

# Mrs Noah's Pockets

Story by *Jackie Morris*  Pictures by *James Mayhew*

## TEACHING NOTES

For Upper KS1 / Lower KS2

by Eva John, Independent Literacy Consultant




# Whatever the weather

Whether the weather be fine  
Or whether the weather be not,  
Whether the weather be cold  
Or whether the weather be hot,  
We'll weather the weather  
Whatever the weather,  
Whether we like it or not.

Anonymous British

Think about all of the different types of weather: e.g. rain, sun, wind, storm, snow, cloud. What sort of weather do you think the passengers on the ark experienced? How did it make them feel?

 Make a list of words for each weather type, so that you can use them in a variety of poems. You could find synonyms, verbs, adverbs, adjectives.

## String poem for poetry bunting

(group or whole class work)

 Create a string poem or chant for one of the weather types.

1. Write your topic word on a minimum of nine post-it notes  
e.g. *rain, sun, wind*

Three of these will be the opening line of your chant and three will be the last line of your chant. The others will be the final word in each line of your chant.

2. Each group works with different types of words to produce three new words for the poem, writing each word idea on a post-it, playing around with the order of words within lines to find the most effective.

For example:

- Words ending in ...ing e.g. sparkling, thrumming, hissing
- Monosyllabic words e.g. cold, hard, sharp
- Disyllabic words e.g. pouring, driving, stinging
- Trisyllabic words e.g. miserable, thundering, hammering
- Alliterative words (words beginning with the same sound)  
e.g. pittering, pattering, pounding







- Assonance (words with the same vowel sound)  
e.g. fine, driving, lively
  - Consonance (words with the same consonant sounds occurring within a number of words)  
e.g. washes, shimmer, vision, splashes
3. Stick all the lines up on the wall and play around with the order, speaking the lines out loud, until you find the most pleasing result.

Rain, rain, rain  
-----, -----, ----- rain  
-----, -----, ----- rain  
-----, -----, ----- rain  
-----, -----, ----- rain  
Rain, rain, rain

4. Recite your chant. You could add percussion effects to create atmosphere.

## *Create weather bunting on which to display your poems*

✂ Cut a piece of thin card in the shape of a weather type e.g. raindrop, sun, wind icon, lightning cloud, snowflake or cloud, leaving a 3cm border at the top, allowing the card to be folded over 1.5cm from the top, and stapled over a long piece of string. Display your compositions for everyone to see.

## *Diamond drops*

✍ Create a diamante poem about the change in the weather, from rainfall to sunshine, experienced by Mr and Mrs Noah and the animals in the ark.

It's easier to work electronically, so that you can centre the lines and create a diamond shape:

Line 1: Beginning subject

Line 2: Two describing words about line 1

Line 3: Three doing words about line 1

Line 4: A short phrase about line 1, a short phrase about line 7

Line 5: Three doing words about line 7


Line 6: Two describing words about line 7

Line 7: End subject

You could create a musical accompaniment to enhance the mood of your poem. Record your work and share with others.



# Weather Riddles


 Choose a different weather type and write a poetic string of images, using:

- a simile
- a metaphor
- personification.

For example, for rain:

*Like water flooding through a colander,  
The bathwater of the gods flung to the earth below.  
Torrents of tears tumbling down rocky cheeks.*

## Umbrella design

 Collect together a range of umbrellas. It's supposed to be unlucky to open them inside, a superstition apparently dating back to Egyptian times, so it might be a good idea to look at them outside on a day when it is not too windy. Examine the designs. How have they been made? How many panels do they have? What materials have been used to make them?

Jackie Morris created a design for an umbrella for her own use. What do you notice about her design?



Look at some famous paintings that feature umbrellas. Discuss the mood of each painting. Which one do you like best? Who painted it? When was it painted? Why do you particularly like it? See if you can create your own version of your favourite painting.

<https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/umbrella-art>

There is more information about umbrellas and parasols on this website:

[https://artsandculture.google.com/usergallery/YAISMX\\_YucmALg](https://artsandculture.google.com/usergallery/YAISMX_YucmALg)







👉 Collect a range of different materials and devise a test to see how waterproof they are. How will you ensure that it is a fair test? Mrs Noah has a black umbrella; Jackie Morris has a fox umbrella. What sort of umbrella would you like? Will it feature animals, mythical beasts, plants, weather types, or something completely different?

📏 Draw a design.

---

---

---

✂️ Try making one out of paper:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMd9NRFe\\_Nk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMd9NRFe_Nk)

✂️ This is a more complex set of instructions for making an umbrella that opens and closes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IMXOT6W1Lk>

You can use these in your display of weather poetry.

## *Tidy up the world a bit*

👉 Mr Noah wanted to take the opportunity to ‘*tidy up the world a bit.*’ Think about what you find troublesome in the world today and make a list.

Place them in order of importance, starting with minor irritations, and ending with the most troublesome. Make sure you explain why you find them problematic.

