

SPEECH

&

DRAMA

SET

PIECES

2023

**CLASS 100:
INDIVIDUAL POEM
4 & UNDER 5 YEARS
(Reception Class)**

**POEM A:
"THE FURRY HOME"**

by J M Westrup

If I were a mouse
And wanted a house,
I think I would choose
My new red shoes.

Furry edges
Fur inside,
What a lovely
Place to hide!

I'd not travel,
I'd not roam -
Just sit in
My furry home.

**POEM B
"I'M IN TROUBLE"**

by Dulcie Meddows

I'm in trouble.
Can't you guess?

My mother says,
'Your room's a mess!
Can't find your bed.
Can't find the floor.
Can't find a thing
I've shut the door
Until you've learned
A thing or two!"

My father says
"What else is new?"

**POEM C:
"TARANTULA"**

by Clare Bevan

She's hairy,
She's scary,
She's covered in bristles.
A fighter,
A biter, With legs like eight thistles.

A muncher,
A cruncher,
With greedy jaws gnashing.
A mawler,

A crawler

But I think she's SMASHING

**CLASS 101:
INDIVIDUAL POEM
5 & UNDER 6 YEARS
(School Year 1)**

**POEM A:
“GRANDMA’S THIRD LEG”
by June Crebbin**

My Grandma has three legs,
And two are flesh and blood,
The other one she leans upon
And that is made of wood.

Last Spring, when we were walking
In fields not far away,
She said her extra leg would be
A help to me one day.

And now we’re picking blackberries
I know the reason why,
She waves her leg above her head
And hooks the ones on high!

**POEM B
“NOW WOULDN’T IT BE FUNNY”
by Pixie O’Harris**

Now, wouldn’t it be funny
If the creatures in the Zoo,
Were all let out to walk about
To look at me and you?

And wouldn’t it be funny
If they put us all in cages,
And Kangaroos and Cockatoos
Came guessing at our ages.

And wouldn’t it be funny
If the Hip-O-Potamus
Said, “Don’t go near, I really fear
They’re very dangerous.”

**POEM C
“THE HAUNTED HOUSE”
by John Foster**

There’s a monster haunts our house,
It’s called the central heating,
From the way its stomach rumbles,
Goodness knows what it’s been eating.

It wakes us up at night-time
With its gurglings and its groanings,
Its clattering and clanging,
Its muttering and meanings.

Mum said, “It lives on water,”
When I asked her a question.
I think it must gulp it down
To get such indigestion!

CLASS 102
INDIVIDUAL POEM
6 & UNDER 7 YEARS (School Year 2)

POEM A:
“HUNT THE GUINEA PIG”
by **Georgie Adams**

Round and round the garden
Everyone look for Fred.
We've got to find my guinea pig
Before I go to bed.

Mum says “Mind my roses,”
Dad says “Watch the cat.
If she finds Fred before we do . . .
That'll be the end of that.”

Round and round the garden
We're all on hands and knees.
I *know* he's hiding somewhere –
Fred. Come out now, *please!*

Listen. I hear squeaking.
There! Behind the shed.
We all played hunt the guinea pig –
But I found Fred.

POEM C:
“OUR TREE”
by **Marchette Chute**

When spring comes round, our
apple tree
Is very full of flowers,
And when a bird sits on a branch
The petals fall in showers.

When summer comes, our apple
tree
Is very full of green,
And everywhere you look in it
There is a leafy screen.

POEM B:
“IT WASN'T ME”
by **Steve Turner**

It wasn't me, my cup just fell,
The plate jumped on the floor,
The window cracked all by itself
And then it slammed the door.

I didn't punch, my hand just slipped
And curled into a fist.
He happened to come walking by,
I happened not to miss.

It wasn't me who talked in class,
I didn't steal that pen,
If someone says they saw me cheat
They've got it wrong again.

It wasn't me, it's not my fault!
Why do I get the blame?
The naughty child who does these
things
Has pinched my face and name.

When autumn comes, our apple
tree
Is full of things to eat.
The apples hang from every
branch
To tumble at our feet.

