



Brontë Parsonage  
MUSEUM

BRONTË  
**200**



# YOUNG BRADFORD POETS

Our Stories at the Brontë Parsonage Museum



Project  
handbook  
Years 5 to 9

**BRADFORD  
STORIES**



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# Introduction

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Welcome to Young Bradford 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 for this project is to engage those students who might currently be reluctant to write. The playful activities in this resource pack all respond to English curriculum requirements across Years 5 to 9 but, more than that, we know that poetry provides an opportunity for creativity and self-expression.

This project will also develop your students' knowledge and understanding of the Brontës as local writers. 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 suggested poetry-based activities and learning sequences developed by poet and schools practitioner, **Francesca Beard**. 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 England 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 an independent 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 children, young people and families.

## Bradford Stories

The National Literacy Trust Hub in Bradford is an campaign 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 [literacytrust.org.uk](http://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](mailto:fay.lant@literacytrust.org.uk).



# The Young Bradford Poets project

This project aims to improve pupils' enjoyment of writing, their motivation to write and their attitudes to poetry.

In addition, their knowledge and understanding of the Brontës will increase and they will have the opportunity to meet and work with a local professional poet.

## Project structure

### Teacher briefing

A full day of training 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
- Working with a professional poet

### Free class visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum

You will need to agree a date for your class visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum with Learning Officer Susan Newby: [susan.newby@brontë.org.uk](mailto:susan.newby@brontë.org.uk).

### Poetry in the classroom

Focused on one of the project themes:

- Identity
- Place
- Journeys and migration

### Workshops with a professional poet

Two fully-subsidised workshops for one class, focused on editing and performance.

### Real audience and purpose

Celebration of pupils' writing through:

- Performance event for pupils and parents
- Publication of an anthology of pupils' writing

## Links to the national curriculum

### Reading and writing

- Encouraging poetry reading and writing for pleasure
- Vocabulary development
- Discussing how poets use language and the impact on the reader
- Writing ideas down at speed
- Learning poetry by heart
- Developing initial ideas, drawing on reading and research
- Assessing the effectiveness of pupils' own and others' writing

### Spoken language

- Preparing poems to read aloud
- Performing compositions, using appropriate intonation, volume and movement





# Spaces for sharing

Local museums and galleries are fantastic places to inspire literacy-based activities both in and out of school. With fascinating collections that range from the natural sciences to the arts and social and industrial history to archaeology, and all the places and stories connected with them, cultural venues hold infinite potential to inspire young people to wonder, talk and question.



## 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. You can contact Learning Officer Susan Newby at [susan.newby@brontë.org.uk](mailto:susan.newby@brontë.org.uk).

## The Art and Science of Noticing

Encouraging children to share ideas and experiences whether with peers or parents is at the heart of supporting literacy activities at Bradford Museums and Galleries.

These questions are central to an innovative child-led methodology developed by Bradford Museums and Galleries Learning Team called the 'Art and Science of Noticing' (ASN), which starts with drawing and ends with poetry writing and inspiring pupils to find out more.

It is a move away from traditional museum and gallery learning experiences which direct children what to look at; instead ASN gives children the freedom to use their own natural curiosity to connect with collections.

To find out more about The Art and Science of Noticing delivered by Bradford Museums and Galleries, you can contact: [learning@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:learning@bradford.gov.uk).

### The Art and Science of Noticing

- What do you notice when you look round a museum or art gallery?
- What interests you and why?
- Could you draw it if I teach you some drawing skills?
- Would you like to talk to a partner or the class about it?
- Could you write down the answers/ideas to some questions about it?
- Can we arrange and edit those answers into a poem? Share your poem?

# 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, Charlotte's writing desk, Branwell's ledger book, Patrick's walking stick.

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!



# Poetry tips to the wise...



An ice-breaker game or a physical warm-up works well in signalling that poetry writing is not an academic exercise. Call and response games that focus on teamwork and speaking and listening help the class to be a supportive audience when it comes to performances.

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. Using images and photographs as a starting point can raise pupils' curiosity and elicit vocabulary and dialogue towards poetry writing. Using visual prompts for discussion like this offers an inclusive approach that supports the abilities of all pupils, including those with EAL (English as an Additional Language) and SEN (Special Educational Needs).

Quick-fire sketching activities can help inspire ideas and act as a 'frame' for their written work, e.g. pupils 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 doing in certain lines and encourage them to discuss together how best to get that across with 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.



