Where My Writing Takes Me

A project by the South Powys Outdoor Learning Wales Network Group aimed at developing literacy outside.
Contents page

Page 3 Introduction to the project
Pages 4-6 Instructions on using Aurasma – accessing embedded media.
Page 7 Introduction to Mark Making Outdoors
Page 8 Poems Section
Pages 9-10 Warm ups for Writing Outdoors
Pages 11-12 Drama Games
Pages 13-14 Kennings
Pages 15-18 The Listening Station & It Hears
Pages 19-20 Elemental Dos and Don’ts
Pages 21-22 Coire Fhionn Lochan
Pages 23-24 Cinquains
Pages 25-28 Instructional Poems
Pages 29-30 Thanks Poem
Pages 31-32 Invitation Poems
Page 33 Participants Evaluations
Page 34 Acknowledgements and Contact Information

Please note: This pack has been designed to be printed double sided, if it is printed single sided there are two pages that are intentionally left blank.
'Where My Writing Takes Me'

The implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework in Wales highlighted the potential to develop literacy through outdoor learning. The South Powys Outdoor Learning Wales Network Group responded to this opportunity by developing a training project with Forest School as the method of delivery, engaging with local Forest School leaders to improve their teaching of literacy alongside the activities included in their Forest School sessions.

Set in the National Trust’s Carno Woods, the training included a range of speaking and listening, reading and writing activities to develop children’s understanding and ownership of the environment. The focus was on developing observation skills, while at the same time capturing ideas in poetry and prose. Poems from existing British poets were used to provide inspiration and structure to the activities. Plants, trees, animals and even a pathway through the woods became the focus for a poem. Every opportunity was taken to use the natural environment to showcase their work including writing on sticks and cuts of wood.

The project was masterfully planned and led by Emma Beynon. Emma, a teacher and writer, has an MA in Education from the University of Bath. In 2008 she developed the Write Team project, an innovative creative writing project managed by Bath Festivals. She currently works freelance teaching creative writing in and out of doors.

In October 2013 Emma established Open Ground Writing (www.opengroundwriting.co.uk) with professional non-fiction and feature writer Helena Attlee. Open Ground provides writing workshops in the landscape for writers of all ages and abilities. In November 2014 she started work for Arts Alive Wales (www.artsalivewales.org.uk) on their project Caban Sgriblio delivering writing workshops for young people in schools & the community throughout Powys. Emma’s travel writing has been published most recently in the Marine Quarterly and Yachting Monthly.

She is currently writing a novel based on her sailing adventures in Svalbard. Forthcoming publications include chapters in Making Poetry Happen published by Bloomsbury – Education.
Using Aurasma to view our videos.

As part of this information pack we have included videos of the poets reading their completed work as well as short video clips of activities.

To be able to access these videos you will need to use Aurasma to scan the photographs/pictures to view content embedded ‘underneath’ the image. Images tagged with the purple Aurasma symbol have augmented content (called Auras) for you to view/hear.

This is how you do it!

**Step 1** - Download the Aurasma app onto your ipad from the App store.

**Step 2** - Next create a user / school account and password.

**Step 2** – Now you will need to find our channel on Aurasma to follow us. Don’t worry it’s quite easy to do!
Step 1 - In the home screen tap on the Aurasma symbol.

Step 2 - You will come to the Explore page. Next click on the magnifying glass displayed at the bottom of the screen.

Step 3 - Type Where My Writing Takes Me into the search bar at the top of the page. Click on search.

Step 4 - Wait a short time and Aurasma will start to search the web for our writing project. Click on the Channels tab which is the third tab along which will narrow the amount of logos you have to look through!
Step 5 - Click on the logo and then you can choose to follow our channel. This channel will have short movies and audio clips of the children reading their poems aloud. You need to be able to follow this channel before you can access our work.

Step 6 – Get back to the Aurasma viewfinder by clicking on the viewfinder button.