When winter comes, our apple
tree
Is full of snow and ice
And rabbits come to visit it...
We think our tree is nice.

CLASS 103
INDIVIDUAL POEM
7 & UNDER 8 YEARS (School Year 3)

POEM A:

**“MY TEACHER ATE MY
HOMEWORK”**

by Kenn Nesbitt

My teacher ate my homework,
which I thought was rather odd.
He sniffed at it and smiled
with an approving sort of nod.

He took a little nibble —
it’s unusual, but true —
then had a somewhat larger bite
and gave a thoughtful chew.

I think he must have liked it,
for he really went to town.
He gobbled it with gusto
and he wolfed the whole thing down.

He licked off all his fingers,
gave a burp and said, “You pass.”
guess that’s how they grade you
when you’re in a cooking class.

POEM C:

“BLAME”

by Allan Ahlberg

Graham, look at Maureen’s leg,
She says you tried to tattoo it!
I did, Miss, yes - with my biro,
But Jonathan told me to do it.

Graham, look at Peter’s sock,
It’s got a burn-hole through it!
It was just an experiment, Miss,
the lens.
Jonathan told me to do it.

POEM B:

“JEMIMA”

by Gareth Owen

Running down the garden path
Jemima, seven years old
Lifts her eyes to watch the sun
Drown in clouds of gold.
Sees her old friend smiling down
Through the chestnut tree
Her face among the branches
smiles
White as ivory.
Jemima tells her secrets
Her breath is like a sigh
Wishing on a star that falls
Dying through the sky.
Jemima up the evening path
Through twilight bright as noon
Tells anyone who’ll listen,
‘I’ve been talking to the moon.

Alice’s bag is stuck to the floor,
Look, Graham, did you glue it?
Yes, but I never thought it would work,
And Jonathan told me to do it.

Jonathan, what’s all this I hear
About you and Graham Prewitt?
Well, Miss, it’s really more his fault:
He tells me to tell him to do it!

CLASS 104
INDIVIDUAL POEM
8 & UNDER 9 YEARS (School Year 4)

POEM A:

“DAD MEETS THE MARTIANS”

by Stephen Whiteside

A flying saucer came last night
It landed in the drive.
I warned the crew, "My dad parks there,
He'll eat you all alive!"

Dad pulled up bad tempered
But his frown became a smile
When he saw the flying saucer.
And he said, "I like their style."

He then addressed the martians,
"Will you take me for a spin?"
They replied, "It's new. Imported
Straight from Venus. Come on in!"

They flew 'round earth a dozen times,
And visited a star.
Then they asked my dad if he
Would drive them in his car.

I simply can't explain it.
I'd have thought that they'd be bored
But Dad now drives a saucer
The Martians drive a Ford.

POEM B: “GOOD MORNING” by Dave Calder

this is
the teacher forecast

Mrs Brown
will be gloomy with occasional outbreaks of rage,
storms are expected by mid-afternoon

Miss Green
will be mild, although her smiles
will probably cloud over when she finds
the spider in her chalk box

Continued on next page

POEM B: (Continued)

Mr White
will be rather windy, especially after dinner-time,
with poor visibility when his glasses fog over

Some drizzle is expected around Miss Red,
she has not quite got over her cold,
and Mrs Blue is already gusting down the corridor
and should reach gale force 9 when she hits the playground.

For the rest of you, it will be much as usual,
a mixture of sunny moments and sudden heavy showers.
Have a good day.

POEM C: "I DO AS SIMON SAYS" by Celia Warren

I'm nobody's dog but Simon's
I do as Simon says,
If Simon says, Delilah, dance!
I'd be up on my two hind legs.

But Simon says, Delilah, sit!
He says, Delilah, stay!
Yet if he said, Delilah, sing!
I'd somehow find a way.

I'm nobody's dog but Simon's
I do as Simon says,
He sometimes says, Delilah, fetch!
And I save Simon's legs.

But Simon is no tyrant,
He takes me out for walks.
I always keep one step ahead
And listen as he talks.

