



Changing life stories



Brontë Parsonage
MUSEUM

BRONTË
200



YOUNG BRADFORD POETS

at the Brontë Parsonage Museum



Project
handbook

Years 9 and 10

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
About the National Literacy Trust.....	3
About the Brontë Parsonage Museum.....	4
The Young Bradford Poets project	5
Poetry tips and starters	6
GCSE specification links	7
Your visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum	8
Outline scheme of work:	
Week one: Introduction to the Brontës	10
Week two: Identity.....	10
Week three: Landscape and nature.....	11
Week four: Death	12
Week five: Freedom and imagination	13
Week six: Writing	13
A poem inspired by a collection item	14
Bronze Arts Award	15
Writers living and working in Bradford	16
What does it mean to be a poet?	17
Membership and further opportunities	18
Notes.....	19



Introduction

Welcome to Parsonage Poets, a collaborative project between the National Literacy Trust and the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

As teachers we instinctively know that pupils are more likely to produce their best work when they are engaged and there is a purpose for their writing. The purpose of this project is not only to support you in developing your students' knowledge and understanding of the Brontës as local writers and in preparation for GCSE English Literature, but also to provide enjoyable cultural experiences which can be used as a stimulus for writing poetry.

Cultural venues and heritage sites provide rich opportunities for creativity and learning. The works of the Brontë siblings are an integral part of the heritage of Bradford and we are keen to support students who may not otherwise get the chance to explore the Brontë Parsonage Museum and develop their own relationship with local writers past and present.

Poetry is inherent in all forms of writing – words, ideas and communication are at its heart. So concentration on poetry benefits writing in all other areas of the curriculum. Teaching poetry is not so much about showing pupils how to be 'good at' poetry, but encouraging them towards a curiosity about poems and how they work, a willingness to play with language and a desire to communicate ideas and discover and define their individual poetry style. The process of lively discussion, followed by collaborative and individual writing and performing tasks, enables pupils to engage with literacy on their own terms in a way that also meets national curriculum requirements for writing.

This resource pack provides information about the project, an overview of the workshop your class will enjoy at the Brontë Parsonage Museum and an outline scheme of work. It is intended to be a starting point for developing poetry writing skills which can be built on in the classroom.

About the National Literacy Trust

One person in six in the UK lives with poor literacy. This holds them back at every stage of their life. Lacking these skills undermines their wellbeing and stops them making a full contribution to the economic and cultural life of our nation.

The National Literacy Trust is a national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK.

We work to improve the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the UK's most disadvantaged communities. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy and drive our interventions. Because low literacy is intergenerational we focus our work on families, young people and children.

Bradford Stories

The National Literacy Trust Hub in Bradford is an initiative from the National Literacy Trust and Bradford Council, branded locally as Bradford Stories. It is funded by the Morrisons Foundation, a charity set up by the supermarket.

Previously known as the Bradford Literacy Campaign, the initiative has been active in the city since 2012. A range of partners work together to improve literacy levels in the city and promote reading, writing, speaking and listening. The campaign focuses on sharing stories across the city, engaging dads in their child's learning and the benefits of bilingualism.

Visit www.literacytrust.org.uk to find out more, donate or sign up for free email updates. For queries regarding this resource pack please call 020 7587 1842 or email fay.lant@literacytrust.org.uk.

About the Brontë Parsonage Museum

The museum is home to the literary and cultural legacy of the Brontë family and contains artefacts and manuscripts relating to their lives. The collections at the museum are the largest and most important in the world and continue to inspire scholars, writers and artists. The collection contains diary papers, letters, miniature books and poetry manuscripts, as well as artwork and evocative, everyday possessions. The collection is housed in the Parsonage, the lifelong home of the Brontës, situated in the picturesque village of Haworth, West Yorkshire.

The Learning team at the museum engage students of all ages in a varied and lively programme exploring the Brontës' lives and works, always with the aim of making them accessible and relevant to new audiences.

Emily 2018

This is a particularly exciting year, as 2018 is the bicentenary of Emily Brontë, poet and author of Wuthering Heights one of the most powerful novels in the English language. Though respected as a classic now, the novel was reviled when first published. This year, in partnership with an exciting array of visual artists, writers and musicians, the museum will be exploring some of the very ideas that so disquieted Emily's contemporaries: the immigrant as outsider, social rebellion and the destructive impacts of gender constraints – not to mention the power of passion!



