

# IDEA 1: PRESENTATION

## DO...

- Speak clearly, slowly and confidently
- Practice beforehand to find your words!
- Make eye contact with your audience
- Plant your feet firmly and move/ gesture with purpose and control
- Speak with enthusiasm and passion
- Use facts to back up your points
- Feel comfortable using short pauses and silences in your talk
- Share your story- why are you here, why are you passionate about this?
- Share other's stories- who has experienced the issues being discussed?
- Differentiate your tone, emphasis keywords and phrases
- End with your 'call to action'- what do you want your audience to take away, or do after this?

## DON'T...

- Fidget
- Look down
- Have 'closed body language (arms crossed)
- Speak too quickly
- Say too many 'Ums' and 'Arrs'
- Speak in monotone
- read off of a PowerPoint presentation
- speak very quietly

## POWER POINT PRESENTATION

Don't fill your slides with words to read. Instead, make each slide visually interesting with one or two images that will prompt you with your points. If you do use words, don't have more than 20 words on a slide- keep it minimal. Use your PowerPoint as an aid, rather than the main focus of your talk.

## VIDEO LINKS:

### HOW TO PRESENT...

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4y1OO9rppA>
2. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tShavGuo0\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tShavGuo0_E)

### HOW TO CREATE AN ENGAGING POWERPOINT...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cElyV-fTQ5Y>

# IDEA 2: LETTER

## STEP-BY-STEP

Before writing, you must understand your purpose for writing. Consider these questions...

**WHO** am I trying to persuade

**WHAT** am I trying to convince my reader to do or change?

**WHY** should they do what I'm asking- what are my reasons?

**PLAN** your letter

Next follow these steps:

1. **Introduce yourself and state your reason for contact**
2. **Give some facts, share a portion of your research**
3. **Share a solution to the issues.**
4. **Call to action- what do you hope to get out of writing this letter?**
5. **Provide a short conclusion and a thank you to end your letter**

## EXAMPLE:

44 Address street  
Address town  
Address county  
PO11 1AA

Dear.....

My name is Ben Sharpe, and I am writing to you in order to open up a conversation about gender inequality. I specifically hope to raise awareness of the vulnerability of girls living in extreme poverty in Northern Uganda. I am in year 10 at \*\*\*\*\* School and as part of my Duke of Edinburgh award, I am currently volunteering over the course of 3 months with Edukid, a UK-based charity that focuses on breaking down the barriers to education that children living in extreme poverty across the globe face ([www.schools.edukid.org.uk](http://www.schools.edukid.org.uk)).

Over the course of my time volunteering with Edukid I have learnt in depth about their gender equality projects in Uganda... Did you know that 1 in 3 women will face gender-based violence in their lifetime AND child marriage rates are expected to increase due to COVID-19? In fact, Edukid, have found out that around 1/3 of the girls living in the rural northern Ugandan villages they work in, are married by the time they are 15 years old, often to much older men because the wider family are so poor that they need the bride price. I am deeply troubled by the above statistics, as I believe that every child, regardless of gender, deserves the right to an education without interruption or pressure of early marriage.

Edukid has highlighted this as a huge barrier for many girls accessing school and so has worked to promote girls' rights and also built a girls' dormitory. The dormitory is highly beneficial to the girls for the following reasons.

1. Girls can live on the school site and avoid pressures and abuse.
2. The girls, who at home are living in extreme poverty - struggling to eat well and have good sanitation - will have access to a clean-living space, a mattress, mosquito nets, a toilet and 3 meals a day.
3. The girls will receive extra educational support from teachers living on-site, will have longer school days, and have the space and time to study with peers without the pressure of doing chores or looking after family members, a common role for a young girl.
4. As suggested in the above statistics, poverty is a leading cause of early child marriage as families look for a 'bride price'. Receiving an education is a sustainable, long-term solution to breaking the cycle of poverty and prevents future generations from facing the issue of child marriage.

Please watch the following Youtube video in which Patricia and Priska, two girls currently staying in Edukid's dormitory, share the issues they have faced previously, and how staying at school in the dormitory has changed their lives:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgOCmkHhrcQ&t=64s>

I am requesting your support. Would you please help me by financially supporting my efforts to make a difference in our world? Alongside my dad, I am planning to do a sponsored walk along the coastal path. The walk will approximately take 6 hours in total and will be very challenging as the pathway will take me up and down cliffsides. Through this event, I aim to raise a minimum of £180, which will fund boarding school fees and educational fees for a girl in Edukid's projects for 6 months. I would, however, love to fund a full year of support for somebody.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I truly hope you have been inspired by what I have had to share and I do also hope that you feel moved to support my efforts in making a positive impact on gender equality.

Kind Regards,  
Ben Sharpe

## VIDEO LINKS:

### HOW TO WRITE A PERSUASIVE LETTER...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgE-qrU1hXU>

### HOW TO WRITE A FORMAL LETTER...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBO-ib-V8LM>

# IDEA 3: POETRY

“Youth are the future. And that's not a figurative, metaphorical statement. That's fact. That's literal. And I think if we look at some of the most successful movements throughout human history, whether it be the civil rights movement, Black Lives Matter, gender equality, typically, those changes wouldn't have come about without the fire and the ferocity of young people. We tend to be a lot more imaginative than our elders just because we bring, I think, the creativity and the openness that comes with being young. We have the most dire stakes when it comes to the future. Young people are looking at the dawn and realizing, whatever happens, today and tomorrow is going to decide the fate of me and my family and my society”

Amanda Gorman

## CREATE AND HOST A PERFORMANCE POETRY FUNDRAISING EVENT.

*This event will hit both “inspire others” and “take action”*

### **It couldn't be Done** by Edgar Albert Guest

Somebody said that it couldn't be done  
But he with a chuckle replied  
That “maybe it couldn't,” but he would be one  
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.  
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin  
On his face. If he worried he hid it.  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: “Oh, you'll never do that;  
At least no one ever has done it;”  
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat  
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.  
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,  
Without any doubting or quiddit,  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,  
There are thousands to prophesy failure,  
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,  
The dangers that wait to assail you.  
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,  
Just take off your coat and go to it;  
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing  
That “cannot be done,” and you'll do it.

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## WHAT IS A POETRY SLAM?

A poetry slam is an event celebrating the competitive art of performance poetry. The emphasis can be placed solely on the **DELIVERY** and **PERFORMANCE** of a chosen piece of poetry by an established poet, or on the **WRITING** of an original poem as well as its **PRESENTATION**. Each contestant presents in front of an audience and a panel of judges.

If you prefer to remove the competitive element and host an evening with a singular focus on raising awareness, the following guide still applies but you will not be needing a score sheet or to arrange and brief a judging panel.

Funds can be raised through ticket and programme sales, a raffle or auction of promises, refreshments and donation buckets at the door.

## HOW TO HOST A POETRY SLAM EVENT

- Advertise for participants (via word of mouth, the school's social media platform, fliers, posters)
- Decide on a suitable date and time for the event (which might be in an assembly, in front of the whole school, or an after-school event aimed at the wider community as well as the student body)
- Arrange a briefing meeting for interested participants and hand out instructions
- Each participant or group should choose a goal and a poem that relates to it and submit their choices to you. The poem could be one of those suggested in the pack or they could find or write their own. They should avoid a poem already chosen by another group.
- Book the school hall or theatre space and arrange to have a technician on hand
- Create official invitations for Head teachers, SMT, school governors, community dignitaries
- Source raffle prizes and tickets, items for an auction of promises, refreshments & find a support team willing to organise and run this side of things on the day.
- Collate technical requirements for each participant or group - music, props, lighting
- Decide on a running order
- Arrange a rehearsal time for each group earlier in the day in the space with the technicians
- Create a score sheet for the judges and brief them on their task
- Arrange for extra entertainment to showcase other performing arts: an art exhibition in the foyer relating to the sustainable goals, an exhibition of poetry either written by students or printed from this resource pack, a musical performance by students while the judges are deliberating.
- Organise the printing of a programme and certificates for participants and purchase small prizes or trophies for the winners.

### **SUGGESTED JUDGING CRITERIA**

Performance techniques including stage presence and confidence

Interesting and creative interpretations of the poem

Choice of vocabulary, imagery and poetic devices OR (if an established poem) how effectively these are delivered

Emotional impact

Teamwork (if presented in a group)

## TEMPLATE TO HELP YOU TURN YOUR POEM INTO A PIECE OF PERFORMANCE POETRY

**Read the poem out loud several times. Make sure you understand every word.**

**Search the web for reviews and analysis breakdowns of the poem. Other people may see something you have missed that will add to your interpretation and presentation; but bear in mind, that just because it's on the web does not mean their view is 'right' or better than yours.**

**Find out about the poet but avoid a long rambling biography of facts. Instead include only that which strikes you as particularly interesting about the poet's life or approach to poetry or is relevant to the poem and its meaning. This could be included as part of your performance or as programme notes.**

**Ideally you should learn the poem off by heart so you can be free to fully engage your audience with your performance and not simply read from a sheet of paper.**

**Practice it until you can make connections between each stanza and not worry about forgetting it.**

### Solo

Your poem may best stand alone as a solo but there are still choices to be made to make the performance as interesting and impactful as possible: You could

a) choose to read it straight, taking care with PAUSES, EMPHASIS and TONE to direct the audience's attention to the meaning, give them time to absorb what you are saying and allow space for gravity or humour.

Example: Hollie McNish reading *A Toast to the People* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZ\\_B4sxIHxs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZ_B4sxIHxs)

b) animate your performance with GESTURES and MOVEMENT that reflects the words or mood and will highlight meaning

Example: Martin Kiszko's performance of *Take a Carbon Takeaway* <https://vimeo.com/216849573>

c) find a piece of MUSIC to complement the poem. Remember to check sound levels.

d) decide how to best use the SPACE to suit your poem's theme. Will you sit or stand? Start on stage or enter an empty space? Could the poem 'interrupt' something you are doing? Will you have a significant PROP or item of SET & how will you use it?

e) create or find a FILM as a backdrop to run while you deliver the poem

Example; Benjamin Zephaniah reading *Future Visions* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDWu9XuJ9oQ>

f) think about how LIGHTING might help your performance

### Group

If your poem is very dynamic or particularly visual, it may be best presented in a group. With more people on stage you can go further to employ physical theatre and Greek chorus techniques to help you express what the poem is about and give your audience many more signals – auditory and visual - to read and interpret:

a) First, highlight any words and phrases that stand out as especially powerful, resonant or significant that merit special emphasis

b) Work through the TEXT of the poem line by line 'arranging it' for performance:-

Share out the text deciding who says what.

Do you have any central characters?

Ensure all your decisions are driven by meaning and impact

Are there any important words or phrases that could be chanted all together in unison or repeated as an echo?