As soon as you are following the Where My Writing Takes Me channel you can scan images in this booklet. Scanning with Aurasma is simple. All you have to do is hold the viewfinder over an image that has the Aurasma logo and the video should start. Be aware though if you take the ipad away the movie/audio clip will stop working.
The beauty of writing outdoors is that there is so much around you to help you mark make!

- Use large pieces of paper and chunky markers.
- Sticks with bundles of leaves knotted onto the end and dipped in mud.
- Use leaves, stones, sticks and other natural objects to ‘build’ your word.
- Take a fern and dip it into runny mud and then write!
- Use your knotting rope to shape words.
- A pointy stick writing into a slab of mud.
- Have a set of whiteboards and pens or clipboards with pencils tied to them so the children can jot their ideas down.
Some of the following pages display the poems that Emma introduced us to on the writing days. We went back to our own schools and used the ideas to encourage writing outdoors. We have included a selection of some of the writing that the children produced. They were inspired, confident and comfortable in writing outdoors. We hope you enjoy reading and listening to them as much as we do!
Warm Ups For Writing Outside

The Muddy Writing Trail

Things to Find

A sign of spring
looks alive

A remnant of autumn
brown golden

Something with a tinge of red
buds

Two objects curved and green
holly

Something glimpsed in the sky
sun
Warm Ups for Writing Outside

All of the warm up exercises are aimed at developing the children’s observation skills together with their vocabulary giving them the skills to be able describe what they see as vividly as possible.

Activities include –

I hear with my little ear: This activity is adapted from I Spy, but instead of identifying the chosen object by the first letter of the word, a homophone is chosen. So for example you might start off with: ‘I hear with my little ear something that sounds like dark.’ Answer: ‘Bark’ or ‘I hear with my little ear something that sounds like good’ ‘wood’. Once children have mastered the principle of this activity it becomes a really effective way of encouraging children to investigate their outdoor environment in depth, searching for words that have not yet been used!

5x5x5: Ask the children to really look at an object outdoors and then write down 5 words or phrases to describe what they see. Once they have completed the first 5, ask them to cross that list out and to write another! Let them keep writing down their descriptions until they have really scrutinized the object in great depth and generated a great deal of vocabulary.

Drawing with Words: Invite children to draw the outline of the object that you are studying. It could be a tree, a bird, a flower or mini beast. Then ask them to look carefully, and for quite some time at the object. Inviting them to write down the words that describe what they see within the outline of the object. In this way they are colouring in the object with words. Once they have exhausted all the descriptions of what it looks like, invite them to touch the object and even imagine the sound its makes. Repeated focus on the five senses helps the children to develop a very vivid and exciting writing style.
Drama Games In Action!
Drama Games – Characterisation and Storytelling

Create a drama space outdoors - this could be a story circle in a glade in a wood or even in the playground. Invite the children to imagine that they are walking on the beach in really hot weather. Ask them to portray in the way they move where they are and what it is like. Once they are quite clearly enjoying a beautiful day by the seaside, ask them to freeze! This gives you a chance to admire their acting by describing what you see. Then invite them to walk along the same beach in a storm. As they walk you can ask them to think about what they see, hear, feel. If they are really concentrating you can always let them answer your questions: What do you see on the beach in the storm? What can you hear? What can you feel?

Once they have mastered this imaginative drama based task, you can focus on characterisation. These activities are also very good for developing team work and communication skills. Ask the children to walk around the space, telling them that when you clap your hands the must get into groups of 3 and make a shape. Start with triangle, squares, then move on to cars and washing machines. Once the children become adept at creating these shapes and objects move onto characters with specific reference to animals.

Ask the children to move around the space as if they were a fox, a badger, a mini beast or an owl. Focus on the five senses, inviting them to think about what they hear, see, smell, taste and feel as a means of developing an understanding of the animal and its habitat. Once the children are confident with this task ask them to freeze, using this opportunity to ask them to describe they can see.