The Young Bradford Poets project

The aims of this project are to:

- ❑ Improve students' motivation and attitudes towards writing
- ❑ Improve students' knowledge and understanding of the Brontës
- ❑ Provide students with the opportunity to meet and work with a local professional poet

In order to achieve these aims, the project will follow this structure:

- 1** A full day of teacher CPD delivered by the National Literacy Trust and the Brontë Parsonage Museum which will focus on:
 - >> The Brontës and their work
 - >> Using a cultural visit to inspire writing
 - >> How to embed the visit into learning back in the classroom
- 2** A free class visit to the museum and writing workshop for students in Year 9 or 10, focusing especially on those who are disengaged from their learning or might not otherwise have the opportunity.
You will need to agree a date for your class visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum with Susan Newby: susan.newby@brontë.org.uk
- 3** Classroom teaching using the work of the Brontës to inspire the students' own poetry writing. (The outline scheme of work provided in this pack is designed to help you with this.)
- 4** A workshop with a local professional poet to take place in school. The poet will work with students to develop their editing and performance skills and help build their confidence in their writing.
- 5** The opportunity for students to publish their work and make it available for sale through our Amazon Young Storyteller initiative: www.amazon.co.uk/youngstoryteller
- 6** A celebratory event at the museum, with the opportunity for students to perform their work.

Poetry tips

- Brainstorming a poem is different to mapping an essay or factual piece. Poetry brainstorming is about not thinking too hard and trusting that you already know what you need for your poem. Poetry brainstorming is about welcoming the obvious ideas as well as the weird and off-the-wall ones.
- A blank sheet can be intimidating – ask pupils to draw round their hands or feet, draw self-portraits and write poems in and around the shapes.
- When pupils are preparing for performance, get them to rehearse in pairs, paying particular attention to voice projection, articulation, timing and rhythm, mood, facial expression and gesture.
- Ask the listeners to think about what the sound and the sense of the poem is in certain lines and encourage them to discuss together how best to get that across in the performance.
- Fidgety students can harness nervous energy by developing the unconscious movement into a choreographed gesture they can repeat. This does not have to be related to the action but can be a way of marking the rhythm. This is a trick that many professional performers use.
- Write your own poems from these activities and perform your work in front of your pupils in all its messy glory. It may be scary but they will see that this is an acceptable, admirable, necessary risk to take.
- When it comes to sharing work, the more inclusive and supportive the atmosphere the better. It's not possible to be too kind and encouraging – performing your work is a terrifying thing, even for seasoned professionals.
- In general, the more confident performers are, the better they will perform.

Starters

Free write

The most established and competent poets frequently use free writes. An example of this would be to place objects around the classroom (e.g. a leaf, an orange and a spoon) and challenge pupils to describe the objects, writing for five minutes without thinking and without stopping. If they get stuck, they can just write "and and and..." until the thought flows again.

At the end of the free-write, ask them to look back over their work and each read out a phrase. Write these phrases down on the board as they read them out. Ask them to combine as many of the phrases as possible into a new piece of writing.

Call and response rhythm game

Standing in a circle, each person creates a short, simple rhythm by clapping, clicking, stamping and/or making a percussive vocal sound that the others repeat back, as closely as possible.

The group creates a simple four-bar beat (e.g. clap clap stamp stamp.) Going round the group, each person inserts their name into the beat.

Silly stress name game

Standing in a circle, each person says their name in a strange way, simply by putting the stress on a different syllable or, if their name is one syllable, drawing it out in a tonal way.

You can add actions to this and explore how in poetry, language is stressed and intonation is key to creating meaning.

GCSE specification links

Parsonage Poets is designed to support teachers in Bradford to provide meaningful cultural experiences to students in Years 9 and 10 which inspire their creativity and writing. The project does this in a way that meets the national curriculum requirements for writing at Key Stage 3 and 4 and that fit well with the GCSE specifications for English Language and English Literature:

GCSE English Language

- AO5: specifically using form, writing for an audience and using varied vocabulary and linguistic devices.

GCSE English Literature

- AO2: Specifically how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers AND terminology for poetic devices
- AO3: developing knowledge of context for the 19th century novel

Through participation in project activities, pupils will use different strategies to develop new ideas and express them through their writing in varied and engaging ways. The activities necessarily also support students' reading, spoken language and evaluation skills in encouraging them to share their work with their peers and provide feedback to each other.

Tip: Ensure students have the opportunity to read out their work regularly, even if there is only one word or phrase they are confident enough to share.



YOUR VISIT TO THE BRONTË PARSONAGE MUSEUM



Please be aware that students will be taken onto Penistone Hill regardless of the weather conditions. When asking for parental permission for the visit, please remind them to ensure their children have appropriate footwear and outdoor clothing.

