

## Poems for Refugee Week June 21<sup>st</sup> –27<sup>th</sup> 2005

The Ethnic Minority Achievement Team (EMAT) would like to invite schools to have a poetry write in during, Refugee Week. We would like to Showcase poems written by pupils in the Autumn Term, perhaps to coincide with Diaspora/Black History Month in October

The poems included in this pack, except The Poor Fellow in Paris\* were written by young refugees who took part in a writing project funded by the Children's Society.\*\* In some cases the young people were relative beginners in English at the time they wrote.

The theme, '**Memories, Wishes and Dreams**' will enable all pupils to participate, as it encourages each pupil to tap into their own unique experiences, to find a voice to tell of something that has significance for them.

Below are some suggestions for using the poems with pupils. They are not key stage specific but can be adapted for use with pupils across an age range. In some cases the suggestions will need teacher input to scaffold the activities.

### **Memories.**

Poems '**The Big Old tree**', '**Mogadisho**', '**India**'

1. Using any of the above poems (or all) as a stimulus, pupils' paint/draw a place that is important to them, or are taken on a guided fantasy to that place....

What does it look like, what can you see (colours, shapes, things around you)  
What is going on, is it noisy or quite/peaceful, lively or calm?  
What sounds can you hear? (Laughter, crying, singing, shouting, water, wind, traffic)  
Who is there? (Relatives, friends, strangers, no one)  
Are there particular smells or tastes associated with the image?  
How do you feel being here?

2. After reading 'The Big Old Tree' brainstorm in groups other strong images associated with a place, people, an event, home, a country. Pupils choose one and write their own poem based on this.

3. Pupils choose the most memorable line or 2 lines form a poem and using the theme of 'memories' use the line(s) in their own poem.

4. A Group poem. In small groups pupils are given 5 minutes to begin their own writing on a theme/poem. They then pass the words on to the next person on their left. Pupils are again given 5 minutes to continue to write. When each pupil has the poem that they began back again, each pupil reads their group poem out. The group then chooses the one they like most. They can edit and revises as they think fit and then rehearse for a group performance. Each group reads their poem to the rest of the class.

5. Pupils use the words 'I remember' repeated throughout the poem. They can use the framework for activity 1 to support their writing.

### **Wishes and Dreams**

Poems: '**My Wish**', '**I Wish**', '**My Dreams**' '**The Poor Fellow in Paris**'.

1. Activities 1, 3 and 4 above also lend themselves to 'Wishes and Dreams'.
2. Pupils use the words 'I wish', repeated throughout the poem
3. Using 'My Dreams' pupils explore what is present in a dream and what is missing/absent. They could use the first line, 'In my dreams I' ... and then, 'But there is still something missing....'
4. Using 'A Poor Fellow in Paris' Pupils can explore being a stranger. Paris could become London or Hackney or England. The 'fellow' could become a girl or boy. Pupils could begin a line/lines with 'No.... They could brainstorm 'lonely', 'afraid' 'disappointed' and include these ideas in the poem. Pupils could work in pairs or threes, each pair or three taking one feeling and brainstorm and working with this. They could then form larger groups, to work on putting the poems together and rehearsing for a group reading/performance.

If you would like a member of EMAT to come into school to work with you and the pupils please contact me.

*\* Taken from The Bend in the Road: Refugees Writing: Ed by Jennifer Langer. (1997) Five Leaves Publication ISBN 0 907123 37 6*

*\*\* Taken from a poetry book published as part of the project called 'Dreams, Struggles and Survivors' available from the Children's Society  
Tel: 020 8553 9619*