For example:

### *Troublesome things*

*Early bedtime on light summer evenings,  
Having to eat all the food on my plate,  
Splodges of chewing gum splatted on pavements,  
Discarded cans in the street.*

👉 Create a plan, like Mr Noah, writing a set of instructions:


*How to rid the world of these troublesome things.*

Think about how you will present your instructions – possibly using bullet points or numbers.


Useful words you might like to consider are: *materials, tools, ingredients, firstly, initially, next, after that, then, finally, to conclude.*




## Design an ark

 Draw plans for the biggest boat the world has ever seen. You could show an external view and a section, cut through the centre of the boat from bow to stern. Think about where you would keep the different types of animals. What sort of things would you have to take into consideration? Label your diagram to show how you plan to include them all. Don't forget to create a figurehead for your vessel. What did Mr Noah choose? You might think of another creature. What name would you give your boat?

## Stitching Song


 Mrs Noah is stitching a secret and smiling as she sews. Collect words connected with cutting, sewing and working with fabric to create a song for Mrs Noah. Play around with the words, thinking about alliteration and rhythm, so that you can echo the sound and movement of the scissors and the machine.

 When you are happy with the order of your words, create some music to accompany them. You could use tuned and / or untuned percussion; you might decide to use humming, or a repetitive refrain. You could explore the instruments and loops on a music app, such as Garage Band, to find out if they would create the right atmosphere. Record your composition, so that you can practise and perform to others.

## Pick a pocket

Did you know that there are different types of pockets?


- A patch pocket – stitched on top of a garment
- A flap pocket – stitched on top of a garment with a flap to cover the opening
- An expanding pocket – a pocket with tucks or pleats, folds or gathers to provide more space
- A kangaroo pocket – a pouch at the front of a garment
- A hidden or secret pocket – usually inside the garment

 Design a pocket of your choice for Mrs Noah's hooded cloak. You could measure and cut the pocket out of a piece of fabric and attach it to a cloak.








 This is one way to make a hooded cloak with minimal sewing:  
<https://bambinogoodies.co.uk/make-your-own-super-simple-no-sew-kids-hooded-cloak/>

You could sew your pockets onto the cloak and put a poem in your pocket, or a secret, or a plan, a wish, a question, or a dream. You might choose a different theme for each day of the week.

## *Possessions in a pocket*

 Watch this old film from 1962, where we find out what two boys kept in their pockets:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=654843908982204>

 What do you keep in your pockets?

Conduct a pocket survey and find out about the variety of items people keep in their pockets.

Create a pictogram or a graph to present your findings. Did you discover anything surprising? What is the most common item to be found in pockets? Do older people keep different things from younger people?

## *A pocketful of poems*

*I will put in my pocket ...*

Just what sort of things will you keep in your pocket? They could be very practical, or they might be highly unusual, such as a sprinkling of star dust. Or you might have a mixture of the practical and sublime, the mundane and scary. It is entirely up to you, because it is your private pocket.

 You could write a list poem by starting with the line:

*In my pocket, I will place/put/hide/smuggle/lay/sneak/smuggle ...*

When you have completed your poem, write it out beautifully and place it carefully in the pocket you designed on the cloak.



# The Heart of Mythico Wood

Imagine the landscape. What sort of trees are there in Mythico Wood, and what atmosphere do they create? Are there thick-cushioned mosses, grey-green lichens, feathered ferns, and tangled brambles?


What dwells, lives, hides, lurks, hunts, stalks, shadows, trails, chases, seeks, searches in Mythico Woods?

 Write an alliterative line for each creature to create a Menagerie

Miscellany:

For example:


*The phoenix flashes fiery feathers in the shadows of Mythico Wood.*

 Tell the story of Mrs Noah entering the wood. You could choose to tell it from Mrs Noah's point of view, or from the viewpoint of one of the creatures she has gone to seek. Think about the scents, sights, sounds of the wood and what each encounter is like. Are the creatures skittish, grateful, shy, wary, fierce, friendly?

## Create a new world collage

 Watch this video of crazy collage monsters with James Mayhew:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnVN2i790Kc>

 Collect together materials and create your own collage on a display board of the new wood Mrs Noah finds near the top of the mountain. Then create the creatures that are going to inhabit it. Think about which part of the wood would provide them with the best habitat, and think about how you will place them in the landscape.

 You might like to learn these old songs about Noah's Ark:

Which version of *The Animals Went in Two by Two* do you prefer?


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuQjR2lsY10>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_I-ZDv9IMA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_I-ZDv9IMA)

The Bachelors: *The Unicorn*:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSRUSRS\\_d3Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSRUSRS_d3Y)

## Create Accordion Books

 Finally, you could make a beautiful accordion book to display all of the work you've created! Look at the cover and end papers in Mrs Noah's pockets, created by James Mayhew, and think about the design you would like for the cover and/or end papers of your accordion book. What sort of materials will you need?

Watch Jackie Morris as she works on a folding book. Although she wrote the story of *Mrs Noah's Pockets*, she is also an artist:

<https://unbound.com/books/accordion-books/>