Objectives

Students will:

- Have a greater understanding of the Brontë family, including the context of their writing
- Have knowledge of the collection items touched on in the outline scheme of work
- Practise writing poetry inspired by their surroundings

Suggested preparation activities

Look at the poems written by Simon Armitage for *Mansions in the Sky*, the exhibition he curated for Branwell's bicentenary celebrations in 2017. The suggested scheme of work uses collection items as the inspiration for students' own writing and this collection provides excellent models.

Conduct a knowledge audit about the Brontë family. What do students know already, or think they know? Following a class discussion, ask students to write down one question about the

Brontës they would like to find out the answer to during the visit (and then make sure they bring them on the day).

Read the first few pages of *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and analyse as a class. Questions could include:

- What do you notice about the description of Heathcliff's house? (It might be useful to ask them to draw the house based on the description in the opening paragraphs.)
- What does this tell you about life in the early 19th century?
- What do you think the author's house might have been like?

Ensure students are familiar with pathetic fallacy and its usefulness as a poetic device.

Learning sequence

Introduction to the Brontë Parsonage Museum

When your class arrives, the visit will begin with an introductory talk about the Brontës and the museum and a guided tour of the parsonage.

Treasure hunt – 20 minutes

Explain to the students that, when they return to class, they will be writing poems inspired by some of the items in the museum. These might include:

Anne's pebbles, Emily's comb, Anne's handkerchief, *A Parody* by Branwell, Charlotte's writing desk, Branwell's ledger book, Branwell's 'Little Henry' toy, Charlotte's moccasins and Emily's tin box.

Ask them to find nine items listed on their worksheet and write down notes about them. Their notes could include:

- A brief description of the item
- Something they like or don't like about the item
- A question they have about the item

Group discussion – 10 minutes

Ask the students to feed back about what they have seen and what they have discovered about the Brontës. This is a good opportunity for them to ask any questions they have about the items or any of the siblings.

Lines composed on Penistone Hill – 30 minutes

The Brontës' writing was often inspired by nature and their surroundings. The class will be taken on to Penistone Hill and asked to write a poem inspired by nature by filling in the gaps of a poem written by Anne Brontë. If you would like to challenge higher ability students, you could just provide the title and ask them to begin writing their own poem.

Students will have the opportunity to perform and share their favourite lines from the new poem they have created.

Plenary – 15 minutes

The original poem *Lines Composed in a Wood on a Windy Day* will be shared with the students and they will be asked to highlight any differences between their own poems and Anne Brontë's. Ask students what impact the weather conditions had on the tone of their poem and recap the concept of pathetic fallacy.

Lines Composed on Penistone Hill on a _____ day

By _____

My _____ is awakened, my _____ is soaring

And carried aloft on the _____ of the breeze;

For above and around me the _____ wind is _____,

Arousing to rapture the earth and the _____.

The long _____ grass is _____,

The _____ trees are _____ their branches on high;

The _____ leaves beneath them are _____,

The _____ clouds are _____ across the _____ sky.

I wish I could see how the ocean is _____

The foam of its billows to _____ of spray;

I wish I could see how its _____ waves are _____,

And hear the _____ of their thunder to-day!

Outline scheme of work:

Week one: Introduction to the Brontës

We suggest that your visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum takes place as part of your introduction to the Brontës.

You may also find the following resources useful:

- ❑ An overview of the Brontës' lives and writing: www.Brontë.org.uk/the-Brontës-and-haworth
- ❑ Clips from the BBC drama *To Walk Invisible*: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04cf4wv
- ❑ Information about the creative decisions taken in staging *Jane Eyre* at the National Theatre: www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/backstage/janeeyre
- ❑ Writing activities linked with the National Youth Theatre's production of *Wuthering Heights*: www.nyt.org.uk/sites/default/files/u386/wutheringheights_web.pdf
- ❑ Interesting information about the Brontës: www.telegraph.co.uk/books/authors/11-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-Brontës/

Week two: Identity

Collection items: Branwell's 'Little Henry' toy, Charlotte's moccasins and Emily's tin box

Focus on conveying meaning, analyse writers' use of vocabulary, poetic devices and structure (form and rhyme scheme) for effect and practise doing the same.

Suggested texts for analysis and/or modelling:

- ❑ Chapter 6, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (Heathcliff and Catherine play on the moor but Heathcliff is not invited to stay at Thrushcross Grange)
- ❑ *I Am the Only Being Whose Doom* by Emily Brontë
- ❑ *Retrospective* by Charlotte Brontë

Discussion activity: Emily Brontë kept her diary locked in her tin box – what does this suggest about Emily and life at the parsonage? Create an imagined tin box for the class and ask every student to pick their most important possession to include in the box. (To ensure creative responses, provide 'rules' such as: it can't be an electronic item, piece of clothing or living being and must be small enough to fit into the box.) Ask students what their chosen item suggests about them.