# Poetry starters

## Call and Response Rhythm Game

Standing in a circle, each person creates a short, simple rhythm by clapping, clicking, stamping and/or 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.

## Magic Circle Game

Standing in a circle, the class creates a portal to a magical dimension – one by one, each person reaches into the circle and pulls out an object, declaring ‘I’m taking out penguins/diamonds/traffic lights/dragons...’. Far from being competitive, this is a collaborative improvisation with no pauses between each object and no commentary.

## Self-Portrait

Challenge pupils to the following sketch activities and after each drawing ask them to think of words they can associate with the version of themselves:

- Sketch a self-portrait in 60 seconds
- In 40 seconds with their non-writing hand
- In 40 seconds in one continuous line without taking the pencil off the page

How would you describe the person in each sketch? What does each self-portrait say about the pupil? Which self-portrait do they prefer and why? Generate a word bank that describes the portraits and move the pupils into writing their self-portrait without using their first or family name. This could use a riddle form – or any simple form – haiku, limerick, kenning, clerihew or rap. Using an acrostic, for example, it could spell out Who Am I? Print out the pieces for the class to read them aloud and guess whose is whose.

## Free write

The most established and competent poets swear by free writes. An example of this would be to place objects through the classroom e.g. a leaf, an orange, a spoon, and challenge pupils to describe the object in a free write. They should write for five minutes without thinking and without stopping. If they get stuck, they 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 read out a phrase each. 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 – it can take any form. Or ask them to use the phrase they shared as the title of a new piece.



# Identity: learning sequence

## Preparation

You will need:

- Blank A4 paper
- Pens or pencils
- Two containers

## Group activity: 20 minutes

Pupils fold one sheet of blank A4 paper into quarters and number each quarter 1 to 4. Number 1 will be the top left, number 2 as the top right, number 3 as the lower left and number 4 as the lower right.

Pupils will need to write in each quarter:

- 1) Noun or object
- 2) Definition
- 3) Abstract noun
- 4) Definition

Examples to model:

- 1) Poem
- 2) A human construct, usually involving words, that bends language to get beyond it
- 3) Love
- 4) A positive emotion

or....

- 1) Carrot
- 2) A root vegetable
- 3) Space
- 4) We all live in it

Tip: Don't use dictionaries. Give your class permission not to worry about using the correct definition. Encourage them to choose things from their own experience and be as precise as possible in the description.

When everyone has done this, each person tears their paper into four pieces, being careful to keep the odd numbers separate from the even. All the even numbers go into container A, all the odd into container B.



A volunteer takes one random piece of paper from container A and another from container B and reads out the 'new' definition, e.g. A carrot is a positive emotion.

## Discussion: 10 minutes

Pupils pull out more 'new' definitions to read together. Sometimes you might have the correct definition paired with its word and this is surprisingly disappointing. In discussion, talk about why some of the combinations work better and are more interesting than others – this is getting to the heart of poetry!

## Individual writing exercise – list poem: 15 minutes

Pupils each choose an object or concept from container B and think about how this might help them describe themselves or their own experiences. Have them write a list poem where every line begins "I'm from", as in the poem opposite.

## Sharing: 15 minutes

Volunteers read their list poems aloud, with the class as active listeners ready to comment and appreciate.



# Identity: model poems

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## I Am the Only Being Whose Doom

I am the only being whose doom  
No tongue would ask, no eye would mourn;  
I never caused a thought of gloom,  
A smile of joy, since I was born.

In secret pleasure, secret tears,  
This changeful life has slipped away,  
As friendless after eighteen years,  
As lone as on my natal day.

**Extract from *I am the Only Being Whose Doom*  
by Emily Brontë**

## I come from a strong woman

I come from a strong woman,  
From manners and responsibility.  
I come from a war-zone with my brothers,  
from fights to arguments.  
I come from independence and courage,  
Looking up to my father with inspiration as  
he tells me to “do well” and “be happy with  
what I do”.

I come from giving and believing, wanting to  
give my family happiness, to giving to the  
poor. I come from believing in God and  
leaving everything in His hands.

I come from wind and destruction, to  
thunder and sun.  
I am from anger and pain, to wanting all  
that I love,  
From highs to lows, to loving to explore and  
adventures.  
I come from dreaming big, to wanting to be  
successful and wanting to make my parents proud.  
I come from hope.

I come from social media, to going out and  
visiting places.  
I come from enjoying time out with my  
friends.  
I come from spending quality time with my  
family.

