

OCTOBER 2021

Primary School
Climate Change Conference

Writing Session
Teacher Notes

Writing session (Approx 1hr 30mins)

Materials needed: Paper, pencil, images of planet Earth, long strips of paper



Introduction – Play video by Sara Skarp from the University of East Anglia on activism and society, activity 1 takes place during this video and there is a pause symbol, so you know when to stop the video

~3 minutes



Activity 1 - Shouting exercise – yes! A loud, but powerful way of demonstrating collective action. Plus – a great anxiety and tension release for all ages! People can cover their ears if it's uncomfortable. ~3 minutes

Pause video when you see the pause symbol. The shouting exercise is done as follows: the teacher/organiser has one student shout (maybe pick someone who is not averse to being loud...). You could say something like "That was pretty loud, but let's see what happens when we all shout". The teacher then invites all students to shout (at varying volumes – whatever suits).

Resume video!

The video ends with this slide and is a good chance for a quick class discussion ~10 minutes:

Get the children to think about;



- Something important we need to do to solve climate change
- Think about specific examples – such as organising a litter-picking event, where many people work together. What else can you think of?
- How can we do that together or get more people to do it?

End the discussion by raising the point that to get everyone to work together *you first need to get them to be aware of the problem and to care about it!*

The power of poetry

In the next part of the writing section the children will work towards writing a poem about climate change. They will need pencils and paper and some images of planet Earth. There's one further down for you to print and there are many more on this website: <https://images.nasa.gov/>

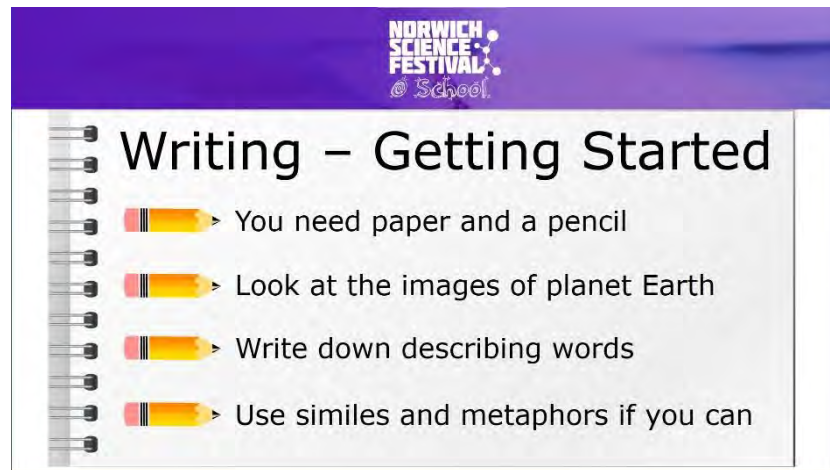


Play the video by creative writing teacher Mike O'Driscoll (~3 minutes) for an introduction to poetry writing and then stop at the pause symbol after the following slide for the children to do Activity 2 the warm-up!



Activity 2 – *Warm up*

~10 minutes



As well as writing down describing words, similes and metaphors about planet Earth, the class can also include vocabulary from the science session to add some more depth.

Once all the children have a good selection of words down on the paper, Mike will show them how he took his list of words and used it to form a poem (the poem is further down in case you would prefer to print it out for children to read along with).

Resume the video!

At the next pause the children will start to take their words and use them to write a poem.



Activity 3 – Poetry Writing ~40 minutes

There is flexibility in this activity so you can decide on the approach best suited to the children in your class. They can use their list of words collected in the warm-up to write a freeform poem or you can give them more structured options, either to extend the warm-up or as a final style to write to. Mike has explained the forms of a Haiku and an acrostic which they may be familiar with.

It can help to wander around and read out any promising lines that you spot as this often encourages children to get stuck in. If there's time, then it's nice to give children a chance to read out their finished poems to the class for an applause. Further editing can be done to this work at a later stage if desired but the real aim is to get a good first draft that the children are happy with.

The final part of the writing session is very short (~1 minute) and is a chance for children to boil down all their best ideas into a single line. For this they will need one long strip of paper each (either cut strips of A3 paper or you can buy a till roll so they have more freedom to write more).....

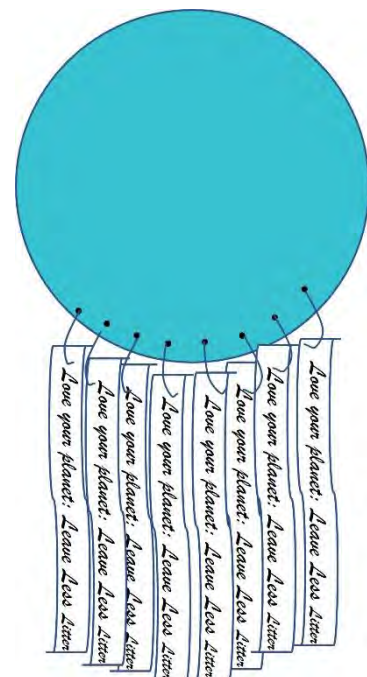
Resume the video!



Activity 4 – Your Pledge to the Planet ~ 15 minutes

For this final activity the children might like to take or build on one strong line from their poem to make their pledge. They could think back to Sara or Lizzie's videos about how important it is to act on all kinds of things to protect the animals and plants we share our planet with.

They might like to use alliteration, as demonstrated by Mike in the video where he says, "*Love your planet, Leave Less Litter*". This is their chance to make an individual pledge and we hope these will be used in the art session that follows as shown here so keep them safe! Think – Giant Dream Catcher!!





'EPIC' View of Africa and Europe from a Million Miles Away – Image credit: NASA

Our Planet

Our planet is a blue marble
Floating in endless seas of space,
A haven and a refuge for all living things
From tiny ant to mighty elephant
From glittering goldfish to the great blue whale

And all the things that grow
The green grass and fragrant flowers,
The tall and branching trees
The crops that feed us
The nettle that stings
The bee that collects the pollen

We are all connected
In a vast invisible web of life.
Together we can thrive and grow.
This is a precious gift which
We must respect and cherish
And pass on to the future
That comes after we are gone.

By Mike O'Driscoll, 2021.