

Poetry and Spoken Word in Leeds

Who is this learning resource for? KS4

What you'll need:

- Teacher Notes (at the end of this resource)
- Copies of the poem "Traffic Update: Tony Harrison"

Lesson objectives	To develop knowledge of poetic devices and apply this to a new poem
Lesson outcomes	<p>All learners will be able to identify some simple poetic devices</p> <p>Most learners will be able to identify a range of poetic devices and apply these to an unseen poem, making some analytical points</p> <p>Some learners will be able to use a range of poetic devices and analyse a poem</p>

National Curriculum links:

English Literature GCSE Subject Content: *evaluation of a writer's choice of vocabulary, grammatical and structural features: analysing and evaluating how language (including figurative language), structure, form and presentation contribute to quality and impact; using linguistic and literary terminology for such evaluation (such as, but not restricted to, phrase, metaphor, meter, irony and persona, synecdoche, pathetic fallacy). Comparing texts: comparing and contrasting texts studied, referring where relevant to theme, characterisation, context (where known), style and literary quality; comparing two texts critically with respect to the above.*

Activities:

1. As a starter, ask learners to make a mind map or list of as many poetic devices as they can think of. Then watch the short film to accompany this lesson resource – where the poet, MC and rapper Testament performs his poem "Poetic Devices" - ask learners to add to their list with any other poetic devices they hear in the poem. Check understanding and go through any devices which learners are not familiar with. (5 mins)

2. The film also explores the heritage of spoken word in Leeds and is filmed at Leeds Library – if appropriate with your group you could have a discussion about the importance of libraries as public spaces, as debate about the purpose and function of libraries today, and the Leeds Literature scene – which Ian Harker talks about in the film. *(10 mins)*

3. Learners could then pick up on Ian Harker's poem to analyse in this session. Some questions that could be posed to learners are:
 - How is Tony Harrison presented in the poem and what does this tell us about the poet's opinions of him?
 - How is a sense of place created in the poem?
 - How is exaggeration (hyperbole) used in the poem and what is the effect of this?
 - What is the effect of the repeated refrain?
 - What tone and atmosphere emerge from this poem?
 - What other poetic devices can you spot in them poem and what is the effect of these?
 - How is humour created in the poem? *(10 mins)*

4. Learners could spend 10-15 minutes analysing the poem on their own and then could feedback their ideas to the class. *(15 mins)*

5. As a plenary or extension task, learners could finish the lesson by writing their own iambic pentameter couplet about the place where they live, these could be fed back to the whole class. *(20 mins)*

Example:

I know Leeds is the place where I belong

I - Know - Leeds - Is - the - place - where - I - be - long

Differentiation:

- For less able learners a list of poetic devices with missing letters could be provided as a resource.
- As a stretch and challenge exercise, learners could look for comparisons in their GCSE poetry cluster to make to this poem.
- As a further task, learners could approach this as a GCSE unseen poem and write a paragraph answering an exam style question, such as “what methods are used to create a humorous effect in this poem?”
- As a homework task, learners could research more into Leeds based poets such as Tony Harrison.

Teacher Notes

Introduction to this session

In this session, learners will explore poetic devices and a poem by a Leeds based author, Ian Harker. Learners will start by recapping what they know about poetic devices and then can develop this knowledge throughout the lesson, through analysis of a poem. Prompt questions are provided for analysis, but this can be approached in any way. If learners study a Time and Place cluster of poems for their GCSE, then perhaps comparisons can be made to other poems they have read. Finally, learners have the opportunity to create an iambic pentameter couplet using the poem as inspiration. Learners will produce a creative response to the theme of the session.

Teacher Notes on the Film

In this film, the focus is on the heritage of The Leeds Library. We then interview Ian Harker who is a poet and a member of staff at the Leeds Library. Ian is a member of Leeds Lit Fest and he speaks about his inspiration and career as a writer. He performs one of his poems 'Traffic Update: Tony Harrison'. This poem is a playful look at how we speak with rhythm and intonation. The author says that Tony Harrison states that Leeds folk speak in iambic pentameter – something which the author was sceptical of before he heard a traffic update using iambic pentameter "Wakefield Road is slow in both directions." The poem makes several playful references to the local area, and paints an image of Harrison as a local hero (and giant!) The Presenter, Testament, also performs one of his poems - Poetic Devices, which is a fantastic resource for teaching the poetic devices used in literature, that students could use as a revision resource!

Copy of the poem: Traffic Update: Tony Harrison by Ian Harker

Tony Harrison is a hundred feet tall
and he's pushing cars into reverse
with giant sticks of rhubarb.
"You're going the wrong way!"
he shouts into the southbound lane:
he's building himself a toytown
out of Ponte's finest – rhubarb hardshoulder,
rhubarb flyover and the cats' eyes
measure out his Beeston pentameter –

Wakefield Road is slow in both directions
Wakefield Road is slow in both directions

The clouds glow pink
in the custardy sunset; he's hit the bigtime
this time: Tony Harrison is a traffic update
and there's no stopping him

Wakefield Road is slow in both directions
Wakefield Road is slow in both directions

A police psychologist shouts at him
through a megaphone to pack it in
but he's having none of it – he's cast-iron
sky-high proof of the justness
of the heroic couplet – DNA,
crop circles, the Fibonacci Sequence.

Wakefield Road is slow in both directions
Wakefield Road is slow in both directions

"It's how we talk!" he insists,
the start of a five-mile tailback.
He gazes back lovingly at the Leeds skyline,
at the flightpath starcloth, glottals
rolling round his mouth.

Wakefield Road is slow in both directions
Wakefield Road is slow in both directions