Creative activity: Look at Charlotte Brontë's moccasins compared with her other shoes. What can students infer about the different aspects of Charlotte from her shoes? Ask students to think about the different roles they play (e.g. student, brother, volunteer) and create their own 'Little ____' (replacing 'Henry' with their own name) showing different outfits for each of their different identities.

Writing task: Write a stanza that gives the reader an idea about your identity.

Extension: To introduce students to more poems about identity from a range of contexts, consider:

- ❑ The work of John Agard
- ❑ *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou
- ❑ *One* by Sarah Crossan
- ❑ *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost
- ❑ *The Boy with the Similar Name* by Roger McGough
- ❑ The work of Grace Nichols
- ❑ The work of Kate Tempest (check suitability of language for classroom)



Tin Box This tin box was used by Emily to keep her short 'diary papers' in. The box would be unlocked about every four years, when the last diary paper would be read, and a new one locked away.

Week three: Landscape and nature

Collection item: Anne's pebbles

Focus on vocabulary, analyse writers' use of vocabulary and poetic devices for effect and practise doing the same.

Suggested texts for analysis and/or modelling:

- ❑ Chapter 34, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (Heathcliff's death and visions of the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff on rainy nights)
- ❑ *Fall, Leaves, Fall* by Emily Brontë
- ❑ *That Wind I Used To Hear It Swelling* by Emily Brontë
- ❑ *Lines Composed in a Wood on a Windy Day* by Anne Brontë

Discussion activity: Class discussion about Anne's pebbles – why did she keep them? Why did Charlotte keep them? Have students got any mementos of places that are special to them?

Creative activity: Label an image of a 19th century painting using vocabulary and poetic devices that effectively describe the scene. (e.g. *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* by Caspar David Friedrich, 1818; *The Hay Wain* by John Constable, 1821; *The Slave Ship* by J. M. W. Turner, 1840)

Writing task: Write a verse of a poem describing a place that is special to you.

Extension: To introduce students to more nature poems from a range of contexts, consider the work of:

- ❑ Valerie Bloom
- ❑ Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- ❑ Seamus Heaney
- ❑ Alice Oswald
- ❑ William Wordsworth



Week four: Death

N.B. This is a sensitive topic so it may be useful to signpost support services such as the school counsellor or allow students to opt out of parts of the lesson/s. You could also ask a colleague who teaches PSHE for support or access resources from the PSHE Association or Dying Matters.

Collection items: Emily's comb, Anne's handkerchief and *A Parody* by Branwell

Focus on poetic devices, analyse writers' use of vocabulary and poetic devices for effect and practise doing the same.

Suggested texts for analysis and/or modelling:

- ❑ Chapter 3, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (Catherine's ghost appears at the window)
- ❑ *The Old Church Tower* by Emily Brontë
- ❑ *On Peaceful Death and Painful Life* by Branwell Brontë

Discussion activity: Provide questions for pairs to discuss, for example:

In a museum, the item I would like to represent me is...

One thing I think about death is...

Something I would like to do before I die is...

The song I would like played at my funeral is...

I would like to be remembered for...

You could ask the class to do the same for one of the Brontë siblings.

Creative activity: Show the class Branwell's drawing of death and ask them to produce their own drawing of death. Collate these as a collage or keep them to help with the writing task.

Writing task: Write a verse using an extended metaphor to describe death.

Extension: To introduce students to more poems about death (including the form of elegy) from a range of contexts; consider:

- ❑ *Stop All the Clocks* by W. H. Auden
- ❑ The work of Emily Dickinson
- ❑ *Do Not Stand At My Grave and Weep* by Mary Elizabeth Frye
- ❑ *Death Is Nothing At All* by Henry Scott Holland
- ❑ The work of Dylan Thomas



Emily's Comb It is thought that Emily used this comb on the day of her death. She dropped it in the fire and it was retrieved, scorched, by their servant Martha.

Week five: Freedom and imagination

Collection items: Charlotte's writing desk and Branwell's Luddenden Foot Notebook

Focus on form and structure, analyse writers' use of vocabulary and form (structure and rhyme scheme) for effect and practise doing the same.

Suggested texts for analysis and/or modelling:

- ❑ Chapter 29, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (Heathcliff tries to exhume Catherine's body)
- ❑ *The Captive Dove* by Anne Brontë (recommend stanzas 1, 2 and 5)
- ❑ *On Imagination* by Emily Brontë

Discussion activity: Share the video called *Books Unlocked* on www.wearestraightline.com and talk about the meaning of freedom. Why might this have been a theme in the Brontës' writing?