**By Nisha Ullah, University Academy Keighley**

# Places: learning sequence

## Preparation

You will need:

- Paper and pens/pencils
- Photos of different Bradford scenes (see [scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/whats-on/above-noise](http://scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/whats-on/above-noise))

## Group exercise: 20 minutes

Working with a partner, pupils explore the photographs of landscapes (included in this resource and available at and choose one to explore.

They talk through the following prompts in preparation for sharing their findings with the class:

- Look closely at the image scanning it from top to bottom, left to right
- What is the most obvious thing about the portrait?
- Is there a tiny detail that others might miss?
- What is in the corners of the image?
- What do you notice about the mood and colour?
- If there are people or animals in the photo, where are they looking and what are they doing?
- What might happen in a place like this? How can you tell?
- Would you like to be in this place and why?

## Sharing and discussion: 20 minutes

Pupils now explore the online archives and listen and read poems by their chosen poet.

- Which words do you think describe the place best?
- How well do you think the poet knew that place?
- What would you describe as the tone (or main emotion) in the photo? Is this the same as in the poem?
- What might you have done differently to represent the place?
- What question would you like to ask this poet?

## Sharing: 20 minutes

Pupils share their photograph, poem, and their findings with the class.



# Places: model poems

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## Lines Composed in a Wood on a Windy Day

My soul is awakened, my spirit is soaring  
And carried aloft on the winds of the breeze;  
For above and around me the wild wind is roaring,  
Arousing to rapture the earth and the seas.  
The long withered grass in the sunshine is glancing,  
The bare trees are tossing their branches on high;  
The dead leaves beneath them are merrily dancing,  
The white clouds are scudding across the blue sky.  
I wish I could see how the ocean is lashing  
The foam of its billows to whirlwinds of spray;  
I wish I could see how its proud waves are dashing,  
And hear the wild roar of their thunder to-day!

**By Anne Brontë**

## The Final Frontier

A canvas, splashed and dotted, frayed and worn,  
lies above us.

Empty and grand, a huge black blanket  
hugging everything, a white eye glaring down  
with searing, lifeless heat,

The universe.

An ocean with no edges, a place within which  
simple stones and sprawling gas can create  
flourishing worlds where life becomes aware,  
with time, that it was not made by a tall man  
with a beard.

Pulsars dance like rapid, cosmic lighthouses, a  
gleeful remnant of a furious crimson sun.  
Black holes sit quietly and mysteriously, an  
invisible pit for all but light to make deeper.

Flea like, ugly pieces of steel hop back and  
forth between miniscule rocks spinning  
around a little yellow spot.

This is the cauldron from which existence itself  
was conjured, using nothing with potential.

And, in yet another standard spiral galaxy, in  
another standard solar system, on a damp  
little rock in the middle of nowhere, there's a  
spotty little fourteen-year-old that needs a  
haircut.

Why on earth would I write about that?

**By Alfie Parker, Buttershaw Business and  
Enterprise College**



# Journeys: learning sequence

## Preparation

You will need:

- Selection of printed poems – one per A4 page in large font
- A timer
- Class set of scissors and glue
- Large pieces of sugar paper

## Before you start:

- Cut up each poem line by line and then shuffle the lines
- Divide the class into 5 to 6 groups and distribute a shuffled poem to each group

## Group exercise: 20 minutes

Give the class a time challenge to reassemble the poems in the way that they think makes most sense.

The object of this game is to think about editing, about the active role of the reader and about how a poem's literal meaning can be obscure. Pupils will experience the poem through the filter of their own associations and therefore own their individual interpretations of a piece.

## Sharing and discussion: 15 minutes

Ask each group to read out the poems and explain what they are about. Either play a recording of the actual poem or read the poem to the class.

## Group writing exercise: 15 minutes

Give each group a large piece of sugar paper, scissors and glue. Challenge each group to make a new poem from the words of the original poems.

## Sharing: 10 minutes

Groups learn the poems and read them aloud, with the class as active listeners ready to comment and appreciate.

## Take it further!

Each pupil takes any one line from the poems explored, and this forms the title for a new poem.

If they want, they can use more than one line, including lines from other pieces, but the original poems act as prompts for their own work.