Play with volume (for example add whispers beneath the main text)

c) Think about how you use the SPACE: where to position the actors to suit, echo and intensify meaning and impact

Who should be in the space from the start? Who might enter? When? how?

Are they in a formation: a line/two lines/a circle/a pattern?

Do they face the front/the back/each other?

d) Are there any GESTURES or MOVEMENT that would help convey the meaning and add emphasis?

Think about using unison for extra impact and repetition if significant words are repeated

Do the actors move through the space?

How do they move? towards the audience or away from them? Quickly or slowly?

Are they always on the same level?

Do they move one by one or on mass?

e) What PROPS might you use to help express the narrative and convey meaning?

EXAMPLE: **In My Shoes:** a pair of shoes on stage immediately suggests an owner and a story; tearing up an identity card becomes a violent act that leaves the floor littered with symbolic debris

f) Would a particular COSTUME further underline the poem's theme?

g) Consider what kind of LIGHTING might enhance the presentation?

h) Would a piece of MUSIC playing beneath the text work with the poem?

**When you are happy with your composition, learn your part and rehearse until you are confident that every aspect of the performance works to communicate meaning and is well-timed.**

**Now your poem is ready to share with others. Well done. Enjoy. Good luck!**

## POEM SUGGESTIONS FOR THE 17 UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

Below is a list of poems - written by renowned poets - that in some way shine a light on each of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Included in the collection are poems by Dan Almagor, Simon Armitage, Ibtisam Baraket, Simon Barraclough, Brian Bilston, Colette Bryce, Cameron Conaway, Carol Ann Duffy, Imtiaz Dharker, Amanda Gorman, Edgar Albert Guest, Martin Kiszko, Phillip Larkin, Josephine LoRe, Roger McGough, Argos MacCallum, Hollie McNish, Alison Morse, Anu Omotunde-Young, Sharmila Pokharel, Michael Rosen, Khadija Rouf, Kate (Kae) Tempest, Benjamin Zephaniah.

### SDG 1: END POVERTY EVERYWHERE

**Josephine LoRe** is a Canadian writer, poet and photographer whose words have been published, read on stage, set to music, danced, and integrated into paintings.

#### ENOUGH

Would words be enough, I would sate your hunger.  
I would build for you a well ever-filled with water clean.  
I would work alongside as you till the field;  
Watch hope emerge green from brown earth.

Would words be enough, I would end your misery,  
Watch each child of yours grow strong and true,  
Teach you to read and to write and to sing  
So that your voice be forgotten nevermore.

Would words be enough, I would help you bear your burden,  
Bring healing to your wounds, end strife,  
See beyond lines on a map, beyond colour,  
And you would know you are my sister, my brother.

If words were enough.

### QUESTIONS

1. The speaker in the poem wants to help eradicate poverty. What specifically does she wish she could do?
2. But words are never enough. What reasons or excuses might people give for failing to act on their good intentions?
3. The word '*Enough*' is repeated throughout the poem meaning 'sufficient'; What meaning and impact does the word have when standing alone as a title?

## SDG 1: END POVERTY EVERYWHERE

**Imtiaz Dharker** was born in Pakistan but grew up in Scotland. She is a poet, artist, playwright and documentary film maker and her mixed heritage is always at the heart of her work. Dharker now lives in Bombay, India and has worked in the slums of Mumbai where the temperature can reach 40 degrees and water is extremely scarce and considered a luxury.

### BLESSING

<https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/english-literature-gcse-level/poetry/poems-other-cultures-traditions/blessing-imtiaz-dharker>

The skin cracks like a pod.  
There never is enough water.  
Imagine the drip of it,  
the small splash,  
an echo in a tin mug,  
the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush of fortune.  
The municipal pipe bursts,  
silver crashes to the ground  
and the flow has found  
a roar of tongues.

From the huts,  
a congregation:  
every man, woman, child for streets around  
butts in, with pots,  
brass, copper, aluminium,  
plastic buckets,  
frantic hands,  
and naked children  
screaming in the liquid sun,  
their highlights polished to perfection,  
flashing light,  
as the blessing sings  
over their small bones

### QUESTIONS

1. The first stanza is full of short abrupt sentences and onomatopoeic words (which when spoken, sound like the noise they would make.) Underline these words. What atmosphere do they collectively suggest?
2. When the pipe bursts we get longer sentences and words like *rush*, *crash*, *flow* and *roar* in quick succession. What is the effect of placing these words close together?
3. Why does the poet compare the sudden rush of water to '*silver*'?

4. The word '*congregation*' (used to describe the villagers who run towards the water) has religious connotations. What other religious words and imagery can you find in the poem and what do they suggest about the importance of water?
5. Apart from the scarcity of water, how else are we led to understand that this community is poor?

## SDG 2: END HUNGER & PROMOTE FOOD SECURITY & SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

**Sharmila Pokharel** is a bilingual Nepalese poet and activist now living in Canada.

### NO TIME FOR POETRY

[https://www.poetryxhunger.com/uploads/1/2/5/7/125799040/no\\_time\\_for\\_poetry.m4a](https://www.poetryxhunger.com/uploads/1/2/5/7/125799040/no_time_for_poetry.m4a)

the big lineup  
in front of the food tanker  
a mother  
holds a paper plate in her right hand drags a child with the left

the loudest crowd ever  
to get meals to their children  
there I saw myself  
fragmented into thousands of humans and my soul in silence  
looking for an answer

### QUESTIONS

1. There is no punctuation whatsoever in the poem. How does this contribute to the poem's meaning and how does it make you feel as a reader?
2. Most of the poem is descriptive but it ends with a powerful metaphor. What does the poet mean by the final lines "*/ saw myself fragmented into thousands of humans...*"?
3. Why do you think the poem is called '*No Time for Poetry*'?

## SDG 2: END HUNGER & PROMOTE FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

**Argos MacCallum** is a poet, actor, director and co-founder of a bilingual theatre company promoting Latinx plays in New Mexico

### ALMUERZO

in the summer heat  
halted by an insolent red stoplight I see a man sitting on his haunches on the opposite curb  
of the t-bone intersection compact dark and round-eyed  
cradling a lunch on his knees

as solemn spoon rises to solemn lips solemn as a state dinner  
the curb a timeless throne  
within an anthem of silence  
an island in the roar of the world

a feast of rice and beans no doubt  
fit for both fisherman and pharaoh  
spoon rises and dives like a bird of prey  
the cardboard bowl the living earth  
the serpent of hunger is driven away and won't be back again today

### QUESTIONS

1. Almuerzo is Spanish for mid-morning snack. Why might the poet have chosen this particular meal to write about?
2. Why does the speaker describe the red traffic light as “*insolent*”?
3. The poem is rich in metaphors, for example, “*the t-bone intersection*”, “*the curb a timeless throne*”, “*the serpent of hunger*”. Underline all the metaphors you can find and consider why the poet chose them and their impact.
4. What does the poet intend for us to understand by the use of the simile “*spoon rises and dives like a bird of prey*”?
5. What do you notice about the punctuation in this poem? What do you think it says about the experience of hunger?

### SDG 3: PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING

**Cameron Conaway** is a poet, author, investigative journalist and teaches creative writing at Penn state University. Mixing prose and haiku on the topic of malaria, this poem was written to commemorate the 2016 launch of the Infectious Diseases Data Observatory, creating opportunities for those working in tropical medicine and global health to learn about each other's work and forge new collaborations.

#### DANCE OF THE DATA

Somewhere, a child has slipped beyond saving  
into a place where her mother's dulcet voice  
can't soothe her.

Elsewhere, a study stays shadowed  
rather than becoming part of the answer.  
Everywhere, the silent illumination of data  
waits for a gardener to tend to minutiae and  
assemble it like fascia.

Mud grows the lotus.

Always, there is the dance of the data -  
a pas de trois between the unknown,  
the uncaptured known and the known.

Somewhere, a child has slipped beyond saving.  
Elsewhere, a study stays shadowed.  
Everywhere, the silent illumination of data  
waits for a gardener to magnify the small  
and noticings become large  
a mother's dulcet voice

Always -  
to extract from datasets  
the inner wisdom below the surface,  
often neglected but still glistening -  
We must shuck seeing for observing,  
hearing for listening.

Somewhere, a child.  
Elsewhere, a study.  
Everywhere, the silent illumination of data  
waits for a gardener.

tiny little sprout  
how you come from everywhere  
but stay settled here

Always, from today on, we will honor  
the lives behind the data by providing the data  
a safe home,  
a chance to roam  
beyond its origin, a chance to bloom  
in the hands of researchers that realize  
there's an excess  
of closed access,  
that the capacity to share  
is a gift to be  
paid forward  
by unfurling as lotus  
into the responsibility to share.

Somewhere.  
Elsewhere.  
Everywhere, the silent illumination of data  
now has its gardener.

data is story  
that only we can unwrap  
a new pas de deux

Always, there will be spindrift—  
and the N in NTDs  
will remain  
until we replace it with the E  
of Eradicated.

But here we are, planting our platform  
in the mud, serving others by being  
an anchor for the roots of their lotus.

## QUESTIONS

1. The title juxtaposes “*dance*” with “*data*”. Apart from the interest added through alliteration, why do you think the poet chose these words and what effect or meaning was he aiming for?
2. What is the significance of the repeated “*somewhere*”, “*elsewhere*” and “*everywhere*” through the poem?
3. Find out what NTD and ETD stand for. What does the poet mean by “*from today on, we will honour the lives behind the data*”
4. The lotus flower is a key piece of imagery. Native to Southeast Asia and able to thrive in challenging environments, the flowers grow in muddy water and often emerge unscathed from the murky depths, Why does the poet compare the building of the new data lab to the lotus?

### SDG 3: PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING

**Khadija Rouf** is a consultant clinical psychologist, writer and poet and a passionate advocate for truth, fairness, equality and the therapeutic power of poetry.

#### CONTACT II

I sit at the computer to make notes,  
fingers hovering over the keys,  
must find a way to digest and describe  
the contact,  
navigating drop down boxes, finding languages –  
each script has its purpose, a syntax of suffering:  
clusters, symptoms, negative thoughts, risk.  
An hour becomes a paragraph. Note:  
*there was 'distress', she was 'tearful'.*

Actually, she cried, tears rimmed her eyes,  
then over-topped, brimmed and spilled and she  
cried and cried, whilst speaking, tears coursed  
down her face, her cheeks were ruddy, her hands  
clenched. I offered tissues, I listened.  
She was crying and talking and crying  
like she was finding the keys on a glass piano,  
searching for harmony in hammered chords  
fragile and new –  
the room found its note. She stopped  
and looked out of the window

It was snowing.  
I companioned her silence waited.  
Snowflakes swirled, filling the wordless places.  
We weathered it quietly, without catastrophe.  
As she left, she made 'good eye contact':  
a bouquet of tear-stained tissues  
tumbled  
from her hands  
into the clinic room bin.  
They fell, like crushed white roses.  
She left her fingerprints everywhere...