The final activity develops a physical sense of the animal, creating a sense of character. Once again invite them to walk around the space until they are asked to stop, at which point invite them to get into threes: two children to create a lap top/computer. The third child is the animal actually sitting at the lap top or asking two of them to become a mirror while the third is the animal gazing at themselves in the mirror. These scenarios give the children a real sense of the way the animal moves, behaves even feels. It provides a really good starting point for a story.
Kennings

Ancient rooter
strong wise observer
tree monster triper
slow grower
leaf dropper

By Shriyans

Worm-slugs-eater
Prickly protector
Spiky-killer
Ball-changer
Shy Character
Summer lover

Jessica Shriyans Neelima

Web maker
Tickly walker
Hairy monster
Thread winder
Fly catcher
It is a ???

By chloe w
Kenning Poems

I’m a...
shell-breaker,
song-creator,
cloud-swooper,
cage-hater,
worm-puller,
dawn-bringer,
shell-maker!

Teachers’ notes: Kennings are an ancient Norse riddle. Clues are written in two-word rhyming couplets that play with sound and rhythm, each one describing what the chosen subject does. So an axe becomes a skull-cleaver, a trunk-splitter. A ladder might be an air-climber or an up-stepper. You simply have to think of what the object does; it’s movements, sounds, appearance etc, then swap the two words round and add ‘er’ to the end.
The subject for your kenning can be something from history, biology, geography or science. Anything!
Can you guess what the Kenning above is about?

Our class went out into the woods kenning poems were hanging in the trees the children had to read them and guess what they were about. The class then had a go at creating their own kenning poems following the special pattern.
The Listening Station
The Listening Station by Chrissie Gittings

It hears the wind that rushes through the trees
    saying something of the sea,
it hears a moth leaving the ceiling,
it hears the thin pages of a book close,
it hears a late key turn in the door.

It hears an egg flop into a mixing bowl,
it hears the crack of a bended knee,
it hears a wash leather squeak down a window pane,
it hears an apple eaten to its rotten core.

It hears a pencil dragged across tissue paper,
it hears a pea-stick snapped in half,
it hears a mouth leave another mouth,
it hears a lion (or is it a child?) roar.

Teacher’s notes: We introduced The Listening Station as a shared reading experience in our log circle where the children read a line each of the poem accompanied with an action to suit their line of the poem e.g. flopping forward like the egg flopping into the mixing bowl. Then we closed our eyes and focussed hard on identifying how many sounds we could hear. The class then carefully scraped the bark off sticks and wrote with a black felt – pen one line for the poem It hears ..... with what they could hear. We sat back in our circle and then performed our poem aloud. The poem It Hears ....by class 3 is next in your pack for you to enjoy.

All of your senses could be explored - It smells ...., It tastes... (from food cooked safely on your campfire), It sees .... You could even draw a smiley ‘poetry face’ on your finger and everything it touches can become a line of your poem e.g. It touches the moss, it feels like down.
It Hears ..... by class 3

It hears the blackbirds chirping happily high up in the tree
It hears the beech tree’s leaves rustling in the breeze
It hears the happy children squelching through the mud
   It hears the minibeasts scurrying through the leaves
It hears the loud cathedral bells ringing out over Brecon
   It hears the busy saw cutting through wood
   It hears the wind rustling through the willow
It hears the whispering leaves hanging from the cherry trees
It hears the grass swaying gently in the summer wind
It hears the crackling flames of the forest school fire
   It hears the car horn beeping on the busy road
   It hears the popping popcorn in the frying pan
It hears the furry squirrel scuttering up the tall tree
It hears the graceful fluttering of the colourful butterfly
   It hears the buzzing bee busily collecting pollen
It hears the children’s laughter as they play outside
   It hears the splashing rain on the oak tree’s leaves
It hears the hissing of the hot fire as it is put out with water
It hears the singing of our class happily working outside
It hears the snapping of the fire sticks to check if they are dry
It hears the roaring fire melting squishy marshmallows.