Creative activity: Students complete a free write task or a monologue from the perspective of their desk. Think about the things the desk has to say and all the things that have been written on it (either figuratively through the paper or literally).

Writing task: Write a stanza beginning with lines 7 and 8 from Emily Brontë's poem *To Imagination*. Challenge: ensure your stanza follows the same form as the poem.

Extension: To introduce students to more poems about freedom and imagination from a range of contexts, consider:

- ❑ *Caged Bird* by Maya Angelou
- ❑ *You are a Poet* by Joseph Coelho
- ❑ *Poetry and the Dragon* by A F Harold
- ❑ *Invictus* by William Ernest Henley
- ❑ *Paper News* by Sophie McKeand (ensure content is appropriate for class)
- ❑ *The Instructions* by Kate Wakeling

Week six: Writing

Ask students to look back at the four stanzas they have created this half term and work on developing and editing their favourite one into a complete poem.

At this point, we would suggest students participate in a workshop with a local professional poet on editing and performance.

A poem inspired by a collection item

Lost and Found

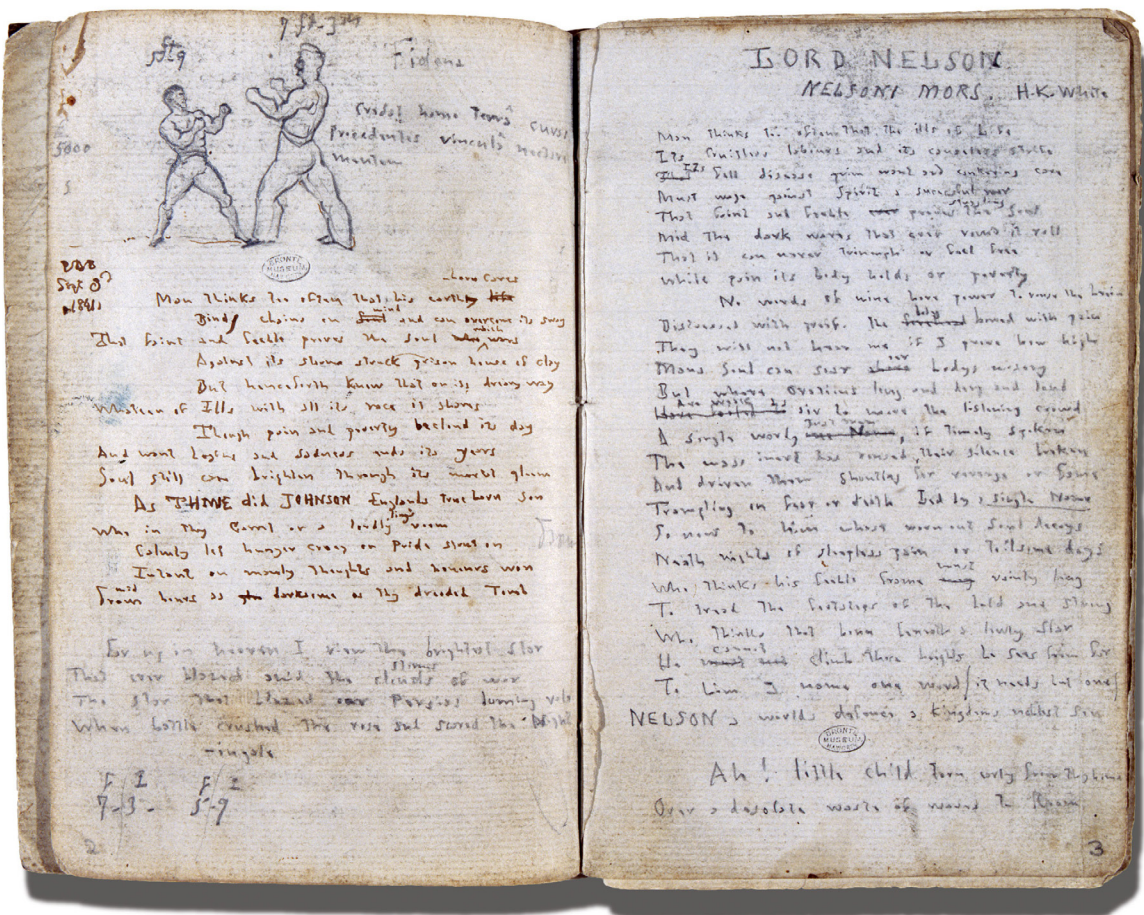
1) Lost

Stolen or unintentionally removed, one artist's daybook and journal, hand-stitched vellum bound in the choicest rhinoceros hide and fastened with white-gold buckle. Of incalculable creative value, said object comprises detailed ethnographic portrait studies, philosophical observations, intellectual meditations, Latin and Greek inscription, archaeological illustrations from the classical period, delicate line-drawings and original drafts of poetic works (including short formal lyrics and extracts from epic cycles) in the modern "Romantic" style. Artefact immediately identifiable via its quality penmanship, mature quillwork and distinguished calligraphy. Owner an educated gentleman of forgiving heart; finder assured at least a footnote in the annals of British art and literature plus the gratitude of the nation. Reward: declared upon presentation.