# Journeys: model poems

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## Bradford

And I sit down for a minute, amongst the books  
and think of the town, stretching out and away  
from here; dark and bright, beautiful and ugly,  
the high-sided wind-scoured canyons of the deserted mills  
telling their silent stories of what has been and what will be;  
the deaths, the births, the fighting and the love,  
all the humanity of it, gathered from every place in the world,  
and all of us, everything, under the infinite night-sky now,  
a silver twist of crescent moon fragile as a girl's first earring  
visible even over the streetlights' sodium glare,  
and I think - this is where we live, in this stone maze,  
in this northern city, under the terrible stars, and we belong.

Extract from *Bradford* by Joolz Denby

## Travellers

(inspired by a painting)

We were negotiating new paths  
And moving on,  
But our journey is harsh.

The dreams that we packed in our eyes  
When we left home,  
Have all been claimed by sandstorms.

The caravan of pain  
has no destination in sight,  
the sky is cruel  
and there is no shelter from the sun  
where we can rest.  
How can we keep going?

In the distance over the horizon  
there are signs of a settlement.  
If we can find a suitable dream there,  
then  
with renewed vigour  
we will start our journey  
towards life.

By Hafeez Johar

# Poets you'll be working with



## Saju Ahmed

Saju Ahmed is a performance poet and a 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.

Saju says that he used to find it difficult to concentrate at school because he found it boring and often got into trouble with his teachers. This was before he discovered Poetry Slam which changed his life.



## 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 published in 2005.

Her featured poem was written as part of Bradford's bid for European Capital of Culture status in 2008.

Joolz is an avid supporter of the Bradford Literacy Campaign. She has attended events and has supported poetry competitions through her amazing writing tips for pupils.



## Imran Hafeez

Imran Hafeez is the National Literacy Trust's Hub manager in Bradford. He has supported the development of this programme and hopes the experience will help to inspire and build resilience in vulnerable young people in the city. He has written and recorded rap poetry in conjunction with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Bradford Council for social action projects and last year he spent some time with Bradford school groups inspiring them with his performances.



## Michelle Scally-Clarke

Michelle Scally-Clarke is a Leeds-born writer and performer. She is a published poet with two novels *I Am* and *She Is* currently in print. Michelle has performed with some of the UK's most recognised poets such as Linton Kwesi Johnson, Benjamin Zephaniah, Lemn Sissay and Simon Armitage, and has toured as a solo performer throughout the UK and internationally including America, Europe, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.



## 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 *Broken Britain*; from *Sausage Roll Babies* to *Social Media Addicts*, her rhymes and rhythms tell stories which are honest, accurate and often a brutal yet heartfelt reflection of today's society.



