

**National
Literacy
Trust**

Change your story



Young Bristol Poets

Key Stage 3 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 3

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

This National Writing Day, invite your students to use their senses to transform the everyday experiences of their city into poetry. Through 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

1. Tune in to Bristol

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

Show short video clips or images of Bristol's landmarks, street art, harbourside, markets and festivals. *What is Bristol famous for? What are we proud of about the city? What comes to mind when you think of the most memorable sights and sounds of Bristol?*

If time allows, take students outside for a walk around school grounds. Encourage notetaking, sketching and capturing sensory impressions, soundscapes or overheard conversations.

Use prompts such as *'What Bristol stories does the pavement hold?'*

Theme: Sensory poetry

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

Image credit: Neil Phillips



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.

Key questions

- *How did you find the exercise?*
- *What surprised you?*
- *Which aspects of Bristol did you focus on and why?*



3. Personification activity

This technique can be used to bring sights and sounds to life in students' poems. Explain that personification can make a place feel alive. They can use the ideas from their free write to support them.

Students create three lists (this can be done as a shared activity and displayed in class):

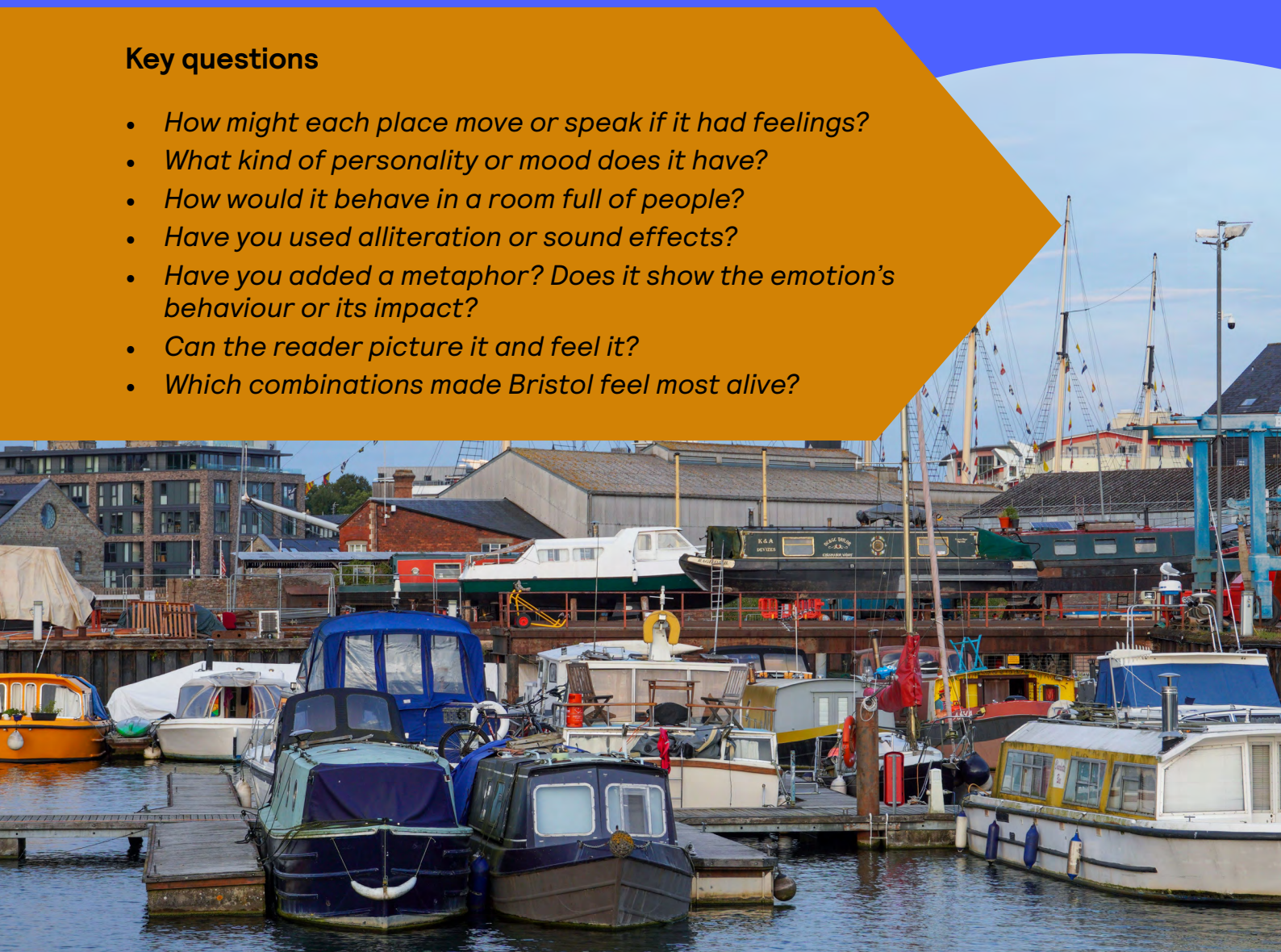
1. Bristol sights and sounds
2. Human action verbs
3. Adverbs

Sight or sound	Human action verbs	Adverbs
The Harbour	sulks	awkwardly
Balloon Fiesta	paces	fiercely
Street art and graffiti	whispers	deliberately
Gulls	gloats	decisively
St Nicholas' Market	shivers	confidently

Encourage playful combinations.