2) Found

One smallish notebook, unruled paper, dog-eared leaves, much discolouring (some staining). Contents: pencil scribbles, ramblings and doodles to most pages including amateurish cartoon profiles and caricatures, juvenilia, doggerel and shopping lists in a childish hand, plus evidence of train-spotting. Distinct whiff of alehouse. Some bite-marks. Also contains occasional profanities, questionable theological statements and crude anatomical representations (Parish Magistrate duly notified). Recovered from wasteland near the Lord Nelson Inn, Luddenden Foot, along with masonic apparatus (see separate listing) and bloody handkerchief (incinerated upon discovery). Assumed local owner. No intrinsic worth but of some personal or sentimental value, possibly. To be held for one week only.

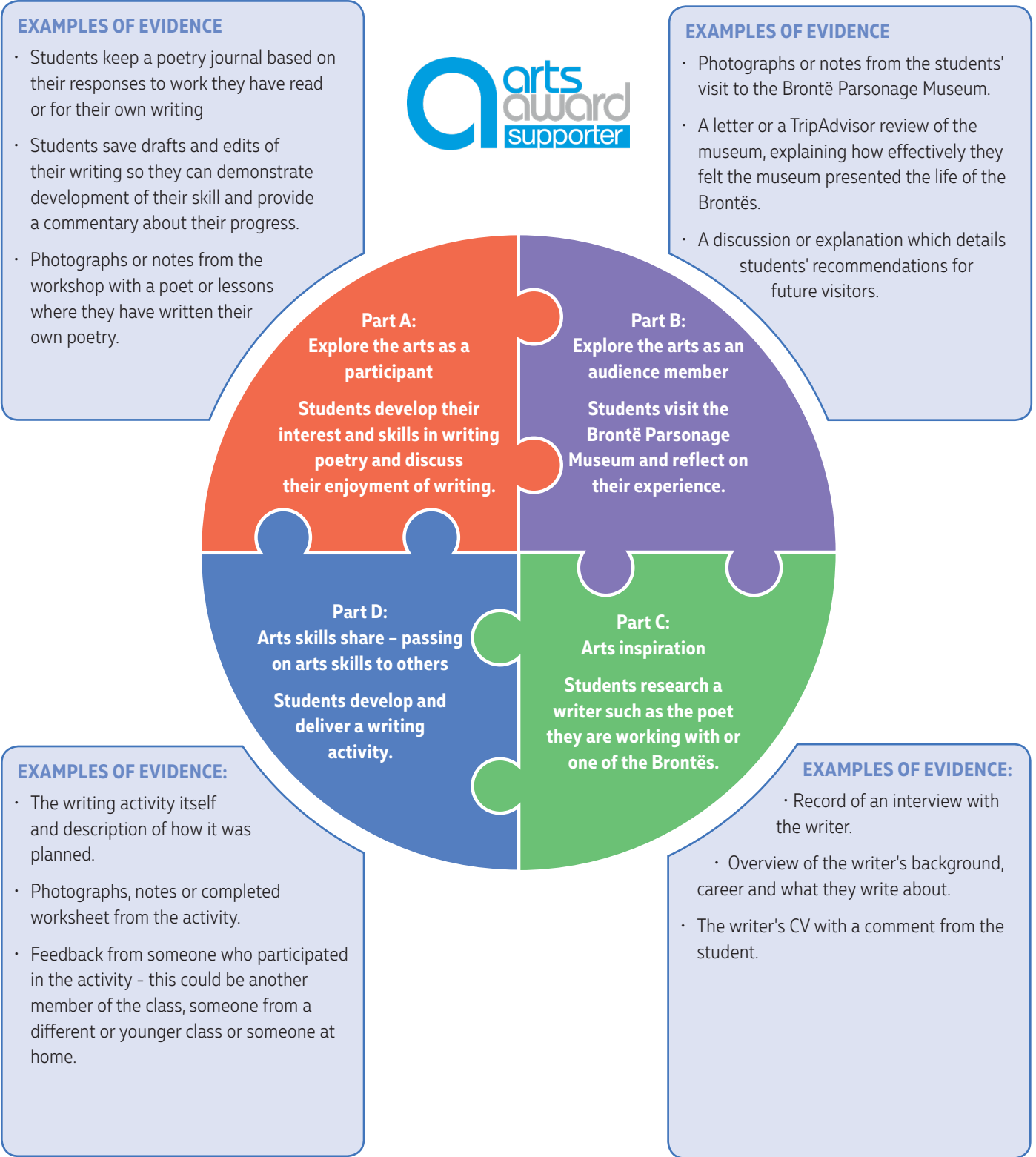
Taken from *Mansions in the Sky* (2017) by Simon Armitage