Teacher’s notes: Inside the classroom we read a newspaper report of an ancient yew tree that was under threat of being chopped down by a property developer. We re-enacted the scenes of protestors protecting the trees. Out in the woodland we sculpted mud faces onto the trees and imagined what the faces would have heard if they were at the protest. The children then wrote independently – with many free flowing ideas of what was heard at the protest!
RECYCLE
YOUR
RUBBISH

Elemental 'Dos and Don’ts
Elemental Dos and Don’ts by Mandy Coe

Do
let blades slide across your back
form a new country between sky and lake
creak and crack
tinkle in gin

Don’t
let the sun make you sweat
sting the polar bear’s paws
let blue mountains become blue lakes
topple Aunty Maureen on the back step

Teacher’s notes: An excellent poem for looking at many areas in our primary science curriculum. A good idea is to start with a mind map so the children have a visual reminder of all they know about a certain topic.

This poem was used within a project about materials and recycling with a Year 1 and Year 2 class. The children were able to suggest unusual ideas to liven up their poems about recycling. The poem also allowed them to use a simple structure so all the children could complete a poem.
We re-used old packaging and clothing. Creating batik on old shirts and used food packaging to make minibeasts and sun hats.
The children need a range of experiences reusing and recycling items so they have plenty of ideas when you ask them to make suggestions on what can and can’t be done with it. I provided each group with one old box or plastic bottle. Each child said one sentence beginning with “Do” and then a second beginning with “Don’t” in turn as they performed to the class.
Finally their ideas were recorded using words or pictures on scrap paper or card. Each child was then able to use their notes to write a Do / Don’t poem.
Coire Fhionn Lochan by Thomas A Clark

...of the little branches
Coire Fhionn Lochan by Thomas A Clark

lapping of the little waves
breaking of the little waves
spreading of the little waves
idling of the little waves

rippling of the little waves
settling of the little waves
meeting of the little waves
swelling of the little waves

trembling of the little waves
dancing of the little waves
pausing of the little waves
slanting of the little waves

tossing of the little waves
scribbling of the little waves
lilting of the little waves
sparkling of the little waves

leaping of the little waves
drifting of the little waves
running of the little waves
splashing of the little waves

Teacher’s notes: This poem provided a beautiful framework to work with a Foundation Phase class as the structure is very simple. It can be about anything that moves and the children coped well with identifying the object and then listing ‘action’ words to describe its’ movement. The children chose their object (in this case an old oak tree in our school grounds). We moved around the log circle as if we were the branches and took turns to describe our movements. Each child wrote a line for the poem onto pieces of old card and we then assembled them into order and stuck them down into our Where My Writing Takes Me book.
Cinquains

Gate
Crippled, old
Swinging, jumping, opening.
A pathway to anywhere.

Door.

Pengwin

Jesus
Powerful, Lord.
Moving, praying, shaking.
Son of God, king of peace traveling to Jerusalem.

RAVIE
Teachers’ notes: A cinquain is a short poem with a very clear form

Line 1 = the title, one word- the name of your person, place or thing (a noun)

Line 2 = two words describing your subject (adjectives)

Line 3 = three ‘ing’ words. Words that tell what your subject does, such as whispering, jumping, hiding.

Line 4 = a sentence about your subject.

Line 5= one word-it should be another name for your subject (noun).

I’ve found the cinquain poem an excellent vehicle for teaching word level work – explaining nouns, adjectives and verbs in a fun and all inclusive way. The children responded very well to using this format outside and were able to transfer the skills they learnt and their enthusiasm for writing back indoors. They completed cinquains around the Easter story, for our dragon theme and other areas of the curriculum right across Foundation Phase and Key Stage Two.
How to See the Sea by Angharad Bradley

Equipment:

A ladder
A house
A map
Some sand
An older brother or sister
And a bucketful of imagination.