My watchword is Obedience,
And Simon's love, my prize;
We go together everywhere
For I am Simon's eyes.

**CLASS 105: INDIVIDUAL POEM
9 & UNDER 10 YEARS (School Year 5)**

POEM A: "GROUNDED" by Eric Finney

Grounded by Dad:
That's not too bad.
He says: "It's just the kind of trouble
I got into as a lad.
Of course, that doesn't mean
I can ignore it.
You must take your punishment,
I can't withdraw it.
But I'll reduce it for a week
To seven days (funny joke!)
No – three days. And tonight
We'll watch the match together
And I'll treat you to a coke."

Grounded by Mum:
That's grim, that's glum.
No Saturday match, no phone calls,
No pocket money;
No way she'll ever change her mind – I
t isn't funny.
She goes on and on
And won't leave it.
She really means it.
You'd better believe it.

POEM B: "SPACE SHUTTLE" by Judith Nicholls

Monday
My Aunt Esmeralda
Gave me one of those
S p a c e – h o p p e r s.
You know
Those big orange things
That you sit on and
They're supposed to take you to the stars.
Didn't take me any further than the lamp-post –
And that hurt.

Tuesday
I gave it to my baby brother.
Do you know, he really believes
It's going to work!

POEM B: (Continued)

Some people will believe

Anything.

Friday.

Just had a postcard

From my brother.

From the moon.

It says

'Had a good journey.

See you soon.

Just hopping off to Mars!'

POEM C: "THE ROBIN" by June Crebbin

I tried to write a poem today,
I tried to make it rhyme,
I tried to get the meaning right
But every single time
I thought I'd got the hang of it,
I thought I'd got it right,
I found I couldn't think of a word
To rhyme with bird
Or, that is, robin.

I didn't want to say
I saw a robin.
It was bobbing
Along and sobbing
Because it wasn't.

So I started again.

Once, last winter, in the snow,
I was out in the garden
At the bird table,
When I turned round
And saw on the path beside me
A robin.

It was so close.
I could have touched it.
It took my breath away.
I have never forgotten
The red of it
And the white snow falling.

CLASS 106
INDIVIDUAL POEM
10 & UNDER 11 YEARS
(School Year 6)

POEM A: “MY SISTER IS A MONSTER” by Gillian Floyd

My sister's a monster –
It's true.
I know, because I've seen her change
From sugar and spice and oh-so-nice to

A raving, ranting beast
With bulging eyes
And long, wild hair;
I've even seen two horns appear
Out of her head, I swear.

Of course,
No one believes me when I tell them.
They think I'm just exaggerating,
Fabricating;
But that's because they never see
My sister's transformation
From human being into this thing.
Oh no. She keeps that certain revelation
Just for me.

You wait. One day soon
My sister will forget herself
In front of all our friends and family:
Her eyes will bulge
And two sharp horns will grow –
Then everyone will know
That my sister's a monster

POEM B: “A BOAT OF STARS” by Natalie Jane Prio

(This replaces “Not a Nightingale” by Jennifer Curry which was originally selected for the syllabus. Sincere apologies)

A boat of stars came down tonight
and sailed around my bed –
it sprinkled stardust on my eyes,
put dreams inside my head

of places I could visit,
sailing off in it alone,
past treetops, clouds and planets
to a moon all of my own.

There the trees and grass are silver
and across a shining sea
is a teeny tiny castle
where my boat of stars takes me.

We spin wildly around the turrets
with the moonbeams and the sun,
and when we’ve finished racing
we watch fireworks, just for fun.

We coast around the craters
and fly off to space and roam
until it’s time to steer my boat
of stars back towards home.

And when at last I fall asleep,
too tired to even play,
it sets the rooftops sparkling
And quietly sails away.

POEM C: "THE SOLDIERS CAME" by John Agard

The soldiers came
and dropped their bombs.
The soldiers didn't take long
to bring the forest down.

With the forest gone
the birds are gone
With the birds gone
who will sing their song?

