

**National
Literacy
Trust**

Change your story

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a green V-neck sweater over a white collared shirt, is standing and reading from a white sheet of paper. He is positioned in front of a black microphone on a stand. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with large windows and some architectural details. The entire image is framed by a large, stylized orange shape that resembles a speech bubble or a large letter 'C' on the right side.

Young Bristol Poets

Key Stage 2 Resource

National Writing Day

24 June 2026

Young Bristol Poets

Delivered by the National Literacy Trust in partnership with Bristol City Council, Young Bristol Poets is a city-wide programme that uses poetry, performance and cultural experiences to inspire children's writing and creativity.

We are inviting all Bristol schools (EYFS–KS3) to take part in **Young Bristol Poets**, launching on **National Writing Day (24 June 2026)** and continuing throughout the **Autumn term**.

This exciting city-wide writing campaign gives Bristol's young people the opportunity to create and share poems inspired by their city, exploring themes of home, identity and belonging. During the Autumn term, schools will receive a comprehensive **poetry resource pack** for EYFS, KS1, KS2 and KS3 teachers, designed to inspire creative writing.

Teachers will also have the opportunity to submit pupils' work for inclusion in a city-wide celebratory anthology, showcasing the voices and creativity of young people across Bristol.

Key Stage 2

Bursting with colour, sound and energy, Bristol is a haven for creativity and poetic inspiration! From the swoop of harbour gulls to the flash of skateboard wheels, from the bright colours of street art to the lively chatter of its residents, the city is full of sights, sounds and rhythms for children to explore.

This National Writing Day, invite your students to become sensory hunters and transform the everyday experiences of their city into poetry. Through rhythm, repetition, vivid imagery and playful language, they will discover how ordinary sights and sounds can become powerful writing.



Tune into Bristol: a city of sights and sounds

Theme: Sensory poetry

Outcome: Children create and perform a poem together inspired by the sights and sounds of Bristol

1. Tune in to Bristol

Begin with the question: *What are the sights and sounds of Bristol?*

Take the class outside to listen and note down what they can see and hear. If not possible, display images or play video clips of Bristol and ask children to imagine:

- Walking through busy streets or the parks
- Standing by the harbour
- Travelling on a bus

Key questions:

- *What do you see or hear first?*
- *What sights catch your eye? Why?*
- *Which sounds are loud, quiet, musical or repeated?*
- *Which feel unique to Bristol?*
- *Which do you like or dislike?*



2. Freewriting warm-up

Freewriting is a technique poets use to warm up their 'writing muscles'. Watch Simon Mole's [How to free write – poetry tips and techniques](#) to learn more or to follow along.

Set a timer for 3 minutes. Students can choose a few or all prompts, or move between several:

- *Bristol looks like...*
- *Bristol sounds like...*
- *In the morning/day/night I can see/hear...*
- *Bristol is the colour of...*
- *If Bristol were an animal, it would be...*
- *If Bristol spoke it would say...*

Rules:

- Write continuously
- Don't stop to think
- Ignore spelling and grammar
- If stuck, repeat a word until something new arrives.

After writing, students highlight favourite words, images or phrases and these become seeds for their poem.



3. Discuss and model

Build a Bristol sensory bank

Using the ideas that the children have generated in their free write, write a list of all the things that children associate with the sights and sounds of Bristol. For example:

Glow of shop windows, hiss of bus doors, glitter of harbour reflections, clang of harbour chains, buzz of cyclists, rumble of the M32, chatter of St Nicholas Market, swooping and diving of gulls, silver ripples of the river, clack of skateboards.

