

A Great Big Cuddle by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Chris Riddell: A Sequence of activities for Early Years Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1

Session 1: Focus Poem: I AM ANGRY

Give the children time and space to look at the illustration of the character presented on this page without any of the surrounding text. A helpful guide to close reading of images can be found at: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/teaching-approaches/choosing-and-using-picture-books> Focus in on its facial expression and body language. Look at the colour used for the character's eyes and the shading around its face and body. How do you think this character is feeling? How do you know? Why do you think it is feeling like this? What might have happened? Scribe children's responses or have them write responses around a copy of the illustration on the working wall. Introduce the title text to the children and read the words aloud, 'I AM ANGRY'. Ask the children if they have ever felt angry. What sorts of things make them angry? What do they do or feel like doing when they are angry? Look at the way the text is presented on the page. Why do they think the title is in capital letters? Why do they think the word ANGRY is coloured red? Now introduce the poem text as it is presented on the page and read it aloud to the children, without being overly expressive. Look at the way the colour tone changes from red through to grey, the opposite way to the title? Why do you think this has been done? Think about the shift of emotion that comes when you start to get angry. First of all, something might annoy you a bit, then you might get cross about it before becoming fully angry. Write down the words that show the shades of intensity from calm through to angry. Think about how we can use this to build up the way we use our voices to perform the title and model this with the children:

I (annoyed)
AM (cross)
ANGRY (angry!)

Look at the way this reverses in the poem. How do you think this might give clues to how we read it? Practice performing the poem, starting from being angry and becoming increasingly calmer throughout the poem, before the line, 'And then go to bed.' Draw on the words illustrating the shades of intensity to help the children think of the differentiation in their emotion as the poem progresses.

You could follow this up by the children making their own illustrations of themselves when they are angry, drawing on the techniques used by the illustrator, Chris Riddell. Think of the facial expression you would have and what you would do with your body. You might have the children freeze in position first and take a photograph that could be printed and used as a reference for drawing. What colours and tones will you use to show this feeling?

Session 2: Focus Poem: Lost

Share the illustration of the character on this page with the children, without showing the title or text of the poem. Compare this character with the picture of the character from the previous session. These are both mice, but how do they look different? How do you think this character is feeling? How can you tell? Focus again on the body language and facial expression and look carefully at the props the illustrator has given to this character, the long, almost oversized shirt and the drooping bow tie that mirrors his drooping ears, eyes and hands. Remind the children of the title that accompanied yesterday's illustration 'I AM ANGRY', and ask them to suggest what the poem that goes with this illustration might be called. They might use the I am...starter and suggest things

like, I am sad, I am scared etc. Reveal the title: Lost and discuss what this might mean in the context of the illustration. Invite children to share personal experiences if they feel happy to share them. Have they ever been lost or felt like they were lost? What was it like? What did they do? How did it feel? Look back at how the poem I AM ANGRY was presented on the page. Look at the size and colour of the text on the page. Do you think a poem about being lost will look like this? Why or why not? What do you think it might look like? Reveal the text on the page. What's different about the text here to the last poem? How do you think that we might perform this poem to reflect the character's feelings and the way the words are written? Give the children time to look at the poem together, you might split up the lines to give each line to a pair or group of children and think about how they will perform it using their faces, bodies and voices to show how the character is feeling. When the children are ready, video their performance, play it back to them and let them discuss whether they think their performance reflects the emotion of the illustration and words.

Session 3: Focus Poem: I DON'T WANT

Share the illustration of the character that accompanies this poem, blocking out the title of the poem in its mouth and the accompanying poem. What can you tell about this character from the way it looks, the scale of its mouth, the colours used, the props the illustrator has chosen to give the character and the space it takes up on the page. Look at its open mouth, as if it's shouting; what do you think it would be saying? Give children the opportunity to scribe their ideas in a speech bubble around a copy of the illustration on the working wall. Reveal the title to the children and compare with their own ideas. Why do they think it is saying I Don't Want? What do they think it doesn't want? If the children don't already do this, draw their attention back to the illustration. Could there be any clues there? Read the poem aloud, without being overly expressive. Look at the choice to use red to colour I don't want at the start of each rhyming couplet. Why do you think this has been done? Do you think it gives us any clues as to how to read the poem? Practice the children's different ideas for reading with the first couplet:

I don't want the jelly
'cos the jelly's too smelly

Ensure that they think about the difference between how they express I don't want in comparison to the rest of the lines so that the children don't just shout the whole poem. Split the children into groups and give them one of the couplets each to perform before they all come together to perform the poem as a whole. Look at how different groups performed and talk about what the other groups thought was effective while they were watching and listening. You could also go on to getting the children to write their own rhyming couplets, following the same structure:

I don't want the _____
'cos the _____'s/is too _____

You could then put these together to form a class 'I DON'T WANT' poem, illustrated with pictures of the children with the things they don't want in their couplets.