But the soldiers forgot
to take the forest
out of the people's hearts.
The soldiers forgot
to take the birds
out of the people's dreams.
And in the people's dreams
the birds still sing their song.

Now the children
are planting seedlings
to help the forest grow again.
They eat a simple meal of soft rice
wrapped in banana leaf.
And the land welcomes their smiling
like a shower of rain.

CLASS 107
INDIVIDUAL POEM
11 & UNDER 12 YRARS
(School Year 7)

POEM A: “CREATIVE WRITING” by Gervase Phinn

(This replaces “In the Woods” by Sheila Simmonds which was originally selected for the syllabus. Sincere apologies)

My story on Monday began:

*Mountainous seas crashed on the cliffs,
And the desolate land grew wetter ...*

The teacher wrote a little note: *Remember the capital letter!*

My poem on Tuesday began:

*Red tongues of fire,
Licked higher and higher
From smoking Etna's top ...*

The teacher wrote a little note: Where is your full stop?

My story on Wednesday began:

*Through the lonely, pine-scented wood
There twists a hidden path ...*

The teacher wrote a little note: Start a paragraph!

My poem on Thursday began:

*The trembling child,
Eyes dark and wild,
Frozen midst the fighting ...*

The teacher wrote a little note: Take care - untidy writing!

My story on Friday began:

*The boxer bruised and bloody lay,
His eye half closed and swollen ...*

The teacher wrote a little note: Use a semi-colon!

Next Monday my story will begin:

Once upon a time...

POEM B: “THE DRAGON OF DEATH” by Jack Prelutsky

In a faraway, faraway forest
Lies a treasure of infinite worth.
But guarding it closely forever
Looms a being as old as the earth.

Its body's as big as a boulder,
And armored with shimmering scales.
Even the mountain tops tremble when
It thrashes it's seven great tails.

Its eyes tell a story of terror,
They gleam with an angry red flame
As it timelessly watches its riches.
And the Dragon of Death is it's name.

Its teeth are far sharper than daggers.
It can tear hardest metal to shreds.
It has seven mouths filled with these weapons,
For it's neck swells to seven great heads.

Each head is as fierce as the other,
Each head breathes a fiery breath.
And any it touches must perish,
Set ablaze by the Dragon of Death.

All who have foolishly stumbled
On the Dragon of Death's golden cash
Remain evermore in that forest,
Nothing left of their bodies but ash.

POEM C: “BYRON TRIES TO KNIT” by Alison Chisholm

With one slight, careless flick
of a marmalade paw,
he brushes my ball of wool
onto the floor,
where it rolls to provoke him.
He quivers, then leaps,
and scatters my patterns
from nice tidy heaps
to a chaos of paper.
He charges and dives –
then with claws just as sharp
as the sharpest of knives
he tenses the wool
and he pulls it in knots
and unravels the strands.
Then he ponders and plots
How to add to the game –
Bats the wool round a chair,
Beneath the TV,
Through your legs, up the stair
The back down. Now the yarn
Is all tousled and grey
And the only thing left
Is to throw it away.
But Byron is purring –
He climbs in my lap
Contented, forgiven;
Curls up for a nap.

**CLASS 108
INDIVIDUAL POEM
12 & UNDER 15 YEARS
(School Years 8, 9 & 10)
(The Rotary Cup)**

“SURFING SPIDER” by Karen Palling

I found you where the moon's soft light
lit up your web site late last night:
those silky threads your own home spun
trapeze. I thought you might have run;
you froze, but still you made a stand,
Inspecting every silver strand
for damage to the filigree
so carelessly disturbed by me.
You've claimed as yours the space between
the printer cable and the screen,
as though you plan to surf the net
you're guarding with your silhouette.

But, though you'll scuttle down below,
my spyware's onto you: I know
your browsing habits, and I'll bet
that, though we haven't caught you yet,
we will, when you're preoccupied
with menus, and you can't decide
between mosquitoes a) and b);
we'll take the opportunity
to sweep away your home; no more
will windows, walls, the office door,
be shoulder-surfing-spider-patterned,
for soon you'll be debugged and flattened.