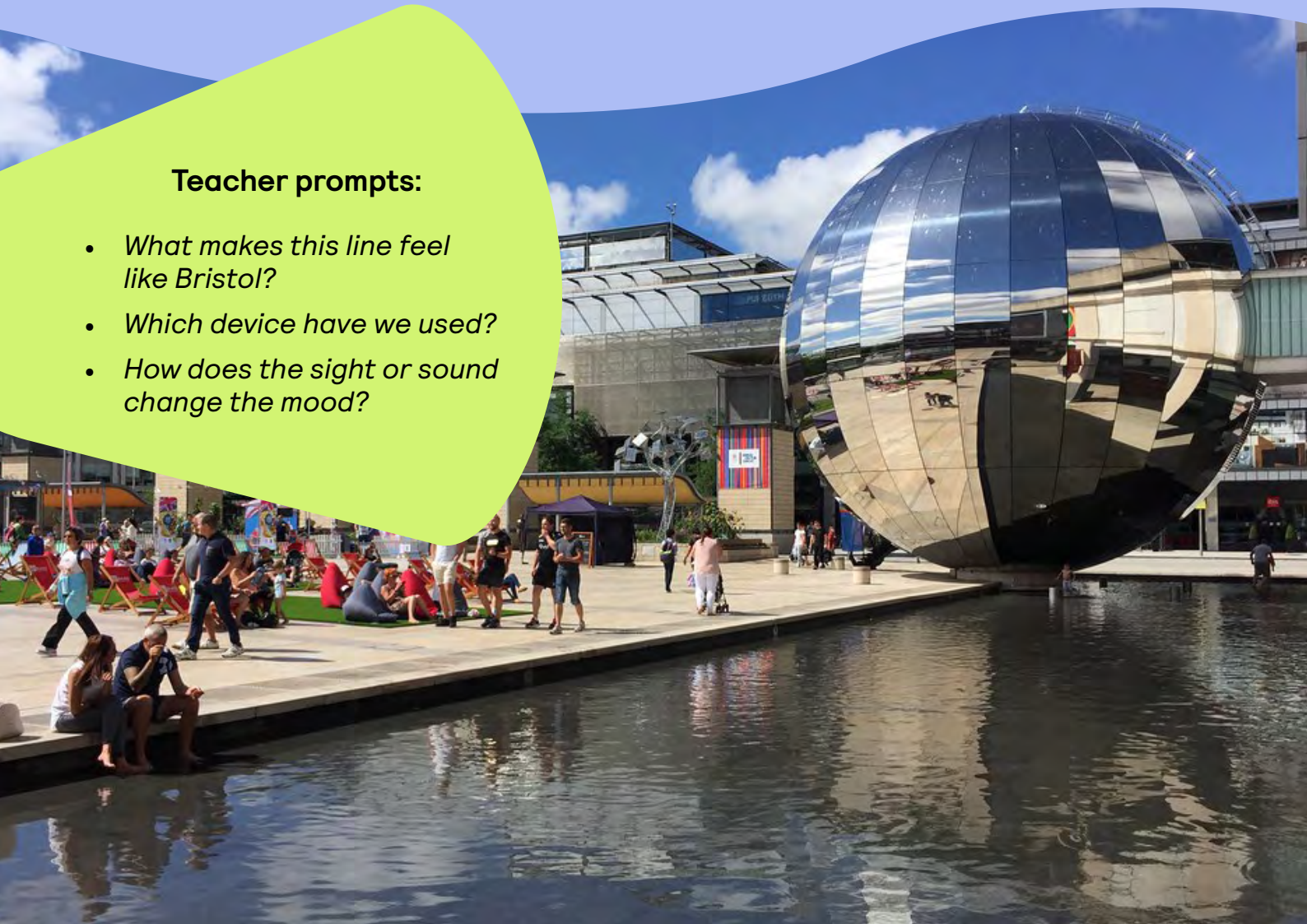
Model key poetic devices

Use one short Bristol-based example for each:

- **Similes:** *Balloons drift through the clouds **like colourful confetti***
- **Metaphors:** *Bristol street art is **a kaleidoscope of colour** swirling across city walls*
- **Onomatopoeia:** ***Screech!** Harbour gulls swoop low.*
- **Repetition:** ***Clack-clack, clack-clack** go the skateboards on College Green.*
- **Alliteration:** ***Bristol beats bounce and boom** from open windows.*

Teacher prompts:

- *What makes this line feel like Bristol?*
- *Which device have we used?*
- *How does the sight or sound change the mood?*



4. Shared writing

Invite children to add new ideas to the class Sensory Bank, inspired by the modelled lines:

Has anyone thought of a new sound? Any new colours or movements we could add?

Choose one image to work on as a class, to play with the modelled poetic devices, e.g., the Balloon Fiesta.

