



# Pollinators and Poetry

## Learning Objectives:

- Communicate; share experiences, ideas and information.
- Explore and discover interesting features of habitats
- Transfer visual ideas to paper in a creative way.

**Location:** Indoors and Outdoors

## Resources:

Smartboard or projector and screen, Laptop and access to YouTube.

## Background:

The world around us is full of things to look at that can inspire creativity in us. Pollinators and other insects have been the inspiration for poetry and prose for hundreds of years.

### Beetle

Glossy black beetle  
Gracefully walking  
In your forest of grass.  
A nest of leaves,  
A crack in the wall,  
You're safe at home at last!

**John Cotton**



Honeybee (*Apis mellifera*)



Violet Oil Beetle (*Meloe violaceus*)

*'For so work the honey-bees,  
creatures that by a rule in  
nature teach the act of order  
to a peopled kingdom.'*

**Henry V Act 1 Scene 2~**

**William Shakespeare**



## ACTIVITY 1:

Write a poem about pollinators.



To sit in front of a blank piece of paper and be asked to write a poem is quite a challenge, so we will break it up in to bite sized chunks.

### Step 1: Choose your subject

What is your favourite pollinator? Do you like hoverflies or butterflies, moths or flower beetles? Perhaps you are a bee person.

Try to imagine what it would be like to be the pollinator yourself. What would your day be like? You may wish to write a poem that rhymes or something a bit different!

To prepare for this session, you may wish to take the class outside to look for inspiration. Get them to visit places where pollinators might feed, shelter or live.

Close your eyes and think of a time when you have seen a pollinator. Remember how it made you feel. Where did you see it, what was it doing and what were you doing?

If the weather is not suitable to look for bugs, you might find inspiration from the internet. Look at the short clips of animation called [Miniscule](#) . All of these ideas can help to inspire your ideas for writing a poem.



Common carder bumblebee  
(*Bombus pascuorum*)



6-Spot burnet moth  
(*Zygaena filipendulae*)



Hoverfly (*Syrphus ribesii*)

Think carefully about the words you use. Try to use 'powerful' verbs. Instead of your pollinator moving, perhaps it shuffles or scuffles, slithers or skulks. Instead of it flying, perhaps it bumbles or baulks, judders or soars. Look at the word bank below for inspiration.



*Brown and furry  
Caterpillar in a hurry,  
Take your walk  
To the shady leaf, or stalk,  
Or what not,  
Which may be the chosen spot.  
No toad spy you,  
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;  
Spin and die,  
To live again a butterfly*

## Christina Rossetti





### Step 3: Think about language techniques

Language techniques can help you provide the reader with more feeling, and also add description to your poem. Look at the word bank for ideas and try to come up with some of your own.

Alliteration - this describes when a sentence contains words beginning with the same sound, for example 'the big black buzzing bee.....'

Similes - this uses similarity to describe things, for example, as angry as a wasp, stripy like a bee

Onomatopoeia - this is a technique where words sound like what they are describing, for example a crack of thunder, smash of glass, the hum of the swarm of bees.

### Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing:  
Ladybird, nor butterfly,  
Nor moth with dusty wing,  
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,  
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,  
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,  
Nor harmless worms that creep.

**Christina Rossetti**



#### Step 4: Structure of your poem

How do you want to write your poem, will you try to use rhyme, or perhaps you can create a HAIKU.

HAIKU is a traditional Japanese style of poetic writing. Generally they are three lines in length and do not rhyme. They can be tricky to create but as with many tasks, the more you practise the easier and more enjoyable they become. Haiku poems have a particular format- the first and third lines have five syllables, whilst the second has seven syllables. The last line of a Haiku often makes an observation about the thing you are writing about.

For example;

*Spee-dy-Hov-er-fly  
Vis-it-ing flow-ers to feed  
Dart-ing gold and black*



Marmalade hoverfly (*Episyrphus balteatus*)

Once you have created your poem, check your spelling and correct if necessary. You might like to illustrate your poem with a picture of the subject.



## ACTIVITY 2: Pollinator appreciation

Take it in turns to read out your poems to the class.

Listen carefully to each poem and make a note of the following:

My favourite poem is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

My favourite describing word is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

My favourite comparison is comparing \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.

The best powerful verb I heard was \_\_\_\_\_.

The best language techniques describing bugs were \_\_\_\_\_.

## ACTIVITY 3: Presentation

Once you have shared your poems with your class, you may wish to revisit them and improve your first work. When you are happy with your poem, type it into your computer and annotate it ready to display in the classroom or school display area as a part of your school Environment or Nature week.

Photo credits: Leanna Dixon, Lorne Gill, Roger Key, Frank Mikley, John Walters, Jaybee, Andrew Whitehouse



Supported by:

J PAUL GETTY JNR  
CHARITABLE TRUST

Biffa Award  
Building communities. Transforming lives.

NORTHUMBRIAN  
WATER

Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust is a company limited by guarantee.

Company No: 4132695. Registered Charity No: 1092293. Scottish Charity No: SC040004. Registered in England at Bug House, Ham Lane, Orton Waterville, Peterborough, PE2 5UU.