



A – Z of poetry reading ideas

Assembly – hold a poetry assembly where each class performs poems.

Buy words – which words would you buy or borrow from a poem? Keep a notebook to store tasty words.

Cut up and close reading – cut up a poem for someone else to reassemble – by word, line or verse. Or cut out words and leave spaces to be filled.

Drawing – illustrate a poem: create poem posters.

Enthusiasm – discuss what you liked in a poem, what you didn't like: draw up a desert island list of top ten poems or poets; hold a vote across the school.

Feelings – read and discuss what poems make you feel and think. Write down or share your first impressions.

Gossip – chat about poets and poems. Hold regular 'recommendation' sessions where you promote a poet or poem that you think others will enjoy.

Highlights – which are the highlights of a poem? Which is a poet's best poem and why? Use a highlighter to identify key words or lines.

Imitate – imitate poetic ideas or patterns and write a poem yourself.

Journals – keep a poetry journal: each week stick in a new poem that you like.

Know it by heart – learn poems by heart. Chant, perform and sing poems out loud. Add in percussion and chime bars. Dance it.

Letters – write to poets ... or to characters in their poems.

Memories – what memories does a poem stir: what do you see in your mind; what does it remind you of?

Newspaper headlines – create a newspaper headline and article about a poem or what is happening in a poem, especially narrative poetry.

Organise – a poetry reading or poetry day. Invite poets into school for book weeks or arts festivals.

Performance – perform poems: make tapes and videos. Send these to other classes or schools.

Question – ask questions about poems: what puzzles you? what are you not certain about? Discuss mysteries. Remember: not everything makes sensible sense – sometimes poems have to be experienced and not just understood.

Reread – keep rereading a poem to let its meaning creep upon you; let the words sink forever into your mind.

Swap – swap poems over. Find one you think your partner would enjoy.

Title – hide the title of a poem: what might the poem be called?

Underline – use a coloured pencil to underline, star or circle parts of a poem that are of interest: likes, dislikes, puzzles or patterns.

Video – video a reading or class performance of a poem. Put on a poetry show.

Weekly – have a poet of the week or month: read their poems each day.

X-ray – put on your x-ray vision when reading: try to see and listen to the heart of a poem.

Yardstick – collect a few poems that act as your poetic yardstick: what is a really good poem by which all others have to be judged; which are the great ones ... And why?

Zodiac – create a zodiac of poems: one for each star (or month) sign.

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