

Writing narrative poems

Learn

A free verse poem is different to lots of other poems as it has no set rhyme or rhythm. Instead, they follow the natural rhythms of speech.

[\(If you have access to a computer, watch the free verse poem video.\)](#)

Narrative poems

Narrative means story and a **narrative poem** tells a story. Lots of poems are mainly about thoughts and feelings and not about telling a story, so this is a key difference.

Key features of narrative poems

- In a narrative poem, a story is told, but there is also rhythm and rhyme.
- Rhythm and rhyme give the narrative energy so that it is more exciting.
- Some narrative poems also contain repetition to add rhythm and make it more predictable.

Watch this video to learn more about narrative poems.

[\(If you have access to a computer, watch the video about narrative poems.\)](#)

Are narrative and free verse poems the same?

Free verse and narrative poems can sometimes seem similar, but they are not the same.

One key difference is that narrative poems often include some poetic devices such as rhyming, rhythm (by counting syllables) or repetition.

Stanzas

A stanza is a group of lines within a poem. A stanza is similar to a paragraph. Just like a paragraph, they contain related information and introduce new thoughts or ideas.

Key features of stanzas

Poems can contain a number of stanzas. They are separated by missing a line.

Like all poems, stanzas can rhyme, but they do not have to.

Complete these activities

Activity 1

Check your understanding. Listen to the two poems below. Can you identify which poem is a free verse poem and which is a narrative poem? If you don't have a computer extracts of the poems are at the end of this document.

Poem 1 - [First Day at School by Roger McGough](#)

Poem 2: - [Chocolate Cake by Michael Rosen](#)

Challenge

Write down some of your ideas about each poem:

- what you enjoyed
- what you would improve
- examples of repetition
- examples of rhyming
- explain why one of the poems is a free verse poem

Activity 2

If you are still isolating on Day 7, you will be writing your own narrative poem. Use whatever time you have left to plan your poem. You could complete a thought shower to record your ideas.

Consider these questions:

- What will your poem be about?
Link it to your learning journey: it could be about an explorer - real or made up, it could be about a discovery, or it could be about someone migrating, etc...
- What will happen? What is the narrative?
- How long will your poem be? How many stanzas will it have?
- Can you think of any figurative language that you want to include?

Handwriting

Extract from Hansel and Gretel

Hansel and Gretel went deeper into the forest until they reached a little house. They approached the little house and saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, and the windows were of clear sugar.

“We will set to work on that,” said Hansel, “and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and you Gretel, can eat some of the window. It will taste sweet.”

Hansel reached up above, and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted, and Gretel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes.



Letter-join 

You can complete the handwriting using the 'Handwriting line guides' which can be found on the website (where you found instructions for your work), or if you have a pack, they will be in there. Alternatively, if you think you have good control over the size of your letters, then you could work on lined paper or plain paper with guidelines.

Extracts from poems mentioned today:

Chocolate Cake

By Michael Rosen

I love chocolate cake.
And when I was a boy
I loved it even more.

Sometimes we used to have it for tea
and Mum used to say,
'If there's any left over
you can have it to take to school
tomorrow to have at playtime.'
And the next day I would take it to school
wrapped up in tin foil
open it up at playtime
and sit in the corner of the playground
eating it,
you know how the icing on top
is all shiny and it cracks as you
bite into it,
and there's that other kind of icing in
the middle
and it sticks to your hands and you
can lick your fingers
and lick your lips
oh it's lovely.
yeah.

First Day At School

By Roger McGough

A millionbillionwillion miles from home
Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?)
Why are they all so big, other children?
So noisy? So much at home they
Must have been born in uniform
Lived all their lives in playgrounds
Spent the years inventing games
That don't let me in. Games
That are rough, that swallow you up.

And the railings.
All around, the railings.
Are they to keep out wolves and monsters?
Things that carry off and eat children?
Things you don't take sweets from?
Perhaps they're to stop us getting out
Running away from the lessins. Lessin.
What does a lessin look like?
Sounds small and slimy.
They keep them in the classrooms.
Whole rooms made out of glass. Imagine.