Method:

One. Get your older brother or sister to buy a ladder,
Two, place the ladder by your house,
Three, climb to the top of your house
Four, don’t fall.
Five, open your map
Six, Look for the blue, don’t look at the sky,
look at the sea.
Seven, when you find the blue, get your sand.
Eight, throw it up into the air,
Nine, there you have it, a seaside.
Ten or you just go to the Beach.
How to Make a Cup of Tea by Chrissie Gittins

For William Patten School, Stoke Newington

Take the mouse out of the teapot.
Pour in two cupfuls of ice.

Boil the kettle and leave the water to cool.
Find some tea.
This could be elephant and magnet tea,
hundreds and thousands tea,
or – the always popular – bag of nails tea.

Shovel the tea into the pot.
Don't bother pouring out the iced water –
it will mingle nicely with the cool water from the kettle.
Pour the water from the kettle steadily into the teapot.
Leave it for half an hour to settle down and stop giggling.

Find six teacups. Six is always a good number.
Don’t worry about the saucers.
Never make the mistake of asking if anyone takes sugar.
If they say ‘Yes’ and you’ve run out,
then you’ll have to go out and buy some.

Milk the cat.
Bake a cake.

Teachers’ notes: These two instructional poems have proved a great hit with the boys – especially as they can add their own sense of humour in along the way! For our How to...poems the class created images in art ephemera (using natural objects) as a starting point and then wrote the poems to accompany their art. The group also wrote instructional poems such as .... How to light a forest school fire safely.... How not to get your wellies stuck in mud....How to catch a glimpse of a forest fairy at forest school....How to find a puddle.
Thanks by Mandy Cole

The rain is thankful for the cloud, the cloud is thankful for the wind, the wind is thankful for the wings of the bird, the bird is thankful for the worm, the worm is thankful for earth, the earth is thankful for the rain, the rain is thankful for the music it makes, de-bop-whoosh, brolly, gutter pitter-patter

**Teachers’ notes:** A simple pattern to follow which enabled successful short burst writing. The children went out into our Peace Garden and listened to the poem by Mandy Coe read aloud. They were then put into groups of 5 and given a piece of paper which a word written on it. The children had to organise themselves into an order in which the thanks poem could be written. e.g. butterfly – chrysalis – caterpillar – leaves – sun. Prompting quality talk and debate! The groups then wrote their poems onto rocks with black felt pens and left outside around the garden for others to read. Next it was the turn of independent writing and using the structure of thanks to complete their poems.
Invitation poems
Invitation from a Mole by Alice Shertle

Come on down

Live among worms a while
taste dirt
on the tip of your tongue

smell
the sweet damp feet of mushrooms

listen to roots
reaching
dereper

press your cheek against
the cold face of a stone

wear the earth like a glove

close your eyes

wrap yourself in darkness

see
what you’re missing

Teachers’ notes: Older children have enjoyed working on these poems and spacing the layout, which helps them to pause within the poem. In our woodlands we imagined ourselves sat high up in the trees having a bird’s eye view of mossy tree stumps, sheltering underneath a toadstool, sleeping underneath a damp log. The children quickly noted down who might live there, what would they see, feel, smell, hear and taste. How would they move in their home? Who would they let in? What natural things around them would they use to help them?
We were asked to note down our evaluation of the training days on small sticks which had been through a band saw to give it a flat side.
With thanks to all the schools that took part in Where My Writing Takes Me.

Thanks also to The National Trust at Carno Woods for two great days using their beautiful woodlands as a stimulus for writing.

A huge THANK YOU to Emma Beynon for her inspiration, enthusiasm and creativity. Emma you managed to make poets out of all of us!

If you would like to find out more about the South Powys Outdoor Learning Wales Network Group then please follow us on Twitter.