# 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."

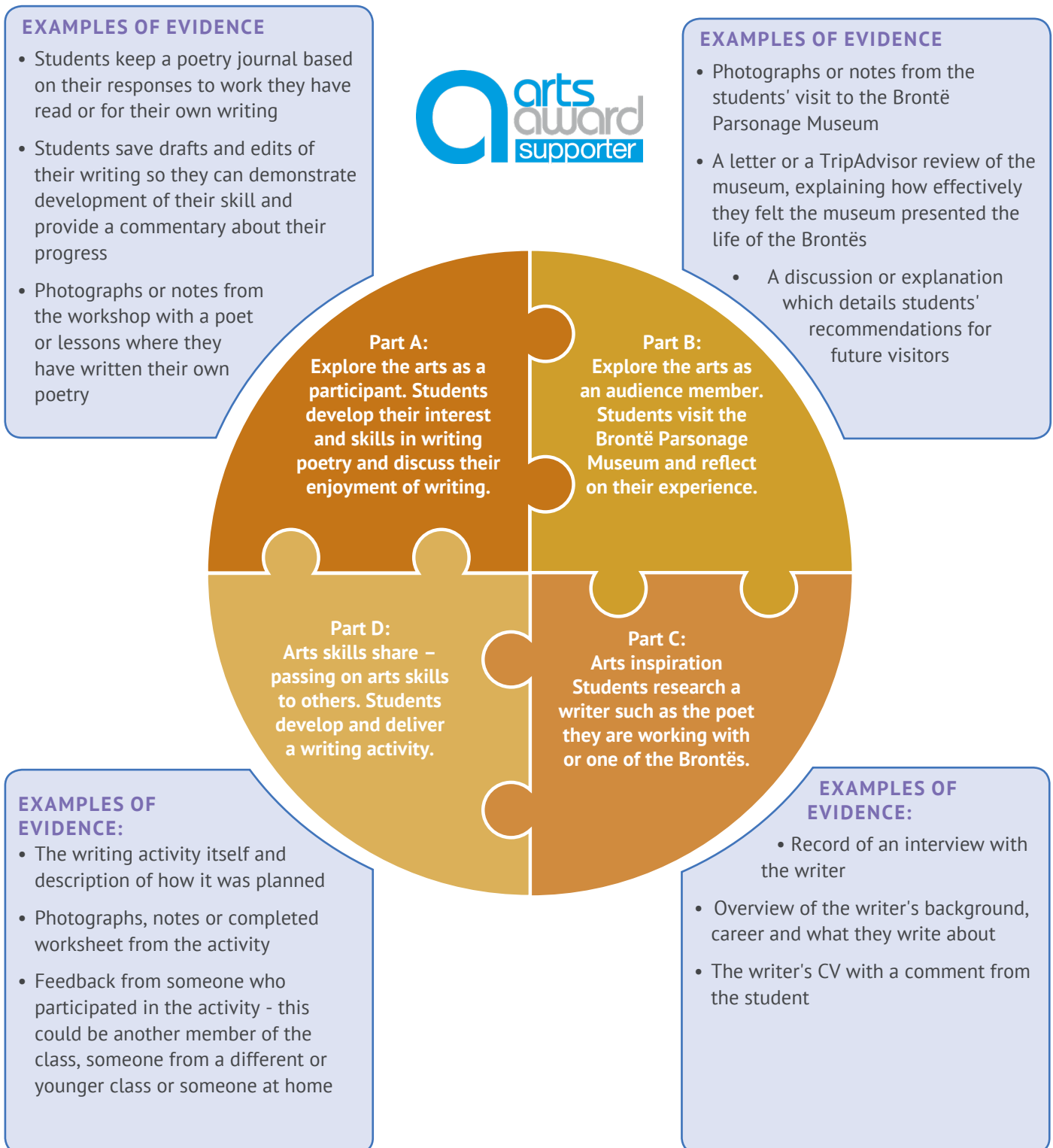
Anyone can write two words!

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!

# Bronze Arts Award

The Young Bradford 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 about the Arts Award, including how KS2 children can achieve the **Discover** or **Explore** Arts Award, speak to Learning Officer Susan Newby: [susan.newby@brontë.org.uk](mailto:susan.newby@brontë.org.uk). Visit [artsaward.org.uk/bronze](http://artsaward.org.uk/bronze) for more information.



# National Literacy Trust membership and further opportunities

## 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.

You can find this resource at:

[literacytrust.org.uk/annual-literacy-school-review](http://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](http://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](http://literacytrust.org.uk/working-with-us-logo) to find out more.



## Reading for Pleasure CPD

This course explores the link between a love of reading and attainment and will help you drive an improved reading culture across your school. Reading for Pleasure is aimed at teachers and literacy leaders working in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Find out more at [literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/reading-pleasure-cpd/](http://literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/reading-pleasure-cpd/)



## Across the Divide: Developing reading in Key Stage 3

Across the Divide is for English teachers and literacy leaders in secondary schools. It has been designed to help secondary teachers develop their pupils reading skills with a particular focus on metacognition, vocabulary and book choice.

Find out more at [literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/across-divide-developing-reading-key-stages-2-3/](http://literacytrust.org.uk/training-and-workshops/across-divide-developing-reading-key-stages-2-3/)





## About the National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity dedicated to giving disadvantaged children the literacy skills they need to succeed.

We work to improve the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the UK's poorest communities, where up to 40% of people have literacy problems. Because low literacy is inter-generational, we focus our work on families, young people and children.

Last year we: directly supported the literacy of 116,290 children through our programmes; supported literacy in 5,529 schools and 184 early years settings; inspired 63 businesses to prioritise literacy and sign the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2018; released four research reports from our annual literacy survey of 47,786 children and young people; and achieved through campaigning a media reach of 262m and equivalent advertising value of £5.2m.

Find out more at [literacytrust.org.uk/about-us](https://literacytrust.org.uk/about-us)



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W: [literacytrust.org.uk](https://literacytrust.org.uk)

 Find us on Facebook: [facebook.com/nationalliteracytrust](https://facebook.com/nationalliteracytrust)

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 Follow us on Instagram: [@Literacy\\_Trust](https://www.instagram.com/Literacy_Trust)

 Sign up for our free email newsletter: [literacytrust.org.uk/newsletter](https://literacytrust.org.uk/newsletter)

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