CLASS 109
INDIVIDUAL POEM
15 & UNDER 18 YEARS
(School Years 11, 12 & 13)
(The Mrs P F Dorey's Cup)

"THE DARKLING THRUSH"
by Thomas Hardy

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-grey,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
 The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
 Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
 The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
 The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
 Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
 Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
 The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
 Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
 In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
 Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
 Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
 Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
 His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
 And I was unaware.

CLASS 172
SET POETRY & PROSE
18 YEARS & OVER
(The Minerva Trophy)

POEM: “POST OFFICE” by Fleur Adcock

The queue's right out through the glass doors
to the Street: Thursday, pension day.
They built this Post Office too small.
Of course, the previous one was smaller –
a tiny prefab, next to the betting-shop,
says the man who's just arrived;
and the present one, at which we are queuing,
was cherry-trees in front of a church.
The church was where the supermarket is:
'My wife and I got married in that church'
the man says. 'We hold hands sometimes
when we're standing waiting at the checkout –
have a little moment together!' He laughs.
The queue shuffles forward a step.
Three members of it silently vow
never to grow old in this suburb;
one vows never to grow old at all.
'I first met her over there' the man says,
'on that corner where the bank is now.
The other corner was Williams Brothers –
remember Williams Brothers? They gave you tokens,
tin money, life, for your dividend.'
The woman in front of him remembers.
She nods, and swivels her loose lower denture,
remembering Williams Brothers' metal tokens,
and the marble slab on the cheese-counter,
and the carved mahogany booth where you were to pay.
The boy in front of her is chewing gum;
His jaws rotate with the same motion
as hers: to and fro, to and fro.

**PROSE: “MARLEY & ME (Life & Love with the World’s Worst Dog)”
by John Grogan**

‘Now take your time son,’ Dad said. ‘Your decision today is going to be with you for many years to come. Try rattling the cage and see which ones aren’t afraid.’

I grabbed the chain-link gate and yanked on it with a loud clang. The dozen or so puppies reeled backward, collapsing on top of one another in a squiggling heap of fur. Just one remained. He was gold with a white blazer on his chest, and he charged the gate, yapping fearlessly. He jumped up and excitedly licked my fingers through the fencing. It was love at first sight.

I brought him home in a cardboard box and named him Shaun. He was one of those dogs that give dogs a good name. He effortlessly mastered every command I taught him and was naturally well behaved. I could drop a crust on the floor and he would not touch it until I gave him the okay. He came when I called him and stayed when I told him to. We could let him out alone at night, knowing he would be back after making his rounds. Not that we often did, but we could leave him alone in the house for hours, confident he wouldn’t have an accident or disturb a thing. He raced cars without chasing them and walked beside me without a leash. He could dive to the bottom of our lake and emerge with rocks so big they sometimes got stuck in his jaws. He loved nothing more than riding in the car and would sit quietly in the backseat beside me on family road trips, content to spend hours gazing out of the window at the passing world. Perhaps best of all, I trained him to pull me through the neighbourhood dog-sled-style as I sat on my bicycle, making me the hands-down envy of my friends. Never once did he lead me into hazard.

CLASS 174
SET POETRY & PROSE
21 YEARS & OVER
(The Star Trophy)

POEM: “IN MEMORY OF MY GRANDFATHER” by Edward Storey

Swearing about the weather he walked in
like an old tree and sat down;
his beard charred with tobacco, his voice
rough as the bard of his cracked hands.

Whenever he came it was the wrong time.
Roots spread over the hearth, tripped
whoever tried to move about the room;
the house was cramped with only furniture.

But I was glad of his coming. Only
through him could I breathe in the sun
and smell the field. His clothes reeked
of the toil and the world outside;

geese and cows were the colour he made them,
he knew the language of birds and brought them
singing out of his beard, alive
to my blanket. He was winter and harvest.

Plums shone in his eyes when he rambled
Of orchards. With giant thumbs he'd split
an apple through the core, and juice
flowed from his ripe, uncultured mouth.