Choose a device like the simile below.

*Fiesta balloons drift through the sky **like colourful confetti**.*

Show how this can be transformed into a metaphor: ***Fiesta balloons are sprinkles of colourful confetti drifting across the city skyline.***

Explore with the children whether the metaphor feels stronger than the simile. Which do you prefer? Why?

Could we swap a word for a more Bristol-specific one? 'Across the **Bristol skyline**'? Or 'Over **Ashton Downs**'?

Next work together to layer in sound with onomatopoeia, e.g.,

Hissssss... the gas ignites! Whoosh! Up they rise.

Work together on any opportunities to add repetition or alliteration, e.g.,

Squawk! Squawk! Squawk! A cloud of white gulls circle the mysterious spheres.

Balloons bob and bounce above the Downs.

Finally add in some human detail. Bring in voices, crowds or local sayings. *What might the crowds below say? What Bristolian phrases might we hear?*

Encourage children to read aloud to check the rhythm. *Does the rhythm feel smooth when we read it aloud? How might we change the lines to improve rhythm?*



5. Poetry Architects activity: build your poem

Building on the whole class activity, children use the following list to construct a poem writing about the sights and sounds of Bristol. They can do this in pairs or small groups. They can work through the list or pick a prompt at random:

1. Describe something you only see in Bristol (you could add a simile or metaphor too)
2. Describe something you only hear in Bristol (you could add a simile or metaphor too)
3. Repeat one word in a line three times
4. Add a sound word (like crash, buzz, swish) to the beginning or end of a line
5. Imagine Bristol is speaking – what does it say?
6. Start a line with 'If Bristol was a colour, it would be...'
7. Use an alliterative line (2 or 3 words starting with the same letter)
8. Ask Bristol a question

Rearrange the order:

Once the lines are written, children can read their poem aloud, then cut up the lines and try them in a new order. They might discover that the meaning or mood changes depending on how the poem is arranged.

Key questions:

- *How does the order of your poem affect how it feels?*
- *Which line worked best as an opening?*
- *Did one work best as a final line?*

6. Next steps:

After completing their poems, you might like to give children time to rehearse and perform their poems using changes in pace, volume and expression to highlight key sights and sounds. They could then perform in front of the class in pairs, groups or individually.

For a digital extension, pupils could create short video poems by pairing their spoken lines with clips or still images of Bristol.

To celebrate children's work throughout school, why not create a Bristol Poetry Trail in the school corridor or in the assembly hall, displaying children's poems alongside photographs or sketches of the places that inspired them?

Further activities and scaffolds

These activities could be used to provide extra structure for pupils who need it or offer challenge for confident writers.

Noun/verb/adverb builder

Write three lists

1. A list of nouns (all the things that you might see or hear in Bristol).
2. A list of verbs that humans might do.
3. A list of adverbs.

Noun	Verb	Adverb
The Harbour	whispers	quietly
Gulls	dance	gracefully

Try out different combinations from each line. Which ones sound interesting or surprising?

List poem: Bristol is...

Start each line with “Bristol is...” to create a strong rhythm. Use the repeated starter to write a list poem about Bristol.

For example:

Bristol is...

Bristol is buzzing buses and bright bridges

Bristol is gulls swooping across silver water

Bristol is....

Try using adjectives (‘**silver water**’) alliteration (‘**buzzing buses**’).

Keep going until your poem feels complete.

Read it aloud. Does it sound right? Are there any words that you might change or take out?

Poetry challenge ideas

Try one or more of these challenges:

- Make some lines short and some long to change the speed
- Use more than one poetic device in a single line
- Repeat a word or phrase to create a pattern
- Describe a busy and a quiet place to show contrast

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About the National Literacy Trust

Literacy changes everything. It opens the door to the life you want. It's the key to knowledge, confidence and inspiration. It's better results at school, and better jobs. If you grow up without the tools to communicate, without books to read or opportunities to write, it's harder to get where you want to go.

We're a charity helping people overcome these challenges and change their life chances through the power of words – reading, writing, speaking and listening. From first words, through school days to training, jobs and beyond.

Together, we're helping people change their stories.

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