Luddenden Foot notebook Pocket book owned by Branwell while working at Luddenden Foot, for the Leeds and Manchester railway. Branwell used the notebook to record his professional tasks as well as sketches, drawings, poetry and notes. He was dismissed from this employment in March 1842.

Bronze Arts Award

The Parsonage Poets project is perfectly structured to support your students in achieving their Bronze Arts Award. The diagram below demonstrates how the project maps onto the requirements of the award. For further information or to speak to a local Arts Award advisor, please contact IVE, the bridge organisation for Yorkshire and the Humber (weareive.org).



Writers living and working in Bradford



Kirsty Taylor

Kirsty Taylor is a Bradford-born, Bradford-bred secondary school teacher. Guilty of MC'ing in her bedroom throughout her teenage years, with a keen ear for hip-hop and grime (tracksuit and trainers to boot!) Kirsty finally found her own way with words. Inspired by her beloved city of 'Bratfud', Kirsty takes a sensitive look at life in Britain; from *Sausage Roll Babies* to *Social Media Addicts*, her rhymes and rhythms tell stories that are honest, accurate and often a brutal yet heartfelt reflection of today's society.



Joolz Denby

Bradford's very own Joolz Denby is perhaps the country's best-known female performance poet. She is a writer, illustrative and fine artist, tattooist, art curator and photographer. Her poetry collections include *The Pride of Lions* (1994), *Errors of the Spirit* (2000) and *Pray For Us Sinners*, a book of short stories and poems (2005).



Miles Salter

Miles Salter is a writer, musician and storyteller based in York. His writing include two volumes of poetry, a children's book, a book for Young Adults and numerous pieces of journalism. He co-edited the Valley Press Anthology of Yorkshire Poetry with Oz Hardwick.



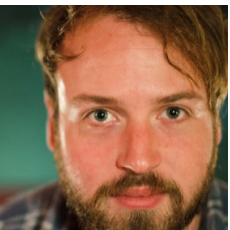
Matt Wooding

Originally from Australia, Matthew lived in Canada for ten years working in journalism before he moved to Yorkshire in 2013. In 2014, he published his first book, *Letters to Nan*. Matthew continues to write and publish his stories, drawing on personal experience, history, and modern issues. He now also works with local secondary schools delivering workshops to help students discover their own love of writing. Recently, Matthew worked with students at University Academy Keighley, running his creative writing programme, to help produce and publish their own anthology of short stories and poetry.



Tom Palmer

Tom Palmer is a children's author from Leeds. He writes stories about spies, detectives, ghosts and war, all set in the world of sport. When he visits schools he can perform his Football Reading Game, which involves children recommending reading to each other, a quiz and a penalty shootout. His *Football Academy* and *Foul Play* series are published by Puffin and his book *Over the Line* is about footballers who fought in the First World War.

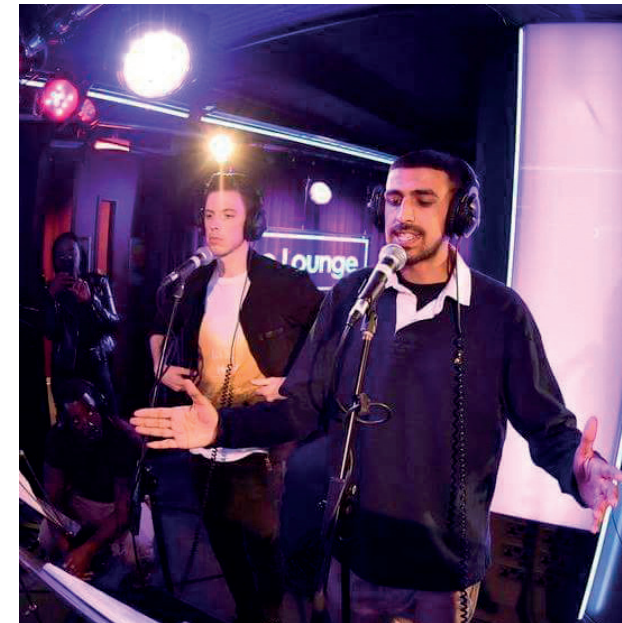


Joe Kriss

Joe is a poet, event promoter, stage manager, editor and creative facilitator based in Sheffield. He is part of the artists collective, Opus Independents, and he is the founder of the live literature organisation Word Life, which puts on events featuring some of the biggest names in UK performance poetry at some of the top venues in the region.