I press 'save', switch off the computer,  
ignore my cold coffee, rush home for the kids.

Later, I'm stirring dinner on the hob, absent-  
minded. I drift in that space out of time  
and her tears come back, her tears...  
And my own come, then –

## QUESTIONS

1. The first stanza introduces the doctor in professional mode, documenting her observations on a patient for the files. Underline examples of the clinical techniques she uses to try to shield herself from the emotional impact of the bad news she has delivered.
2. Stanza 2 is a complete contrast: it is as though the emotional distress of the patient has broken through the consultant's professional armour. How does this make you feel?
3. How is stanza 3 different from stanzas 1 and 2?
4. The poem documents the immense distress for both patient and doctor when bad news is delivered. In the West, conversations like this take place in private, the latest treatments can be offered and the patient can expect to be cared for until the end comes. Imagine how this translates to a developing country where provision is basic, medical professionals are in short supply, treatment options and pain relief limited and clinics are inundated with queues of people suffering from so many life-threatening diseases, many of them entirely preventable. What needs to be done to support the work of medics operating in developing countries and improve the life chances of their populations?

### SDG 3: PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**Michael Rosen** was born in 1946 in North London and started writing poetry aged 12, creating satirical poems about people he knew. Renowned for his work as a poet, performer, broadcaster and scriptwriter, he lectures and teaches in universities on children's literature. At the beginning of the pandemic, the 74 year old contracted covid 19 and spent 7 weeks in intensive care, 6 of them on a ventilator. He wrote this poem to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UK's National Health Service where medical care is cradle-to-grave, free to all and who saved his life.

#### **THESE ARE THE HANDS**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vb3vKDyQ244>

These are the hands  
That touch us first  
Feel your head  
Find the pulse  
And make your bed.

These are the hands  
That tap your back  
Test the skin  
Hold your arm  
Wheel the bin  
Change the bulb  
Fix the drip  
Pour the jug  
Replace your hip.

These are the hands  
That fill the bath  
Mop the floor  
Flick the switch  
Soothe the sore  
Burn the swabs  
Give us a jab  
Throw out sharps  
Design the lab.

And these are the hands  
That stop the leaks  
Empty the pan  
Wipe the pipes  
Carry the can  
Clamp the veins  
Make the cast  
Log the dose  
And touch us last.

### QUESTIONS

1. Knowing that we in the UK have access to free medical care throughout our lives, how does the poem make you feel?
2. How would you feel if there were no NHS and you were poor and had to pay for private healthcare? What would you do?
3. Had Michael Rosen been born in a developing country, he would not have survived. What must be done to improve the health and life chances of people in developing countries?

## SDG 4: INCLUSIVE QUALITY EDUCATION & LIFE-LONG LEARNING

**Ibtisam Barakat** is a Palestinian-American poet, author, artist, educator and peace activist. Born in Jerusalem, she was 3 years old when her family fled their home during the 6-day war and she grew up on the West Bank under Israeli occupation and emigrated to America when she was 22. Her free verse, short-lined poems often use metaphor to explore themes of war, poverty and healing.

### A POEM MADE OF BREAD

In the middle of bread --  
all loaves, all shapes:  
American white,  
French baguette, or  
Arabic flat --  
single flour  
or multi-grain  
there is the word: read.  
All that remains if you break  
a loaf of bread is: read.  
past and present  
eternal like rain  
falling from the sky  
grain by grain. . .  
Those who cannot read  
are the hunger of this world.  
And dinner will not be ready  
until they can read.  
Dinner will not be served  
until all can read  
and the young have books  
early in life  
to sleep on like pillows  
after reading so late  
and the passing to have books  
to take to the afterlife --  
a gift to the reading angels  
who long for human bread.

### QUESTIONS

1. This poem was written “*because millions of children every year will not see the inside of a classroom*”. Why has Barakat used bread as her metaphor for the importance of reading?
2. The poet draws a further parallel between reading and food when she says “*dinner will not be served until all can read*”. What do you think she means?
4. Barakat has said “*her wings are made of words and poems*” What are your wings made of?

## SDG 4: INCLUSIVE QUALITY EDUCATION & LIFE-LONG LEARNING

**Carol Ann Duffy** went to school in Stafford and her literary talent was encouraged by two English teachers, June Scriven and Jim Walker. She was a passionate reader from an early age and always wanted to be a writer, producing poems from the age of 11. When one of her English teachers died, she wrote:

*You sat on your desk,  
swinging your legs,  
reading a poem by Yeats  
to the bored girls,  
except my heart stumbled and blushed  
as it fell in love with the words and I saw the tree  
in the scratched old desk under my hands,  
heard the bird in the oak outside scribble itself on the air.<sup>[8]</sup>*

### IN MRS TILSCHNER'S CLASS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nQ7UG7lnkY>

You could travel up the Blue Nile  
with your finger, tracing the route  
while Mrs Tilscher chanted the scenery.  
Tana. Ethiopia. Khartoum. Aswân.  
That for an hour, then a skittle of milk  
and the chalky Pyramids rubbed into dust.  
A window opened with a long pole.  
The laugh of a bell swung by a running child.

This was better than home. Enthralling books.  
The classroom glowed like a sweet shop.  
Sugar paper. Coloured shapes. Brady and Hindley  
faded, like the faint, uneasy smudge of a mistake.  
Mrs Tilscher loved you. Some mornings, you found  
she'd left a good gold star by your name.  
The scent of a pencil slowly, carefully, shaved.  
A xylophone's nonsense heard from another form.

Over the Easter term, the inky tadpoles changed  
from commas into exclamation marks. Three frogs  
hopped in the playground, freed by a dunce,  
followed by a line of kids, jumping and croaking  
away from the lunch queue. A rough boy  
told you how you were born. You kicked him, but stared  
at your parents, appalled, when you got back home.

That feverish July, the air tasted of electricity.  
A tangible alarm made you always untidy, hot,

fractious under the heavy sky. You asked her  
how you were born and Mrs Tilscher smiled,  
then turned away. Reports were handed out.  
You ran through the gates, impatient to be grown,  
as the sky split open into a thunderstorm.

### QUESTIONS

1. The poem is full of nostalgic memories of primary school. What stands out for you when you read it? what do you remember from your primary school education and how do the memories make you feel?
2. The classroom is described as a sweetshop. How important is Mrs Tilschner to the children? Apart from knowledge, what does she give them?
3. Why do you think the horrific child murderers Brady and Hindley are mentioned after “*sugar paper, coloured shapes*” and immediately fade “*like the faint uneasy smudge of a mistake*”?
4. What is the symbolism of the children watching tadpoles becoming frogs just before the “rough boy” “*told you how you were born?*”
5. Millions of children in developing countries live too far from schools or are kept too busy in the mechanics of survival to attend school. As well as missing out on learning, how else will their lives be poorer?

## SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY & EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

As an artist, film maker and poet, **Imtiaz Dharker** challenges us to question how we live on an individual and global scale and to consider our shared responsibility for each other. She wrote this poem exactly 100 years after the beginning of the First World War, as a response to Wilfred Owen's '[Anthem For Doomed Youth](#)'. The poem also alludes to the shooting of 15 year old Malala Yousafzai in 2012 on a bus on her way to school. Malala survived and now campaigns on the international stage for the education of women around the world.

### A CENTURY LATER

The school-bell is a call to battle,  
every step to class, a step into the firing-line.  
Here is the target, fine skin at the temple,  
cheek still rounded from being fifteen.

Surrendered, surrounded, she  
takes the bullet in the head  
and walks on. The missile cuts  
a pathway in her mind, to an orchard  
in full bloom, a field humming under the sun,  
its lap open and full of poppies.

This girl has won  
the right to be ordinary,  
wear bangles to a wedding, paint her fingernails,  
go to school. *Bullet*, she says, *you are stupid.*  
*You have failed. You cannot kill a book*  
*or the buzzing in it.*

A murmur, a swarm. Behind her, one by one,  
the schoolgirls are standing up  
to take their places on the front line.

### QUESTIONS

- 1.. The poem tells of the struggles of schoolgirls fighting for their right to an education and Dharker draws a parallel with soldiers fighting for their lives and the lives of others in a more traditional conflict. Can you pick out all the examples in the poem which reference war?
2. The poem contrasts the extreme imagery of war with mentions of "*the school bell*" "*a field.. full of poppies*" and "*a book*". Why is their juxtaposition so shocking and effective?
3. What purpose do the onomatopoeic words "*humming*", "*buzzing*" and "*murmur*" serve? Why does the poet use the word "*swarm*" at the end of the poem?

## SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY & EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMAN & GIRLS

**Brian Bilston** is known as the “Banksy of poetry” and “Twitter’s unofficial poet laureate”.

We live in an increasingly visually-literate world and in this poem Bilston has sought to capitalise on this .

### IN THE MARGINS

Strange how – even now  
in two thousand and sixteen – we still  
find

All that male posturing  
the blustering, the bargaining.  
little wonder, perhaps

Women  
Occupy the margins

But there must be more to it than  
that.  
Some deep-seated insecurity  
that masculinity unhinges  
unless

Woman are kept  
out on the fringes

There has been progress, I suppose.  
A promotion  
to the status of a chapter  
from that of a footnote (1)

1. Most women are now even entitled to vote

But yet an everyday sexism  
still pervades our world view  
it twists and distorts  
and skews all that we do

those deft discriminations  
And the gap over pay,  
the abuse and harassment  
that won’t go away.

Please do not think this  
An appeal for Kindness or Charity  
It is merely a question of parity

because no one should be

at the edge of a page

not with all this blank space  
in which to take  
centre-stage.

### QUESTIONS

1. By playing with layout and font size, Bilston is pointing out a serious issue. Do you like the way it has been laid out and do you think it an effective way to make the point?
2. As well as creating humour, what does this do to the flow of the poem and how does this add to the meaning?
3. What happens to the length of lines and the rhyming scheme in the second half? What effect does this have on your reading of it?
4. The poet is exasperated by the continued side-lining of women in society. In what ways are women discriminated against? How is the world poorer because of this discrimination?

## SDG 6: PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CLEAN WATER & SANITATION

Every 90 seconds, a child under 5 dies as a result of diarrhoea caused by contaminated water, poor sanitation, and unsafe hygiene. It is customarily the task of women and girls to fetch water which is both time consuming and dangerous.

This poem was written (and recorded) by **Kenyan school girls** as an ode of gratitude to the recently drilled borehole within their community.

### DEAR WATER

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A\\_FTqaOTj74](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_FTqaOTj74)

Dear Water

It was hard to get to you

Waking up at dawn

Buckets on our heads

Donkeys loaded with jerry cans

Miles we walked in the scorching heat

To look for you

Dear Water

At last you came

Sweet water

Our backs are rested

The miles are no more

Diseases are gone

For you are closer to us

Dear Water

You are such a blessing.

### QUESTIONS.

1. Why is water addressed directly and spelt with a capital W - "*Dear Water*" - as though it were a sentient being?
2. Water is a highly prized commodity for everyone in developing nations. Why is it especially significant that the writers of this poem are girls of school age?
3. In what ways is the new water hole "*such a blessing*" to these girls as well as to the community?

## SDG 6: PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CLEAN WATER & SANITATION

**Imtiaz Dharker** frequently addresses gender politics and concepts of freedom in her poetry. **X** hums with a nervous energy and intensity that makes climate change feel personal.

**X**

<https://soundcloud.com/guardian-visuals/kelly-macdonald-reads-x-imtiaz-dharker>

Hand shaking on the stop-cock, she looks  
at the X, the warning cross,

the water-tap unlocked, its padlock cracked.  
Breath hacks in the throat, *Check your back.*

Turn it on and an anxious mutter swells  
to thunder in the plastic bucket. *Don't spill it.*

*Fill it to the top.* Lift to the hip, stop,  
balance the weight for the dangerous walk

home. *Home.*  
*Don't lose a drop.*

From the police chowki across the track  
a whistle, a shout. *Run. Don't stop. Don't slip.*

A drag at the hip. *Hot, hot* underfoot. Water slops  
up and out in every direction, over the lip,

over her legs, a shock of cool, a spark of light.  
With her stolen piece of sky, she has taken flight.

Behind her, the shouters give up. She puts down  
the bucket. The water stills.

She looks into it, looks up to where the blue  
is scarred with aimless tracks.

Jet-trails cross each other off  
before they die out, a careless X

## QUESTIONS

1. What is it that immediately alerts us to the fact that this is no simple task, that the girl is in fact afraid?
2. Plosive sounds from letters C,K,P,D,B and T are used repeatedly in the opening lines heightening a sense of intention and urgency and chopping up the girl's thoughts as though she is constantly looking over her shoulder. Underline the words that create the tension.
3. What is the effect of the silent instructions (in italics) that the girl rehearses in her head? Do you think these are her own thoughts or is she replaying the words of another?
4. Who or what is she frightened of?
5. At the start, the girl observes an X on the water tap "the warning cross" and the "careless X" in the vapour trail of the aeroplane at the end. What connections is the poet making?

## SDG 7: SUPPORT ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE & SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

**Simon Barraclough** is a freelance writer, author and poet with a particular interest in form, wordplay, humour and wide-ranging cultural references. Barraclough's work is wry and witty, steeped in pop culture, bathos and – increasingly – science as a way to access and explain the human condition.

### HOW'S MY COAL?

How's my coal getting on?  
I set as much aside for you as I could. Don't use it all up at once.  
It might come in handy one day.

How's my oil faring?  
It keeps best underground, in the dark. Doesn't do so well in the light.  
Don't let it spoil.

How's the wind blowing?  
I try to keep it moving, keep it on the muscle,  
keep the pressure on, make it hustle.

How's the hydro hanging?  
All that *potential*. You don't oughta de-water & watch out for insects, birdlife.  
You're dammed if you do and you're dammed if you don't.

Any breaking news on wave power?  
I've hired an intern to handle the oceans.  
If we could make some ripples, get more converts, that would be swell.

Geothermal sounds like a blast.  
I've got files and files on extremophiles. Plucky geezers.  
There's life in the oven and life in the freezer. I'll keep the volcanoes ticking over for you.

Nuclear's nothing new  
but until some of you stop saying *nuclear*, I'm not sure it'll do.

Hydrogen: now that's my bag. People say I'm full of it  
but one day you'll get a grip,

Stick with it: there's more than one way to fuse a cat.  
You've got to get off-grid, kids. One day I'll blow the lid off.  
Your magnetosphere's too tempting for me, like bubble wrap I've gotta pop.

I assume you're using solar, right? This other stuff 's for backup.  
In case there's a rainy day  
for me, in space.

Talking of which,  
one day you'll sail away on a fair wind of photons.  
Remember me this way.

### QUESTIONS

1. Who or what is the speaker in the poem & what style of language and tone is adopted?
2. Why has the poet chosen to write from this unusual standpoint and in this particular manner?
3. The poem is both a wry warning and a call for action. Why is it so important for developing nations particularly that we all pursue renewable sources of energy?
4. What does he mean by the final line "*Remember me this way*"?

## SDG 7: ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

**Collette Bryce** is an Irish poet, editor and poetry tutor. Her poem '*Turbines in January*' was chosen by Carol Ann Duffy for a collection of the 20 best poems about climate change.

### TURBINES IN JANUARY

<https://atticusreview.org/turbines-in-january-love-on-a-night-like-this-and-archive/>

A thousand synonyms for wind  
make up your song.  
Those busy arms

may juggle any number of rumours  
going around:  
your *Swish*, for one—

they say it whisks the pool of sleep;  
that blades cut holes  
in the cloth of dreams;

that shadow-flicker  
makes of the sunniest day  
a speed-frame motion picture,

and panes of ice, which crystallize  
on your frozen wings,  
are flung when you turn

(one, it was said, had lodged  
like a glass fin  
in the roof of a camper van).

What's to be done  
to keep your head in the clouds,  
your whirling one-track mind,

for the wingers and losers,  
raptors, plovers, gulls  
batted to the ground?

What's to be done  
about your foot, electric root  
beneath an ocean floor

abuzz with armoured  
creatures charmed  
by your magnetic aura?

Like my brother's  
distance-defying snaps,  
where the London Eye will rest

like a trinket in his palm  
or the Tower of Pisa  
bend to the slightest pressure

of an index finger,  
these turbines  
could be a row of daffodils

bordering a lawn, signalling  
the spring, as I reach  
my hand out

into the perspective,  
pluck one like a stem,  
raise it to my lips

like a child's seaside windmill  
on a stick, and blow...  
Its earfolds fill and spin.

### QUESTIONS

1. The poem seems to mock ruefully the '*rumours*' surrounding wind turbines? What rumours are circulating that threaten their use as a renewable form of energy?
2. Which lines tell us how the poet herself feels about the turbines?
3. The final stanza compares wind turbines to a child's windmill on a stick. Why does the poet use this simile?

## SDG 8: PROMOTE DECENT WORK OPPORTUNITIES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

In 1911 a blaze in a textile factory killed 146 garment workers in New York City, mostly young, immigrant women. This poem was written by **Alison Morse**, a poet and descendent of one of those workers. Alison drew parallels between this tragic incident and another that occurred more than 100 years later, when an eight-storey building in Bangladesh, containing five garment factories making clothes for some of the world's biggest brands, collapsed in on itself. Over 1,140 garment makers were killed. The clothing was cheap and demand from the West relentless, so the owner had begun constructing a ninth storey in order to create more factory space. When a crack developed in a wall, the workers were evacuated. The next day the building was declared safe and the workforce was ordered back in. Later that day the building collapsed.

### WHAT WAS LEFT

500 sewing machines, now melted metal  
5 dozen cutter's knives, 5 dozen scissors, now melted  
1,000,000 freshwater pearl buttons, now quicklime  
1,000 lbs packing paper and boxes, now ashes  
10,000 bolts cotton and linen fabric scraps, now ashes  
2,000 lbs lumbar made into bins, cutting tables, sewing machine tables, now charcoal  
300lbs tissue paper, now ashes  
2,000 shirtwaists, now ashes  
1 shirtwaist factory worth approximately \$120,000 before the fire  
1 negative bank account balance  
1 insurance policy worth approximately \$200,000 enough to cover losses from last year's workers' strike  
5 inspectors, ignored  
1 burnt door, its bolt in locked position, found at the main entrance  
2 owners who swear they never locked the door  
2 counts of manslaughter  
1 defense lawyer, favourite of politicians  
2 acquitted owners  
146 dead garment workers, each considered property:

Lizzie Adler, Anna Altman, Anna Ardito, Rossie Bassino, Vincenza Bellota, Vinceno Beneti, Essie Bermnstein, Jacob Bernstein, Morris Bernstein, Gussie Bierman, Abraham Bnevit, Rosie Brenman, Sarah Brenman, Ida Brodsky, Ada Brooks, Laura Brunetta, Josephine Cammarata, Frances Caputto, Josephne Carlisi, Albina Caruso, Josie Castello, Rose Cirrito, Anna Cohen, Antonina Collertti, Dora Dochman, Kalman Downic, Celia Eisenberg, Dora Evans, Rebecca Feibisch, Yetta Fichtenhultz, Daisy Fitze, Max Florin, Tina Frank, Rosie Freedman, Molly Gerstein, Celia Gettlin, Esther Goldstein, Lena Goldstein, Mary Goldstein, Yetta Goldstein, Irene Grameatassio, Bertha Greb, Dinah Greenberg, Rachel Grossman, Rosie Grosso, Esther Haris, Mart Herman, Esther Hochfield, Fannie Hollander, Pauline Horowitz, Ida Jakovsky, Tessie Kaplan, Becky Kapelman, Ida Kenowitz, becky Kessler, Jacob Kline, Bertha Kuhler, Tiller Kupfersmith, Sarah Kupla, Benny Kuritz, Annie L'Abbato, Fannie Lansner, Maria Mary Laventhal, Jennie Lederman, Nettie Lefkowitz, Max Lehrer, Sam Lehrer, Kate Leone, Guiseppa Lauletti, Rosie Lemarck, Jennie Levin, Pauline Levine, Louis Loeb, Catherine Maltese, Lucia Maltese, Rosaria Maltese, Maria Menara, Bertha Manders, Rose Manofsky, Michaela Marciano, Yetta Meyers, Bettina Miale, Frances Miale, Gaetana Midolo, Becky Nebrerer, Annie Nicholas, Nicolina Nicolosci, Annie Novobritsky, Sadie Nussbaum, Julia Oberstein, Rose Oringer, Becky Ostrowsky, Carrie Ozzo, Annie Pack, Concetta Presifilippo, Providenza Panno, Antonietta Pasqualicca, Ida Pearl, Jennie Poliny, Millie Prato, Becky Reivers, Emma Rootstein, Fanny Rosen, Israel Rosen, Julia Rosen, Yetta Rosenbaum, Jennie Rosenberg, Gussie Rosenfield, Nettie Rosenthal, Teddy Rothner, Sarah Sabasowitz, Sophie

Salemi, Sara Saracino, Tessie Saracino, Gussie Schiffman, Rose Schmidt, Ethel Schneider, Violet Schochep, Margaret Schwartz, Jacon Selzer, Annie Semmilio, Rosie Shapiro, Ben Sklaver, Rosie Sorkin, Gussie Spunt, Annie Starr, Jennie Stellino, jenie Stern, Jennie Stiglitz, Samuel Tabick, Clotilde terdanova, Isabella Tortorella, Mary Uilo, Meyer Utal, Freda Velakowsky, Bessie Viviano, Rose Weiner, Sally Weintraub, Dora Welfowitz, Joseph Wilson, Tessie Wisner, Sonia Wisotsky, Bertha Wondross

\$400 collected by owners from their insurance for each dead worker (property lost) \$68,400 total.

### QUESTIONS

1. Read the poem out loud. At what point does the list of what was left take a sinister turn?
2. How did it feel to read out the list of names?
3. Look at the labels on the clothes you are wearing. Where were they made? Try to imagine who might have made them and under what conditions?
4. What questions would you like to ask the factory owners if given the chance?

## SDG 8: PROMOTE WORK OPPORTUNITIES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

'The Price of Our Clothes' is the working title of a growing collection of poems by **Alison Morse** about the garment industry seen through the lens of the Rana Plaza collapse (2011) and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (1911). The poems attempt to reach across time and cultures to honour the people who make our clothes and encourage a future that respects their rights. 'Easy for me' is one of the poems in the collection and a painful reminder of our complicity when one click can summon to your front door new jeans made in deadly factories thousands of miles away.

### EASY FOR ME

To take  
my brown Gap  
corduroys, cheap,  
made in Bangladesh,  
knees faded,  
to Goodwill where  
someone will throw  
them into a bin  
to sell to a textile  
recycling centre

where, deemed  
better than a rag  
or landfill garbage,  
my corduroys  
will top off a ton  
of Ralph Lauren,  
Old Navy,  
countless other  
American brand  
frayed shirts,  
overstretched  
pullovers, worn-  
thin dresses,  
will sail to Cameroon

to become part  
of a one hundred pound  
bale worth  
a month of meals  
for five in Cameroon.  
My corduroys will be resold  
to a customer in the capital  
for much less  
than a hand-batiked  
cotton Kabba,  
or any other apparel

made by a Cameroonian,  
will keep this African  
country's own  
garment makers  
unemployed.  
Easy.

### QUESTIONS

1. We assume we are being green and ethical by recycling our old clothes, but what is the very different experience of the poet?
2. Did the message shock you? Think about the route of your clothes from the recycling bag to an African nation such as Cameroon. Who makes money along the way and who loses out?
3. Research what is being done by some fashion brands to help create a more ethical trade. What can be done by the public, and by governments to support the movement?

## SDG 9: BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, FOSTER INNOVATION AND PROMOTE INDUSTRY

**Simon Armitage** is our current Poet Laureate and professor of poetry at the Universities of Sheffield and Oxford. His poem 'More Precious than Gold' is narrated by Robbie Williams on behalf of UNICEF as a soundtrack to a short and hard-hitting film highlighting the chilling horror of organised child trafficking.

### MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-EM3nOceBE>

Countries like these are rich in natural resources  
hardwood trees reach for the sun with their dark limbs  
Diamonds sleep in the earth or stare from the mountains  
but one crop is more precious than gold or opus  
An exotic fruit, it grows wild and free in towns and villages  
prized higher than all others  
It is ripe for picking after 12 or 13 summers

At harvest time buyers arrive from the city  
They seek out the tender buds  
They pluck the best of the bunch  
They cut the roots  
They disappear into the dust

Some fruit is for domestic consumption  
But most is exported  
It can be seen being unloaded at UK airports  
Many wealthy countries have developed a taste for it

It's not uncommon for one piece of fruit to be sold a thousand times over  
It is often packaged in eye catching colours  
It is praised for its sweet scent  
And its sun-kissed flesh  
Prized for its soft insides and its dark segments  
Only the heart of the fruit is discarded  
The heart that is broken  
Once the fruit is opened.

### QUESTIONS

1. In the poem, Armitage uses the exotic fruit trade as a metaphor to describe the sale of young lives. In what ways are the children likened to the fruits?
2. Which lines show how badly the children are treated once they leave their homes?
3. For much of the poem, the poet deliberately holds the reader at a distance by focusing on the metaphor. How is the final stanza different and to what effect?

## SDG 9: BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, FOSTER INNOVATION AND PROMOTE INDUSTRY

**Benjamin Zephaniah** delights in words and sounds. He grew up in Birmingham the son of a Barbadian postman and a Jamaican nurse. A dyslexic, he left school at 13 unable to read or write but someone gave him an old manual typewriter and he began to write poetry. He wrote this extended poem in 2020 as part of 'The Living Planet' project, a film which shows us a future that could be within reach if we marry the needs of the industry to the needs of our planet and try to work with rather than against nature.

### FUTURE VISIONS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDWu9Xuj9oQ>

When we rose up, the land was bare  
When pure beginnings filled the air  
We stood upright and walked the same  
When this great planet had no name

We saw the land, we saw the seas  
And endless possibilities  
To speak of what existence is  
even develop languages.

We built houses from sticks and mud,  
Raised animals that chew the cud.  
We tilled the land and sowed the seeds.  
We raised the crops, controlled the weeds

We saw lightening when we gazed higher  
We saw light and created fire.  
We took all our skills and families  
and created our communities

in paintings, poems, verses and songs  
we made our spirit wise and strong.  
with science and reason, we were enlightened  
our senses were truly heightened.

When we built ships and learned to sail  
It's true to say we did prevail  
Our will and our imagination  
constructed jobs, cities and nations

We saw progress and nothing less  
Just wealth and stuff and happiness.  
Endless pleasures, endless fun,  
until the day thy kingdom come

we chased that rainbow's light to find

utopia and peace of mind  
our greatness and our unity  
could have created harmony

but some just could not be content  
so empires came and empires went.  
Nobody thought of air pollution  
come the industrial revolution.

From beneath that land where we did toil  
and they took coal and gold and oil,  
developers clothed in well-armed forces  
robbed the earth of its resources.

Beneath the land they started drilling  
beneath the seas they started killing  
after the brave hearts learnt to fly  
they sucked the life out of the sky

from way on high to well down under  
deceive and rob, pillage and plunder  
the so-called civilised can't see  
they're drunk on their hypocrisy

But then a generation came  
Who said things just can't stay the same  
A generation who it seems  
Are full of hope, belief and dreams

They know that they can do much better  
If they rise up and work together.  
They love this earth and they have seen  
A vision of it blue and green.

Unleash the righteous thinking mind  
Unleash the good within mankind  
Unleash the youthful code with care  
Rebuild our lives and clean the air.

Let us not dig for negatives  
Let's reach out for alternatives  
Breathe in my people, save the whale,  
touch the trees and then exhale.

Technology can make us stronger  
Good tech stuff can help us prosper.  
Without greed we can still do trade

Without greed, we can get it made.

We can harness what nature gave us  
without letting greed enslave us.  
A modern future's possible  
And that future can be beautiful.

When we rose up the land was bare  
When pure beginnings filled the air.  
Imagine what we can achieve  
If we have hope and we believe.

We can have our jobs and keep our friends  
And follow eco-friendly trends.  
If we apply our minds then we'll  
make it green and keep it real

So hand in hand let's do projects  
with love for generation next.  
We can fill the coming years  
with progressive new ideas

Love up the place, green up the space  
we're really not the master race.  
There is no master just the child  
So let's be humble and re-wild.

### QUESTIONS

1. The first half of the poem celebrates everything that has been achieved by humans in harnessing the earth's rich natural resources. Make a list of these points of progress.
2. For a nation with so much imagination, why, he asks, do we now find ourselves at a tipping point on a path to destroy in the name of progress everything which sustains life? What does he put it down to?
3. Zephaniah 's poem is finally optimistic presenting a vision of humans as great problem solvers with huge imaginations. What does he suggest we do to turn things around?

## SDG 10: REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES

**Anu Omotunde-Young** is a Nigerian economics student at Lancaster University. Her home country is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest oil-producing country in the world and yet over 50% of its inhabitants lack basic water supply, affordable and efficient health services, roads, education and other basic goods. In a country filled with abundant natural, human, physical and mental resources, extreme poverty far outweighs and stands in stark contrast to the small pocket of extreme wealth.

### WHY STUDY ECONOMICS AT UNIVERSITY?

Her wrinkled, tired face turned to me:

No Roads; No Light. Where is the light at the end of the road?

No Income; No Food. Who am I to want food when my family starves?

No Hospitals; No Safety. When will it be safe enough to survive in our hospitals?

No Water; No Strength. Do I not need strength to lug water home from the town well?

No Education; No Future. What will become of my children?

No Leadership; No Inspiration. How can they be inspired without leadership?

No Home; No Consideration. Why should I consider the consequences of my actions when I have no home?

How can you care? What can you do?

You are only one of a 150 million others.

I can start by caring enough to want change,

I can start by admitting we have a major problem,

I can start by learning the accumulation and maintenance of wealth.

Mother!

For you, I learn about sustainable development.

For you, I learn the difference between money and wealth.

For you, I learn how I can generate income and growth using our very own resources.

For you, I learn the components needed for a free market,

For you, I learn about Public Goods and can tell you that you deserve access to healthcare, education, water and shelter.

For you, I stay up all night reading and applying the mechanisms that help boost Investment and Savings.

With this, I propose economic growth that will take you a step towards that job you want.

For us, I study to learn the skills to make our motherland prosperous.

For us, I work with passion towards being the change we need

### QUESTIONS

1. Who is the wrinkled, tired woman of the first stanza and how does the poet describe her life?
2. Every line in the first stanza begins with the word 'no' and the final "*How can you care, what can you do?*" is infused with resignation and despair. Why has this woman given up hope?
3. Which words replace the word 'no' in the next stanza and what effect does it have?
4. What is the poet's message to her fellow Nigerians?

## SDG 10: REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES

**Simon Armitage** told BBC News that poetry is "*more valuable and more relevant than it's ever been*" and can be as potent and powerful a tool as direct political activism.

### THANKYOU FOR WAITING

[https://youtu.be/p\\_tSk508Zyk](https://youtu.be/p_tSk508Zyk)

At this moment in time we'd like to invite  
First Class passengers only to board the aircraft.

Thank you for waiting. We now extend our invitation  
to Exclusive, Superior, Privilege and Excelsior members,  
followed by triple, double and single Platinum members,  
followed by Gold and Silver Card members,  
followed by Pearl and Coral Club members.  
Military personnel in uniform may also board at this time.

Thank you for waiting. We now invite  
Bronze Alliance Members and passengers enrolled  
in our Rare Earth Metals Points and Reward Scheme  
to come forward, and thank you for waiting.

Thank you for waiting. Accredited Beautiful People  
may now board, plus any gentleman carrying a copy  
of this month's *Cigar Aficionado* magazine, plus subscribers  
to our Red Diamond, Black Opal or Blue Garnet promotion.  
We also welcome Sapphire, Ruby and Emerald members  
at this time, followed by Amethyst, Onyx, Obsidian, Jet,  
Topaz and Quartz members. Priority Lane customers,  
Fast Track customers, Chosen Elite customers,  
Preferred Access customers and First Among Equals customers  
may also now board.

On production of a valid receipt travellers of elegance and style  
wearing designer and/or hand-tailored clothing  
to a minimum value of ten thousand US dollars may now board;  
passengers in possession of items of jewellery  
(including wristwatches) with a retail purchase price  
greater than the average annual salary  
of a mid-career high school teacher are also welcome to board.  
Also welcome at this time are passengers talking loudly  
into cellphone headsets about recently completed share deals  
property acquisitions and aggressive takeovers,  
plus hedge fund managers with proven track records  
in the undermining of small-to-medium-sized ambitions.  
Passengers in classes Loam, Chalk, Marl and Clay

may also board. Customers who have purchased  
our *Dignity* or *Morning Orchid* packages  
may now collect their sanitised shell suits prior to boarding.

Thank you for waiting.

Mediocre passengers are now invited to board,  
followed by passengers lacking business acumen  
or genuine leadership potential, followed by people  
of little or no consequence, followed by people  
operating at a net fiscal loss as people.  
Those holding tickets for zones Rust, Mulch, Cardboard,  
Puddle and Sand might now want to begin gathering  
their tissues and crumbs prior to embarkation.

Passengers either partially or wholly dependent on welfare  
or kindness, please have your travel coupons validated  
at the Quarantine Desk.

Sweat, Dust, Shoddy, Scurf, Faeces, Chaff, Remnant,  
Ash, Pus, Sludge, Clinker, Splinter and Soot;  
all you people are now free to board.

## QUESTIONS

1. Armitage's poetry often takes the ordinary, everyday things we barely register and drags them into darker territory to point up their idiosyncrasies and make us see them with new eyes. What is his purpose in this poem?
2. The poem repeats three times the simple bright phrase "*Thankyou for waiting*" before allowing another set of people to board. How does the language change towards the end of the poem in addressing those on welfare?
3. How do you think it feels to be at the bottom of the wealth pile and to be judged by the amount of money you have?
4. All societies need to be structured in some way in order to function. Could you write an alternative poem proposing a different value criteria for boarding?

## SDG 11: MAKE SETTLEMENTS AND CITIES INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND RESILIENT

On first reading, **REFUGEES** by **Brian Bilston** appears to be a twisted and ugly condemnation of migrants as scroungers and criminals. Read on!

### REFUGEES

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those who are born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way  
*(now read from bottom to top)*

### QUESTIONS

1. What does Bilston achieve by disorienting the reader using this deft device?
2. The poem was written to counterpoint the anti-migration rhetoric that has exploded across Europe in the last ten years. What reasons does Bilston rehearse in the top to bottom reading to keep migrants out? How does he counter these in the reverse bottom to top reading?
3. Try writing your own short poem that reads differently in reverse: for example,  
*Be late*  
*You always hate to*  
*Get up early*

## SDG 11: MAKE SETTLEMENTS AND CITIES INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND RESILIENT

**Imtiaz Dharker** has said that she had the slums of Mumbai, India, in mind when writing this poem—in particular the “fragility” of the structures and the resourcefulness of the people who put them together with whatever materials were at hand.

### LIVING SPACE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgkgOPLgB1Y>

There are just not enough  
Straight lines. That  
Is the problem.  
Nothing is flat  
Or parallel. Beams  
Balance crookedly on supports  
Thrust off the vertical.  
Nails clutch at open seams.  
The whole structure leans dangerously  
Towards the miraculous.

Into this rough frame,  
Someone has squeezed  
A living space

And even dared to place  
These eggs in a wire basket,  
Fragile curves of white  
Hung out over the dark edge  
Of a slanted universe,  
Gathering the light  
Into themselves,  
As if they were  
The bright, thin walls of faith.

### QUESTIONS

1. The problem Dharker claims is “*not enough straight lines*” but the reality is there is not enough of anything. The precariousness of existence is tangibly represented by the crooked structure which mirrors the chaos of life in the slums where buildings are held together by a thread. Explain the double meaning of “*nails clutch at open seams*”.
2. The off-beat rhyme scheme of “*beams*” and “*seams*” culminates in “*the whole structure leans dangerously towards the miraculous*”. What do you notice about the length of this line in comparison to the rest of the poem? Why has she done this?
3. The startling image of fragile white eggs in such a flimsy container and in such a dirty, unpredictable environment suggests that, even in the worst scenarios, people are capable of remaining hopeful and strong through faith. Underline other references to faith and religion in the poem.

## SDG 12: PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION

**Martin Kiszko** is a writer, performance poet, composer and screenwriter. He has composed over 200 scores for film and television and released eight albums with major European orchestras. In this poem he seems to delight in every idea he presents encouraging us to consider how good it might be for our mental health, as well as the planet, to take greener alternatives when travelling instead of using the car. His aim is always to “*provoke a thought, raise a smile, start a conversation, spark an idea, spur us into action, or simply turn on a few ‘green lights’*”

### TAKE A CARBON TAKEAWAY

<https://vimeo.com/216849573>

Take a step  
Take a stride  
Take a unicycle ride  
Take a horse that likes the turf  
Take a board to ride the surf  
Take a pogo, take a hop  
Take a long jump, take a bop  
Take a rowboat, walk a lane  
Take the tube, take the train  
Take an elephant, take a mule  
Take a camel to your school  
Take a buggy, take a pram  
Take a donkey, take a tram  
Take a troika, take a sled  
Take a jolly rollerbed  
Take a team of husky dogs  
Take a set of rolling logs  
Take a jog, take an amble  
Take a jaunt, take a ramble  
Take a skateboard, take a bike  
Take a saunter, take a hike  
Take a ghost ship, trike or scooter  
Take a Go Kart with a hooter  
Take a tandem, take a wagon  
Take a route you chose at random  
Take a kayak or canoe  
Take a ski or take snowshoes  
Take a punt, take a sail  
Take a glider, go by rail, go by rail , go by rail ....

Take a wheelchair, take a cart  
Take a butt-fired superfart!  
Take a hang glide from a loft  
Take sedan chairs, take a trot  
Take a sleepwalk, take a prong  
Take a rickshaw from Hongkong

Take a snowboard, take a trek.  
Take some stilts, oh what the heck!  
Take a pumpkin coach with fairies!  
Take a milk float from the dairies!  
Take a pair of rollerskates,  
Take piggy backs with all your mates  
Take journeys that don't use a car  
Take stock, if you should go that far  
Take heed when travelling here and there  
Take choices that will save our air

### QUESTIONS

1. Each line begins with the simple word 'Take' and is followed by an alternative method of transportation. What is the effect of the short sentences and regular rhyming scheme?
  2. What is it about these different modes of transportation that make them so much more appealing than driving?
  3. Why the rhythmic repetition "*Go by rail, go by rail, go by rail....*"
3. Create your own verse to add to the poem, for example:
- Take a horse-drawn carriage; don't save it for a marriage!*  
*Take a Canadian canoe and paddle as a two*  
*Take a hot air balloon and drift amongst the clouds.*  
*Take a penny farthing ride to please the crowds*

## SDG 12: PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION

**Hollie McNish** is a British writer and performance poet who uses her poetry to question and challenge political and social mores and who drills into everyday experiences to make us examine anew how we live, the views we hold and the choices we make.

### FASHION REVOLUTION

If the girl who made your skirt's is not paid  
You cannot say it's beautiful  
If the pay is less than living wage  
You cannot say it's beautiful  
If the coloured dyes now lie in rivers  
Poisoned fish, polluted waters  
If there's no sick pay, no toilet breaks  
If the factories are in decay  
No matter what your mirror says  
Or how stylish you look today  
You cannot claim it's beautiful

### QUESTIONS

1. The poem asks that we weigh up how much we can enjoy wearing a garment if we are aware of human rights abuses behind its manufacture. Why should we have a more mindful approach when choosing what to buy?
2. Apart from the exploitation of garment makers in the developing world, what else is the fashion industry guilty of?
3. The only way to protect the rights of garment workers in developing nations and ensure waste is disposed of safely is for governments and big brand corporations to press for enforceable legislation and abide by it. Why are they reluctant to do this? What can we as purchasers do to support the change?

## SDG 13: COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE & ITS IMPACTS

This poem by **Brian Bilston** is a gently acerbic and witty observation on climate change, politics and our national character.

### TODAY'S CLIMATE FORECAST

And onto today's climate forecast:  
where we can expect to see a prolonged spell of inaction,  
interspersed with patches of hazy promises  
across many areas.

Over Westminster and other centres of government,  
a build-up of hot air will cause inactivity  
to soar to record levels over the coming days,  
in spite of the high pressure.

Elsewhere, a front of chronic misinformation  
will sweep in from the east,  
bringing with it a band of climate change deniers  
and the chance of scattered falsehoods,

while powerful gusts of idiocy and ignorance  
look set to blow across social media.  
Outbreaks of 'We just got on with it in 1976'  
and 'It's called the British summer, mate' are likely.

In summary: unsettling.

### QUESTIONS

1. Why has Bilston chosen to put his message across in the form of a TV weather forecast?
2. Bilston is clearly fed up with the lack of political action on climate change. Who ultimately does he implicate as responsible?

## SDG 13: COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE & ITS IMPACTS

**Simon Armitage** The last Snowman is a languidly beautiful poem charting the inexorable drift of an unanchored snowman as the ice caps melt.

### THE LAST SNOWMAN

<https://twitter.com/poets4theplanet/status/1270311570741104643>

He drifted south  
down an Arctic seaway  
on a plinth of ice, jelly tots

weeping lime green tears  
around both eyes,  
a carrot for a nose

(some reported parsnip),  
below which a clay pipe  
drooped from a mouth

that was pure stroke-victim.  
A red woollen scarf trailed  
in the meltwater drool

at his base, and he slumped  
to starboard, kinked,  
gone at the pelvis.

From the buffet deck  
of a passing cruise liner  
stag and hen parties shied

Scotch eggs and Pink Ladies  
as he rounded the stern.  
He sailed on between banks

of camera lenses  
and rubbernecks,  
past islands vigorous

with sunflower and bog myrtle  
into a bloodshot west,  
singular and abominable

.

### QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Armitage chose to write about a snowman and not the progress of, for example, the last sheet of ice or the carcass of the last penguin on earth?

2. Armitage personifies the Snowman as “he’ and not “it”. What other words and phrases help the reader identify and sympathise with his plight?

3. Why finish with the word ‘Abominable’?

## SDG 14: CONSERVE OCEANS, SEAS & MARINE RESOURCES

Like Banksy, **BRIAN BILSTON** chooses to remain anonymous, hiding behind a pseudonym and publishing his wry commentaries on social media where he has a huge following.

### CASTAWAYS

A bottle with a message  
floated in upon the tide.  
*The sea is blue and so am I,*  
said the note inside.

Next day on the beach,  
a plastic bag washed up.  
Inside, another letter:  
*Come rescue me. I'm stuck.*

In the kelp, a cry for help:  
*drowning in Styrofoam,*  
written on a coffee cup,  
beneath *Latte 4 Jerome.*

The day after, thin tubes  
were spread along the shore,  
spelling out the words:  
*THE FINAL STRAW.*

Two weeks on, the beach was plastic.  
Itself, an unanswered message:  
castaways washed up on the sand,  
and out to sea, the wreckage.

### QUESTIONS

1. Who are the messages from and what do they signal?
2. Bilston begins his poem in typical light-hearted mode. What happens to the tone as the poem progresses?
3. What is the double meaning of the poem's title "*Castaway*"?

## SDG 14: CONSERVE OCEANS, SEAS & MARINE RESOURCES

There are few pens as recognizable as the one that belongs to the young poet and activist **Amanda Gorman** who shook the world with a message of hope on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 when she took to the podium at the inauguration of the 46th president of the United States. Amanda also became the first person to recite an original poem at the American Superbowl. The power of her poetry to move people to action is unmistakable, and so is the power of youth.

### ODE TO OUR OCEAN

<https://www.lonelywhale.org/ode-to-our-ocean>

The sea sings out to its many saviours:  
Teenagers with fists thrust into the air at climate strikes,  
Scientists converging around their data,  
A child who stoops to scoop up a piece of trash.

The sea sings out for its singular subjects:  
Arching whales that wave from their waves,  
Turtles that teeter down their shining shores,  
Coral reefs shining brightly as cities.

The sea sings out its suffering,  
Knowing too much of waste, screeching sounds  
and pernicious poison, its depths bruised by  
Atrocities in the Atlantic,  
Misery in the Mediterranean,  
Its tides the preservers of time past.

The story of the ocean and the story of humanity  
are one and the same: a Great River that  
knows no borders and notes no lines,  
Only ripples.  
While we might call it the Seven Seas,  
Today we sing out your true name -  
The one ocean.  
For no matter how we try to separate your waters,  
You are the colossus that connects us.

Water makes up 70% of Earth,  
70% of the human heart,  
and 70% of the human being;  
All of us, bodies of water,

For we, too are oceans,

Or at least beings bobbing in the same boat.  
To stand up for our ocean  
is to stand up for our own ship.  
The sea is a restless, strong collective of many pieces.  
So are we.  
The ocean can recover.  
And so will we.

Let us not divide the tides,  
but discover all they have to teach us—  
Green meadows of sea grass that survive pathogens,  
Blue-bloodied marine snails that can fight off viruses.  
There are more lessons to learn,  
Still more work to be done.  
So we lift our faces to the sun.

May the seas help us see healing and hope,  
May we sing out the ocean's survival and revival.  
Being the people of this blue planet is our most  
Profound privilege and power,  
For if we be the ocean's saviours,  
Then it is surely ours.

## QUESTIONS

1. “*Ode to Our Ocean*” makes it clear that we are not separate from the ocean; how does Gorman believe we are connected and how do we currently treat it?
2. What does she mean by the lines: “*For no matter how we try to separate your waters, you are the colossus that connects us*”?
3. . As the challenges to our oceans grow—and with that, the need for solutions—the clearer it becomes that the health of our seas is tied to our own. What needs to be done to preserve and protect the seas and marine life?
4. How might the ocean be our saviour in years to come?

## SDG 15: PROTECT, RESTORE & PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TERRESTRIAL ECO-SYSTEMS & HABITATS

A prolific poet, broadcaster, children's author and playwright, **Roger McGough** was born in 1937 and has been nicknamed 'the patron saint of poetry' by Carol Ann Duffy. His poetry is always accessible and unpretentious, often dealing with big life events and themes but always with wit and humour. McGough presents 'Poetry Please' on Radio 4 as well as performing his own poems.

### GIVE AND TAKE.

<https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poems/give-and-take>

I give you clean air  
You give me poisonous gas.  
I give you mountains  
You give me quarries.

I give you pure snow  
You give me acid rain.  
I give you spring fountains  
You give me toxic canals.

I give you a butterfly  
You gave me a plastic bottle.  
I give you a blackbird  
You gave me a stealth bomber.

I give you abundance  
You give me waste.  
I give you one last chance  
You give me excuse after excuse after excuse after excuse...

### QUESTIONS

1. Who is the "I" speaking in the poem and who is being addressed?
2. Why do you think the poem is called '*Give and Take*' when all the lines begin '*I give you / you give me*'?
3. What are the excuses the poet refers to in the final line?

## SDG 15: PROTECT, RESTORE & PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TERRESTRIAL ECO-SYSTEMS & HABITATS

**Phillip Larkin** was born in 1922 and died in 1985 . A poet and librarian, over his lifetime he witnessed huge developments in industry and technology. In this poem he laments the fact that the English countryside – which he always thought would somehow be preserved – is starting to disappear at an alarming rate.

### GOING GOING

I thought it would last my time -  
The sense that, beyond the town,  
There would always be fields and farms,  
Where the village louts could climb  
Such trees as were not cut down;  
I knew there'd be false alarms

In the papers about old streets  
And split level shopping, but some  
Have always been left so far;  
And when the old part retreats  
As the bleak high-risers come  
We can always escape in the car.

Things are tougher than we are, just  
As earth will always respond  
However we mess it about;  
Chuck filth in the sea, if you must:  
The tides will be clean beyond.  
- But what do I feel now? Doubt?

Or age, simply? The crowd  
Is young in the M1 cafe;  
Their kids are screaming for more -  
More houses, more parking allowed,  
More caravan sites, more pay.  
On the Business Page, a score

Of spectacled grins approve  
Some takeover bid that entails  
Five per cent profit (and ten  
Per cent more in the estuaries): move  
Your works to the unspoilt dales  
(Grey area grants)! And when

You try to get near the sea  
In summer . . .  
It seems, just now,  
To be happening so very fast;

Despite all the land left free  
For the first time I feel somehow  
That it isn't going to last,

That before I snuff it, the whole  
Boiling will be bricked in  
Except for the tourist parts -  
First slum of Europe: a role  
It won't be hard to win,  
With a cast of crooks and tarts.

And that will be England gone,  
The shadows, the meadows, the lanes,  
The guildhalls, the carved choirs.  
There'll be books; it will linger on  
In galleries; but all that remains  
For us will be concrete and tyres.

Most things are never meant.  
This won't be, most likely; but greeds  
And garbage are too thick-strewn  
To be swept up now, or invent  
Excuses that make them all needs.  
I just think it will happen, soon

### QUESTIONS

1. The title 'Going, Going' immediately summons the third, unspoken word in the phrase commonly used by auctioneer's: 'Going, Going, Gone.' Why did Larkin chose this as his title and why is the phrase unfinished?
2. What aspects of England does he value and why does he fear it is fast becoming the "*first slum of Europe*"
3. Who does he cite as responsible?

## SDG 15: PROTECT, RESTORE & PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TERRESTRIAL ECO-SYSTEMS & HABITATS

**KATE (now Kae) TEMPEST** is a young English performance poet, novelist and playwright with a distinctively hip hop style: :  
“As gorgeous streams of words flow out, they conjure a story so vivid it’s as if you had a state-of-the-art blu-ray player stuffed into your brain projecting image after image that sears itself onto your consciousness” (New York Times)

### OUR PLANET

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjtcNGGkKIA>

Once upon a time in a town much like your town, on a road much like your road,  
where the people lived and worked and passed their days much like the people you know,  
there was a feeling in the air of dread.  
It was thick and dark and it got into the eyes and mouths and lungs.  
Our mother is dying, said the dread.

But wait, once upon a time the story changed.  
It was not dread that tugged the people’s sleeves  
but possibility.  
The sky cleared over the city and the sun came through in a blast of golden light  
and we saw that we were standing on the crest of a mighty hill.  
Our view was panoramic  
and we could see  
this endless exploitation does not make us happy.  
This violent inequality destroys everybody’s freedom.

We know what mining does.  
We know what deforestation does.  
We know what plastic in the oceans does.  
We know what humans need.  
We know what nature needs.  
We could live differently.

We could consider our minuteness in the natural scheme of things.  
We could fuel our lives in ways that are not harmful.  
We could build our cities so they are sustainable.  
We could encourage nature, not just to survive  
but to flourish  
If we made that our priority the animals would begin to multiply,  
the oceans would recover,  
the people would remember how to feel simple things.

It will never work, said exhaustion.  
Money makes the world go round, said dissatisfaction.  
If it doesn’t turn a profit  
it’s never going to happen, said shame.  
Grow up, said feel. Put up, said feel. Shut up, said feel.  
Isn’t this the very reason we were born into this age? Said courage,

to make the huge transition that the age demands?  
Isn't that the weight you feel -  
The weight of changing ages?  
Why are you so afraid? said resolution.  
This is the only way, said love.  
Even as the cities roared  
the children could be heard above the noise of the machines:

I want to live in a world where I can breathe the air and drink the water, they said.  
I don't want the seas to boil or the forests to burn.  
I want to look at the rising sun with ancient wonder.  
I want to live in a world where the weather patterns are not deadly,  
where animals roam wild and are not just farmed for meat,  
where people have enough.

I want to be a human being, not an agent of consumption.  
I was not born to spend.  
I am more than the sum of my data.  
I want to honour our planet.  
I want to live on our planet  
I want to live.

The time had come for a brand new story:  
Once upon a time we were gifted with a present that was heavy.  
It was now.

## QUESTIONS

1. Read the opening and closing stanzas together: "It was not dread that tugged the people's sleeves but possibility... once upon a time we were gifted with a present that was heavy". What present is Tempest talking about and why is it heavy?
2. What does she see as holding us back and what will drive us forward?
3. Who does the poet charge with making change happen?

## SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE & STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Known as a 'giant in Israeli popular culture' **Dan Almagor** is a professor of Hebrew literature and a poet in occupied Palestine. He is a stern and vocal critic of the racism against Palestinians he believes to be systemic in Israeli society and continues to speak out through his poetry despite receiving death threats for his views.

### IN MY SHOES

For some people a Palestinian is Yasir Arafat,  
A youth throwing a Molotov cocktail at a bus,  
A boy hurling taunts at soldiers and cursing their mothers.  
When you say "Palestinian" to me, I think of Walid.  
The only Palestinian I know and who knows me,  
And with whom I converse (in my language, of course).