Then, hearing the room clock chime,
he walked from my ceiling of farmyards
and returned to his forest of thunder;
the house regained silence and corners.

Slumped there in my summerless season
I longed for his rough hands and words
To break the restrictions of my bed,
To burst like a tree from my four walls.

But there was no chance again of miming
his habits or language. Only now,
years later in a cramped city, can I
be grateful for his influence and love.

PROSE: "ATONEMENT" by Ian McEwan

The house was silent. Briony's view past the open front door was of a stretch of floral lino, and the first seven or eight stairs which were covered in deep red carpet. The brass rod on the third step was missing. Halfway along the hall was a semicircular table against the wall, and on it was a polished wooden stand, like a toast rack, for holding letters. It was empty. The lino extended past the stairs to a door with a frosted-glass window which probably opened onto to the kitchen out the back. The wallpaper was floral too – a posy of three roses alternating with a snowflake design. From the threshold to the beginning of the stairs she counted fifteen roses, sixteen snowflakes. Inauspicious.

At last, she heard a door opening upstairs, possibly the one she had heard slammed when she had knocked. Then the creak of a stair, and feet wearing thick socks came into view, and a flash of bare skin and a blue silk dressing gown that she recognised. Finally, Cecilia's face, tilting sideways as she leaned down to make out who was at the front door and spare herself the trouble of descending further, improperly dressed. It took her some moments to recognise her sister. She came down slowly another three steps.

'Oh my God'

She sat down and folded her arms.

Briony remained standing with one foot still on the garden path, the other on the front step. A wireless in the landlady's sitting room came on, and the laughter of an audience swelled as the valves warmed. There followed a comedian's wheedling monologue, broken at last by applause, and a jolly band striking up. Briony took a step into the hallway.

'She murmured 'I have to talk to you'

Cecilia was about to get up, then changed her mind. 'Why didn't you tell me you were coming?'

'You didn't answer my letter, so I came.'

She drew her dressing gown around her, and patted its pocket, probably in the hope of a cigarette. She was much darker in complexion, and her hands too were brown. She had not found what she wanted, but for the moment she did not make to rise.

CLASS 192
INTERPRETATION
“RHAPSODY ON A WINDY NIGHT” by T S Eliot
(The John Allen-Falla Memorial Trophy)

Twelve o'clock.
Along the reaches of the street
Held in a lunar synthesis,
Whispering lunar incantations
Dissolve the floors of memory
And all its clear relations,
Its divisions and precisions.
Every street lamp that I pass
Beats like a fatalistic drum,
And through the spaces of the dark
Midnight shakes the memory
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,
The street-lamp sputtered,
The street-lamp muttered,
The street-lamp said, "Regard that woman
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door
Which opens on her like a grin.
You see the border of her dress
Is torn and stained with sand,
And you see the corner of her eye
Twists like a crooked pin."

The memory throws up high and dry
A crowd of twisted things;
A twisted branch upon the beach
Eaten smooth, and polished
As if the world gave up
The secret of its skeleton,
Stiff and white.
A broken spring in a factory yard,
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left
Hard and curled and ready to snap.

Half-past two,
The street-lamp said,
"Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,
Slips out its tongue

And devours a morsel of rancid butter."
So the hand of the child, automatic,
Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along the quay.
I could see nothing behind that child's eye.
I have seen eyes in the street
Trying to peer through lighted shutters,
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,
An old crab with barnacles on his back,
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,
The lamp sputtered,
The lamp muttered in the dark.
The lamp hummed:
"Regard the moon,
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,
She winks a feeble eye,
She smiles into corners.
She smooths the hair of the grass.
The moon has lost her memory.
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,
Her hand twists a paper rose,
That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,
She is alone
With all the old nocturnal smells
That cross and cross across her brain."
The reminiscence comes
Of sunless dry geraniums
And dust in crevices,
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,
And female smells in shuttered rooms,
And cigarettes in corridors
And cocktail smells in bars.

The lamp said,
"Four o'clock,
Here is the number on the door.
Memory!
You have the key,
The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair.
Mount.
The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life."

The last twist of the knife.