He has extensive experience of running writing workshops at every level from primary to university and believes passionately in the power of the spoken word to educate, inform and entertain.

What does it mean to be a poet?



Saju Ahmed is a performance poet and graduate of the Leeds Young Authors project. He has performed nationally and internationally at poetry slams and literary festivals including New York, California and Washington.

When and why did you start writing poetry?

I grew up in an area of Leeds that was considered deprived and violent, so at secondary school some of us were given mentors from the community for some extra support. It was while I was injured and couldn't play football that my mentor, Mr Francis, told me I should go along to a poetry group. There was no way I wanted to go but he told me it was a chance to do something positive and I might even get to go to America with the group, so I gave it a try.

It was at the group that I met Khadijah Ibrahim (Leeds-based poet, playwright and activist). She asked me what poetry is and I said "It's boring, it's Shakespeare." She asked me what rap is and I said "It's music, expression, freedom, it's whatever you want." Khadijah told me that rap means rhythm and poetry and gave me a book of poems by Tupac Shakur. I was sold.

What do you think are the benefits of writing poetry?

For me, there have been so many benefits. The first thing that blew my mind was one of the first poetry slams I went to. We were there with lots of other teams and we thought it would be really competitive but before we started performing we had the chance to get to know each other. We really built an emotional connection so that when someone started performing we were cheering for them because we knew them and what they had been through. It was really powerful.

Poetry has also massively increased my confidence. When I was chosen to join the Leeds Young Authors, I was really scared but it made me feel special and like I had something to say that people wanted to listen to. Since then poetry has opened my eyes to new perspectives and I feel like I'm constantly learning.

What does the life of a poet look like?

I think it can vary massively. For me, I'm not a full-time poet. I have a day job working at a local college in the admissions and advice department. I really enjoy working with the young people and talking to them about making the best decision for them. I'm also lucky that they are flexible in letting me take time off if I'm involved in community projects or have a poetry event.

I have been massively inspired by Khadijah and I now volunteer at the Leeds Young Authors project. It's really good to be able to mentor the next generation of young people and support them to express themselves in the same way that writing helped me.

What would you say to anyone just beginning to write their own poems?

My advice would be not to follow the rules. Poetry is not just about rhyming or a sonnet or haiku.

The best thing about poetry is what it teaches you about yourself and there are no rules in the way you express yourself. Anyone can do it. The shortest poem in the English language was written by Mohammed Ali and it goes:

"Me.

We."

Anyone can write two words!

The only thing I would say is to be honest. If you don't have experience of guns or drugs then there is no point writing about it. Speak your truth and you never know who it might reach. I know of people who have performed poems about self-harm or feeling depressed and it has really meant something to someone in the audience. I really believe poetry can save lives!

EMBEDDING A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH Annual Literacy Review

Our new and improved Annual Literacy Review is a valuable tool that supports literacy leaders to review their school's current literacy provision and develop an action plan for moving forward. An example poster has been included on the next page of this handbook.

You can also find this resource at:
literacytrust.org.uk/annual-literacy-school-review

Annual Literacy Research and Policy Guide for Schools

This is the ultimate resource for schools: a yearly compilation of recent research and policy developments in literacy to support busy practitioners in building evidence-based practice.

Areas covered:

1. Leading whole-school literacy
2. Reading enjoyment
3. Reading skills
4. Writing enjoyment
5. Writing skills
6. Spoken language
7. Supporting literacy

Go to:
literacytrust.org.uk/annual-literacy-research-policy-guide

WORKING WITH THE NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST

As a project participant you have the opportunity to use our logo on your website, signage and letterheads.

Go to literacytrust.org.uk/working-with-us-logo to find out more.

working with

National
Literacy
Trust

2017/18

UNDERSTANDING THE LITERACY REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW GCSES

Every GCSE subject will soon include literacy requirements. To help teachers meet this challenge, our secondary experts have developed a workshop to focus on key areas such as extended writing and SPAG.

Find out more at literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/understanding-literacy-requirements-new-gcses/



ORACY WITHIN THE CURRICULUM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This 1-day workshop will help you develop an understanding of oracy as a key component of literacy, particularly as a mechanism to improve reading and writing. We invite teachers from different subjects to attend this course, along with literacy leaders.

Find out more at literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/oracy-within-curriculum-secondary-schools/





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