

Aims

- ❖ To write poetry that experiments with:
 - active verbs
 - personification
- ❖ To revise poems for reading aloud individually

Resources:

- ❖ Scary poems by Porchester School, Nottingham
<http://www.kidsonthenet.com/porchester/spooky.htm>
- ❖ A downloadable activity sheet
http://www.kidsonthenet.com/teachers/downloads/Y6t1obj10scarypoems_as.doc

Introduction

The use of personification and active verbs is ideal for writing atmospheric and gripping poems. The poems featured on the web page mentioned above are excellent examples.

Points for discussion and activities

- ❖ Discuss **active verbs** (*The crashing sea beckoned me to come closer*, as opposed to *I was beckoned to come closer by the crashing sea ...*): they lend immediacy, tension, and in the case of these scary poems, a feeling of imminent threat.
- ❖ Look at the poems by Porchester School and identify the active verbs. Change various lines, substituting the active verbs for passive ones. Discuss the effect that this has on the 'feel' of the poems, and the length of the lines.
- ❖ Discuss **personification** (a form of metaphor in which language relating to human action, motivation and emotion is used to refer to non-human agents, objects or abstract concepts): *The wind laughed, the prison walls mocked him* etc. The attachment of human actions or emotions to other things extends the scope and atmosphere of the picture being painted by the poem. *The sun smiled* gives greater depth of meaning than *the sun shone*, for instance.
- ❖ Again, look at the poems by Porchester School and pick out examples of personification (some are featured in the [downloadable activity sheet](#)). Rewrite some of the lines avoiding the personification (*The rainbow winked at me like a rock star*, from *Ella's poem* would be much the poorer without the personification for instance) to underline how much additional information can be conveyed in one or two simple words.
- ❖ Write some Scary Poems using the activity sheet as a starting point.

Follow Up

- ❖ Revise the poems, with a view to preparing them for reading aloud. This can be done on an individual basis, in pairs, in small groups, or by projecting draft versions of poems for a whole class to work on together.
- ❖ Try using personification and active verbs in other types of poems. Sporty and descriptive poems also lend themselves excellently. These can also be submitted for inclusion on the Kids on the Net site via the form at <http://www.kidsonthenet.com/about/write.htm> For examples of poems on a sporty theme, try <http://www.kidsonthenet.com/cricket.htm> and <http://www.kidsonthenet.com/sports.htm>.