Session 4: Focus Poem: YOU CAN'T SEE ME

Share the title of the poem and the illustration of the big red chair, without showing the text of the poem or the accompanying large illustration of the child and the rabbit. What do the children think the title means? Who might be saying this? Look at the illustration carefully to see if they spot the character. Where are they? Who are they? Why are they behind the chair? Who do you think they

are saying 'You can't see me' to? Who might be looking for them? Scribe children's ideas and responses around a copy of this illustration. Now reveal the second illustration of the child cuddling the rabbit and the accompanying text, 'YOU FOUND ME!' How do you think they both feel in this illustration? What do you think their relationship is? Do you think it is a real rabbit? Draw on the clues that we are given by the facial expressions, body language, use of colour and scale and the clothing given to the child in making inferences. Why do you think this child might have been looking for the rabbit? Ask the children if they have a special toy that they take to bed. Give time and space for the children to share their personal experiences. How would they feel if they couldn't find this toy before bed? Where would they look if they couldn't find it? Read the poem together, noting the question marks and seeing how this affects our intonation when we read. Do you think the rabbit is feeling worried as he says the poem or is it more like a game to him? How would this affect the way you read the words?

Prior to this session, find a class toy and hide it from the children. Show the children a photograph of the toy for reference and have them search the classroom, and if possible, other areas in the school, such as the outdoor area to try and find it. As they go, take a clipboard and list all the places they look before finding it. When they find the toy, ask them how they felt. Use this to write your own class poem, using the structure of the original to support the writing.

You can't see me
You don't know where I am
Am I _____?
Am I _____?
etc. up to:
Am I _____?
You're getting very near.
I can see you.
I'm sitting over here.
YOU FOUND ME!

Don't immediately worry about the ABCB rhyme structure, but if you do look in some places that rhyme such as bed and shed, you might build this in.

Session 5: Focus Poem: LET ME DO IT

Share all the illustrations of the character across the two double-page spreads of this poem, covering the poem and the title but leaving the L-plate style L. Scanning this into the computer makes this process easier. Give the children time to look at and consider the character that they can see. Are they young or old? What are they doing? Encourage the children to draw on everything they have learnt about looking at facial expression, body language, props, colour, scale and perspective in drawing their inferences. Scribe responses or have children scribe their own responses around the illustrations on the working wall. Observe whether any children pick up on L-plate. If not, draw their attention to it. Have you seen one of these before? Do you know what it means? Why might this have been used on this page? How might it relate to this character? Reveal the title to the children, 'LET ME DO IT'. Why do you think this is the title? Look back at the illustrations, what sorts of things do you think the character wants to do? Do you think it can do those things? Have you ever wanted to do something really badly then not been able to? What was it? Now read the poem aloud, , without being overly expressive. Look at the repeated refrain:

Let me do it, let me do it

*Let me blow up the balloon
Let me do it, let me do it
Let me go to the moon*

How do you think the character would say this? Think of ways that could express its excitement and enthusiasm and try out individual ideas.

Then look at the way the character mixes up the words in the second and third verses after the refrain. What effect does this give to us as the reader of the poem? What does it make us think about the character?

Through modelled writing, think of your own ideas for an alternative four-line verse. Think of different verbs connected to each noun mentioned and write the verbs on a post it note so they can be easily swapped. If possible, follow an ABCB rhyme scheme as in the original.

Let me _____ the _____ (a)
Let me _____ the _____ (b)
Let me _____ the _____ (c)
Let me _____ the _____ (b)

Now experiment with switching the verbs in each sentence for comic effect and perform your own 'LET ME DO IT' poem using the refrain from the original in between your mixed up verses.

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Greenaway shortlist. To access more free resources from CLPE, visit: www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources

In depth teaching sequences for over 175 other high quality texts can be found at:
www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading

Further resources to support children's understanding of picturebooks for all ages and research on the importance of using picturebooks across the primary years can be found at:
<https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures>