamp-y up and down.*
- Allow the children to really engage in the alliteration, sound play, repetition and nonsense words, and enjoy mouth feel and the inherent humour in it.
- Children can write their dinosaur ride poems or have them scribed by an adult and left on a small world table along with all the dinosaur toys and the personal puppets so that the children can revisit and re-imagine their own imaginative dinosaur rides.
- You could provide other dinosaur books and poems for children with a keen interest in the topic, such as *Stomp, Chomp, Big Roars! Here Come the Dinosaurs!* by Kaye Umansky, illustrated by Nick Sharratt (Puffin)
- You could also go on to look at other poems in the collection that explore alliteration, such as 'Wibble-Wobble Clown'.

### Session 8: Exploring rhyme and making word collections: 'Hungry Horse'

*Children with a good awareness of rhyme and good initial rhyming skills tend to become better readers and spellers. A focus on rhyme can significantly reduce the difficulty of reading words for beginner readers, as the correspondence in the spelling patterns that represent rhymes and their sounds in spoken words is far more consistent than the correspondence between single graphemes and phonemes. Children with reading difficulties often tend to have gaps in knowledge and experience of rhyme, so a focus on rhyme and analogy is useful with any children who are having difficulties in learning to read.*

*Rhyme awareness develops early in young children. The awareness of onset and rime precedes the awareness of individual phonemes in the development of phonological skills. The rime is the spelling sequence in different words that reflects the rhyming sound, such as '-at', '-all' and '-ack'. The onset is the initial consonant sound in any English syllable. This may be a single letter e.g. cat, ball, sack; two letters, e.g. flat, small, black or three letters, e.g. splat, thrall, thwack. Children are able to make analogies between the shared spelling patterns in the onsets and rimes in words and use this to support them in word-reading. Children with good rhyming skills will be able to make more rime analogies than others.*

- This is a short, rhyming poem where the majority of words are phonetically decodable, with some repeated high frequency words, it therefore lends itself very well to being read aloud by the children themselves.
- Use a large copy of the poem, either printed or on an interactive white board.



- Read the poem aloud a couple of times, with the children joining in as they become comfortable with the words. *Do they notice any words that are repeated? Are there words that sound similar to each other?*
- With the children, underline or highlight all the rhyming words that they can find. Write each one of the words on a small A6 sized card.
- Are there any other words that rhyme with *clop*, *shop* and *pop* that the children can discover themselves? Discuss the meanings of the words the children say, recognising which are real words and which are pseudo-words.
- Write these down or invite the children to write them on their own cards, if they are at this stage of development.
- Now peg these together on a washing line or other string and read them all from left to right. You can take this opportunity to notice and draw out any spelling patterns.
- Explore spotting and collecting the rhyming words in other poems in the collection. ‘Moon Rocket’ (pages 14-15) is an excellent example to use for this activity. You can listen to Jane Newberry perform this poem on her poet page on CLPE’s website: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/jane-newberry> and join in with the poem and actions as well as focusing on the rhyming words. When you identify these, write them on cards and peg them up on string, clustering the rhyming words together.
- Make 3 or 4 different rhyming collections with the children and leave these within children’s reach - these could be laminated and strung on trees outside, alongside laminated copies of the rhyming poems to increase their reading and poetry engagement outside or used in your classroom poetry area as an interactive display. Children can revisit their rhyming strings, take the cards off the line to read and sort. You can also leave more cards and pens for children to write more rhyming strings, or to write simple phrases which use the rhyming words they have found to create their own rhyming couplets or poems. They could experiment with making their own rhyming phrases or play with known nursery rhymes, changing the rhyming words.
- Examples of other familiar rhymes, taking inspiration from your discussions during your first session together can be laminated with white board pens to read and underline the rhymes and placed near your rhyming strings display for children to add to independently.

### Session 9: Exploring Onomatopoeia: ‘Big Green Crocodile’

*Onomatopoeia is the process of creating a word that phonetically imitates, resembles, or suggests the sound that it describes. These words allow children to articulate a wide range of consonant and vowel sounds.*

- In preparation for this session gather a collection of animal soft toys, cushions and blankets. The poem and the illustration suggest this is a ‘bedtime’ poem, so you can turn the lights off or darken the classroom for the initial reading of the poem.

- Have the children lie down in the cushions and blankets and play the video of the poet reading 'Big Green Crocodile' from Jane Newberry's poet page: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/jane-newberry>
- You can encourage the children to close their eyes as they hear it for the first time and allow them to focus on the experience of hearing the poem read aloud.
  - How did the poem make them feel?
  - How did it feel to experience the poem with their eyes closed?
  - What did they think about when they first heard the poem?
- Now look at the illustrations around the poem (pages 28-29) and re-read the poem. Did it change how they felt about the poem? Did it change their understanding or interpretation of the poem?
- Explain to the children that you are going to create your own poems based on 'Big Green Crocodile'.
- Show an enlarged copy of the poem and cover the phrases *big green crocodile*, *nap*, and *SNAP!*.
- Let the children take it in turns to select one of the animal soft toys and show the class. Allow them to describe the animal commenting on its size and colour, for example the 'tiny black cat' add the children's ideas over the words *big green crocodile*.
- Then explore the different sounds the animal could make. You can stress the onomatopoeic quality by writing the word in capitals followed by an exclamation point as they appear in the poem for poetic effect. Place these over the word *SNAP!*.
- Now read aloud your new poem.
- Repeat this a few times with the different soft toy animals. *Which poems did they like the best? Why was this?*
- Provide the children with the opportunity to create and write their own versions and perform these using the props.
- Later, the children can illustrate their own written poems which can be collated and presented in a class book or in your class Poetry Journal. Water colour paints over their pen drawn illustrations of the animals will provide a vivid medium to illustrate these.
- You could go on to explore more onomatopoeia in the rhyme 'Monster March' (page 10). Listen to poet Jane Newberry perform the poem on her poet page: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/jane-newberry>
- Now read aloud the poem on the page. Come back together to learn the sounds each creature in the poem makes, repeating these together, and discuss the verbs in the poem that tell you how the creature moves.
- Encourage the children to act these out as you read the poem again, and to make the sounds of the creatures.
- Now, think about other creatures that you could add additional verses for, considering verbs that might describe how they move and words that describe the sounds that they might make, using the structure of the poem as a model:

*How shall we go? What do you say?*  
\_\_\_\_\_ along like a \_\_\_\_\_ - Hey!

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Every day is a \_\_\_\_\_ day!*

- Allow time for the children to learn and perform the original poem and some of their new verses.

### Drawing the learning together

- To draw together all the work done in over the course of this sequence, hold a discussion about the collection as a whole.
  - What are your most memorable poems or performances? Why?
  - What have you learnt about poetry that you didn't know before?
  - Would you like to read more poetry after reading the collection *Big Green Crocodile*? Why? Why not?
- If you were to write a letter to the poet, Jane Newberry, what would you say about the collection? What questions would you ask her?
- You might like to find out more about Jane Newberry's other work and share more examples.
- To complete the unit, look back at the children's initial ideas about poems and the collection by looking through the class Poetry Journal. Review together the videos and photos from the last nine sessions. Reflect together on the children's learning journey through this unit and celebrate this journey together.
- You could organise a poetry recital or celebration event and invite families or other classes to watch the children perform their favourite poems from the collection and share their own written poems.