Key questions

- *How might each place move or speak if it had feelings?*
- *What kind of personality or mood does it have?*
- *How would it behave in a room full of people?*
- *Have you used alliteration or sound effects?*
- *Have you added a metaphor? Does it show the emotion's behaviour or its impact?*
- *Can the reader picture it and feel it?*
- *Which combinations made Bristol feel most alive?*



4. Drafting

Students can now draft their poem, using personification from their list of combinations, and adding in sensory details through imagery and ideas collected in their freewriting fragments. Encourage them to write in whatever poetic form they feel inspired by – there are no rules! They may want to write in free verse. If they prefer to follow a structure, you could display an example of a list poem on the board:

Bristol is....

Bristol is the Harbour blinking slowly as morning spills across the water

While street art sneaks deliberately across the city walls

Bristol is the hub of St Nicholas market chattering,

Its voice rising and falling like rags on a high wind

Bristol is...

You could offer alternative stems such as *In Bristol.../ This city.../ Here, the city...*

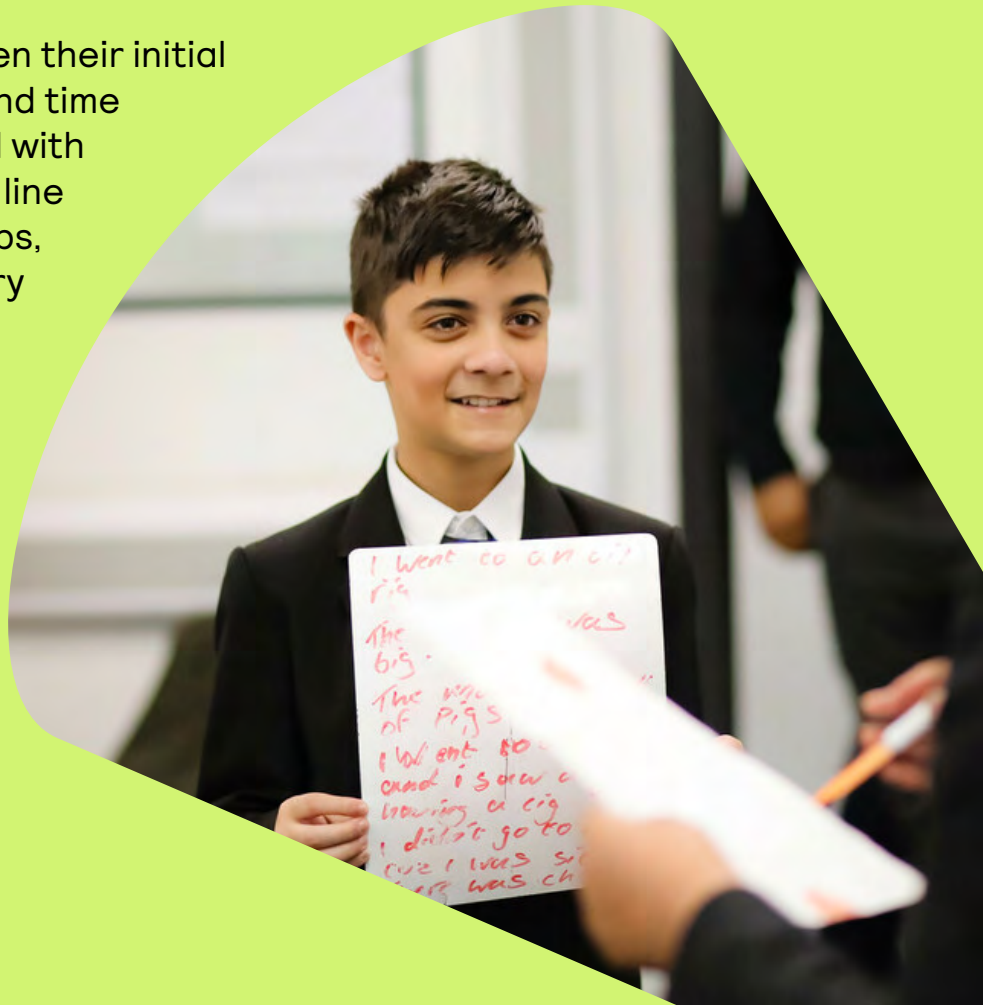
5. Editing and sharing

When students have written their initial draft, they could then spend time editing and playing around with the structure by adjusting line breaks, strengthening verbs, adding or removing imagery and reading aloud to test rhythm. Students could also work in pairs to provide feedback using prompts such as:

The strongest image was...

I want to know more about...

This line really made the city come alive because...



Further activities and scaffolds

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

Building poetic lines

Write four 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.
4. A list of phrases that conjure up image or sound

Noun	Verb	Adverb	Phrase
The Harbour	shivers	nervously	beneath grey skies
Gulls	dance	gracefully	across the twilight

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

List poem: In Bristol...

Use a repeated opening to create rhythm and structure.

Example:

In Bristol, the pavements remember...

In Bristol, the gulls argue...

In Bristol, the water glitters...

Try using alliteration (Bristol beats boom) and imagery (sunset turns the skyline copper) to heighten the sights and sounds.

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

To develop your poetry writing further, try one or more of these ideas:

- Experiment with line length: short lines can feel sharp and sudden while long lines develop an idea.
- Use repetition: repeat a word or phrase to echo movement, sound or emotion
- Shift the tone: show different sides to the city (playful, gritty, peaceful chaotic, etc).
- Add metaphor: compare Bristol to something unexpected to reveal a new perspective.



Change your story

In partnership with



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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