He is thirty or so, married with children,  
Has a pleasant smile and speaks passable Hebrew.  
An intelligent fellow, with a degree in accounting  
Who reads for pleasure classical Arab poetry,  
Philosophy and religious works.  
He has a good sense of humour and he's an optimist.  
I wish I had more friends like him.

He uses his education in our local supermarket,  
Weighing vegetables and making home deliveries.  
In his spare time he washes cars or cleans apartments  
in our neighborhood, as many hours as possible.  
He has a family to support and he may not be able to come tomorrow.  
There might be a curfew.

Or he might find himself "inside" like his brother:  
Six months administrative detention without trial.  
Every day he has a story to tell.  
Minor incidents, not what you would call atrocities.  
His identity card was torn up by a reserve soldier  
for no particular reason.  
Trucks turned up suddenly with soldiers without uniforms  
and loaded up a few of his cousins (our cousins).

Some people think of Yasir Arafat or Abu Nidal  
When you mention Palestinians.  
I think of Walid.  
When we tactfully offered Walid parcels of secondhand clothes  
For his relatives in the village,  
he accepted gratefully without taking offense.

How strange to think that someone, somewhere  
In Walid's village near Nablus,  
Is wearing my shoes now.  
Once, not so very long ago, I was in his shoes.

## QUESTIONS

Read the poem out loud and think about the following questions:

1. In the poem, Almagor describes his acquaintance with Walid, an employee in his local supermarket, distinguishing his impressions of Palestinians, based on his personal acquaintance, from the perceptions that "*some people*" have from seeing Palestinians only on television or reading about the conflict in print. What point is the poet making?
2. Almagor goes on to relate an incident when he gave Walid some "*secondhand clothes for his relatives in the village*," including an old pair of shoes.
3. Why do you think this Israeli poet highlights shoes in amongst the bundle of second-hand clothing? What does he mean when he says "*Once, not so very long ago, I was in his shoes.*"
4. What does it mean to '*walk in someone else's shoes?*'

## SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE & STRONG INSTITUTIONS

**Imtiaz Dharker** wrote this poem in the wake of the 9.11 Terrorist attack on the Twin Towers of New York City. In it she points out the complexities of language and identity; how we view and label other people, particularly those from different backgrounds to our own, and how they may see and label themselves.

### THE RIGHT WORD

Outside the door,  
lurking in the shadows,  
is a terrorist.

Is that the wrong description?  
Outside that door  
taking shelter in the shadows,  
is a freedom fighter.

I haven't got this right.  
Outside, waiting in the shadows  
is a hostile militant.

Are words no more than  
Waving, wavering flags?

Outside your door,  
watchful in the shadows,  
is a guerrilla warrior

God help me!  
Outside, defying every shadow,  
stands a martyr.  
I saw his face.

No words can help me now.  
Just outside the door,  
lost in shadows,  
is a child who looks like mine.

One word for you.  
Outside my door,  
his hand too steady,  
his eyes too hard,  
is a boy who looks like your son too.

I open the door.  
Come in, I say.  
Come in and eat with us.

The child steps in  
and carefully at my door  
takes off his shoes.

## QUESTIONS

1. What expectations do you have of the figure “*lurking*” outside the door in the opening lines?
2. The “*terrorist*” is then re-cast as a ‘*freedom fighter*’, ‘*militant*’, ‘*guerrilla warrior*’ and ‘*martyr*’, no longer ‘*lurking in the shadows*’ but ‘*taking shelter*’, ‘*waiting*’, ‘*watching*’ and with each change in word usage, comes a different idea of their character and purpose. What point is Dharker making about the power of words?
3. Why do you think Dharker uses ‘flags’ as a metaphor to describe the power of words to frame and re-frame the same situation?
4. The lurking figure is finally re-cast as simply a ‘*child*’ who “*looks like your son*”. What new idea does this suggest?
5. The image of the door recurs throughout; a barrier separating the two sides, perhaps masking our similarities and allowing us to imagine fundamental differences. Yet a door can open. How does “THE RIGHT WORD” throw light on your chosen development goal ‘Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’?

## SDG 17: REVITALISE & STRENGTHEN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

**Hollie McNish:** “*There’s a comfort I find in writing that I don’t get from much else: trying to find words to frame thoughts on to a page; playing with metaphors; deciding which silences merit line breaks or commas or dashes or just a little more blank page all to themselves. Like moulding and carving clay. Most of the poems I write are primarily for myself: to ease pain; to heal; to reorganise anger; to giggle; to think more clearly; to convince myself of feelings that maybe weren’t quite true; to have fun; to play with language; to imagine alternative realities; to wallow; to question; to reconsider; to remember; to give some sort of shape to things that overwhelm me*”.

### FOREIGN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSop3jaMmeU>

I find it strange  
when people complain  
about foreigners in the UK so much  
and ignore all the foreign stuff that we use.  
I find it strange the way we treat foreign people and families so differently  
from the way we treat foreign money or products or food  
Let foreign ships sail to our shores filled with things we can take  
But turn them away if the foreign people who make them want to come too.

I find it strange:  
we’re ok with chewing on foreign food:  
Chinese carry out bags and Indian too,  
kebabs and pizzerias and foreign tropical fruit juice.  
We’re ok with eating foreign sugar cane sugary treats,  
Munching on foreign cocoa bean chocolaty sweets,  
Complaining between every bite about the foreign folk down our street.

We’re ok  
with wearing foreign clothes,  
Stuff we love to buy cheap because foreign wages are so low,  
Our whole household comes from Shanghai and Tokyo  
and I know,  
that we’re ok with driving foreign cars, so fast,  
filling up buses with foreign petrol piped from their parts  
foreign heating gas extracted by digging up their plants,  
watching foreign TVs as we sit on our starts  
complaining to each other  
about the foreigners in our kid’s class.

We’re ok  
with going on holiday to a foreign beach,  
lying in foreign sunshine,  
swimming in foreign seas,  
sipping sangrias and Cuban cocktails as much as we please.

We're ok  
with using foreign places to get away from UK rainy days,  
watching programmes on TV showing British families as brave,  
we're buying cheaper foreign properties and showing what they save,  
we're buying up entire Polish villages  
for English resorts and greasy spoon beach breaks,  
complaining in Spain there's no ketchup with the chips  
and covering Ibiza's shores with booze and teenage sick  
as we complain about the foreigners that come to us to work and live.

We're ok  
with buying foreign goods we love to from abroad,  
then dumping all our rubbish on foreign people's shores,  
Filling foreign landfills overspilling with our household cans  
complaining about the foreign people with accents we can't understand  
and how our British culture is being killed by the foreign man  
and all the foreign families.

While we keep eating our Ugandan chocolate treats,  
Keep watching our Chinese TV,  
our Korean MP3,  
our Taiwanese DVD,  
posing in our Indonesian jeans,  
going on holiday in our Spanish seas,  
biting down on our scones and jam and cream,  
sipping at what we proudly call our English Breakfast tea,  
forgetting as we sip that those are  
Indian leaves, made from Indian seeds,  
shipped across in ships that sail from Indian seas.

So please, do not tell me  
foreign people are a burden to our economy,  
I feel it's time we sipped a little bit of this hypocrisy  
and thought about how differently we treat the nationality  
of foreign money, products, goods and food to  
Foreign people and their families.

## QUESTIONS

1. McNish points to several of the most common complaints she hears in the UK about immigration. What are they?
2. Underline phrases in the poem that tell us how the poet feels about attitudes to immigration amongst some sections of the British public.
3. Were you surprised at just how interconnected we are as a nation with other countries? McNish is entreating us to treat migrants with courtesy, kindness and gratitude for what they are able to bring to the country. How does it make you feel about the issue of immigration in this country?

## SDG 17: REVITALISE & STRENGTHEN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

She is the 2022 version of Bob Dylan and at 19, was named America's Youth Poet Laureate. **Amanda Gorman's** poem covers the key issues that face us all: the interconnectedness of climate change, poverty, hunger, inequality, and the impact of hate. Each of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals are a step along the road to a safer, fairer world and Amanda's message is one of hope: "*that while issues of hunger and poverty and illiteracy can feel Goliath and are so huge, it's not necessarily that these issues are too large to be conquered. But they're too large to be stepped away from*".

### AN ODE WE OWE

How can I ask you to do good,  
When we've barely withstood  
Our greatest threats yet:  
The depths of death, despair and disparity,  
Atrocities across cities, towns & countries,  
Lives lost, climactic costs.  
Exhausted, angered, we are endangered,  
Not because of our numbers,  
But because of our numbness. We're strangers  
To one another's perils and pain,  
Unaware that the welfare of the public  
And the planet share a name—  
—Equality

Doesn't mean being the exact same,  
But enacting a vast aim:  
The good of the world to its highest capability.  
The wise believe that our people without power  
Leaves our planet without possibility.  
Therefore, though poverty is a poor existence,  
Complicity is a poorer excuse.  
We must go the distance,  
Though this battle is hard and huge,  
Though this fight we did not choose,  
For preserving the earth isn't a battle too large  
To win, but a blessing too large to lose.

This is the most pressing truth:  
That Our people have only one planet to call home  
And our planet has only one people to call its own.  
We can either divide and be conquered by the few,  
Or we can decide to conquer the future,  
And say that today a new dawn we wrote,  
Say that as long as we have humanity,  
We will forever have hope.

Together, we won't just be the generation  
That tries but the generation that triumphs;  
Let us see a legacy  
Where tomorrow is not driven  
By the human condition,  
But by our human conviction.  
And while hope alone can't save us now,  
With it we can brave the now,

Because our hardest change hinges  
On our darkest challenges.

Thus may our crisis be our cry, our crossroad,  
The oldest ode we owe each other.  
We chime it, for the climate,  
For our communities.  
We shall respect and protect  
Every part of this planet,  
Hand it to every heart on this earth,  
Until no one's worth is rendered  
By the race, gender, class, or identity  
They were born. This morn let it be sworn  
That we are one, one human kin,  
Grounded not just by the griefs  
We bear, but by the good we begin.

To anyone out there:  
I only ask that you care before it's too late,  
That you live aware and awake,  
That you lead with love in hours of hate.  
I challenge you to heed this call,  
I dare you to shape our fate.  
Above all, I dare you to do good  
So that the world might be great

## QUESTIONS

1. The poem is a call to action insisting that we take a step back and consider a more global perspective on all the issues that face us as a planet. What does the poet suggest is the key to a new approach and how is this different to what has gone before?
2. Which demographic is Amanda Gorman addressing directly to stand alongside her and make a difference? Why does she target this particular group?
3. In the final stanza the poet calls upon "*anyone out there*" to "*care before it's too late*" and dares them to "*shape our fate*". Who is she addressing and through what emotions?