



Reading Fluency

Dawn Chorus Poetry

Wonder

**Seven poems for
National Poetry Day**

Thursday 1 October 2026





Foreword

At Reading Fluency we love our poem-of-the-week routine so I thought I could write a set for National Poetry Day.

This year's theme for National Poetry Day is *Wonder*.

These poems are designed to inspire that sense of wonder in all of us. Each poem comes with a week around it: a plan, the poem itself, the vocabulary cards and the syllable stacks. The routine is the one we use - hear it, grow it, show it. They are designed to be read either as just one of the poems within a class or reading group, or, if you wish, as part of a much bigger whole-school performance. You can use the chant to bridge between each.

I've really enjoyed working on these poems over the last couple of weeks. If nothing else I hope you enjoy reading them aloud with your children.

Best wishes,

Simon

Simon Sharp

Founder, Reading Fluency



The set at a glance

Seven poems, one for each stage, all on this year's National Poetry Day theme: **wonder**. Each poem has the same week around it, so a class can take its own poem on its own, or the whole school can build a performance from all seven.

	Stage	Poem	Voices
	Willow during Year 1	The Wonder Box List poem · Nature & Seasons	Namer · All
	Hazel end of Year 1	Ask the Sky Performance poem · Nature & Seasons	Askers · Sky
	Yew end of Year 2	The Question Machine Nonsense verse · School Life	Inventor · Class · Machine
	Chestnut end of Year 3	Is a Flame Alive? Performance poem · Nature & Seasons	Side A · Side B · Chorus
	Oak end of Year 4	The Water's Question Rhyming poem · Nature & Seasons	Spring · Brook · Stream · Falls · Rapids · Bend · Mouth · Rain
	Sycamore end of Year 5	Big and Small Performance poem · Nature & Seasons	Big · Small
	Cedar end of Year 6	I Used to Wonder Narrative poem · Family	Solo · Chorus

The week

Monday · Hear It. The adult performs, the class talks, the adult explains three choices, then everyone echo-reads.

Tuesday to Thursday · Grow It. One decision a day: cold choral and echo, guided choral chasing one feature, then partner reads with a kind tip.

Friday · Show It. The class performs, in the groups the plan suggests.

Every plan is a suggestion. You will have your own ideas about how a line could be said, and the wobbles we list are only the likely ones. Use your judgement.

The whole-school performance

Run the poems youngest to oldest. The whole hall says the chant before the first poem and again before each one, so it bridges every change of stage.

Chant · Willow · Hazel · Yew · Chestnut · Oak · Sycamore · Cedar

The whole set runs at about fifteen minutes.



THE WONDER CHANT

Look! Look!

See the wonder in this day.

How it works. The whole hall says it together before the first poem, and again before each poem in the performance. A leader calls the first line. Everyone answers with the second. Two claps on the two Looks.





The Wonder Box

List poem · Nature & Seasons · Namer · All



Namer: A smooth rock from the box.

All: Ooh! We wonder, we wonder!

Namer: A shiny shell from the box.

All: Ooh! We wonder, we wonder!

Namer: A long stick from the box.

All: Ooh! We wonder, we wonder!

Namer: A green frog from the box.

All: Ooh! We wonder, we wonder!

Namer: A shiny mirror from the box.

All: It is me! I can see me!



The Wonder Box

List poem · Nature & Seasons · 10 lines · 5 verses · 57 words · about 1 minute at Willow pace · no rhymes · a repeated line

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

The same line, four times, then a surprise.

Four times the class answers with exactly the same words. The poem only works if the fifth answer sounds completely different: a shout of surprise.

Day 1 · Hear It – then Grow It begins

about 25 min · whole class + partner talk

Perform

ADULT · MY TURN
2 min

Read the whole poem with a real box and the five things inside it. Lift each one out as you say its line. Be the **NAMER** and the **ALL** yourself: **NAMER** slow and curious · **ALL** big eyes, hand on chin. On the last line hold the mirror up to the children and let them see themselves before you say **It is me!**

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

What came out of the box? then **What did the mirror show?** Listen for: it showed us, our own faces. **wonder** hold up the word card. “When we wonder, we want to know. We say ooh and we look and look.” Everyone does one ooh with big eyes.

Reader Talk

ADULT · MY TURN
5 min

Read again, children following on the screen. Say out loud three choices, no more:

1. “I said the Namer lines slowly, because the Namer is looking carefully.” (line 1)
2. “Ooh has a big mark after it, so I made it big.” (line 2)
3. “The last line is different. I made it a happy shout.” (line 10)

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

How does the Namer say frog? Try it on your partner. Then: **Which line is the surprise?** (the mirror line) Ask two pairs to show their Ooh. Pick the one with the biggest eyes.

Echo Read

MY TURN, YOUR
TURN
8 min

One line at a time, with the action. Children copy the voice, not just the words. The Namer lines are split at the slash (marked on the teacher’s copy). Everyone points at themselves on line 10. Finish with one whole-class read, teacher as Namer.

Days 2–5 · the one decision for each day

5–10 min a day

DAY 2 · GROW IT

Cold Choral + Echo

Likely wobbles, echo only these:
line 3 shiny · line 9 mirror
line 2 we wonder, we wonder
(keep the beat)
line 10 It is me!

DAY 3 · GROW IT

Guided Choral

Chase one feature: **the exclamation mark means a big voice.**
Put It Together: one group of five are Namers, one thing each. Everyone else is All.

DAY 4 · GROW IT

Partner Read + Kind Tip

Tips to model first:
“Make your eyes bigger on Ooh.”
“Say smooth slowly.”
“Point at yourself on me.”

DAY 5 · SHOW IT

Perform with the box

NAMER five children, one thing each, lifted from the real box
ALL the whole class, with the action
The last Namer holds the mirror up to the audience.

WATCH FOR

Tricky words: shiny the y says /ee/ · mirror the or says /er/.
Children may say “I wonder” instead of “we wonder”.
Praise the meaning, then point to the we and say it together.

YEAR 1 LINKS

Join in with predictable phrases · appreciate rhymes and poems, and recite some by heart · discuss word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known.
By Friday every child should be able to say the All lines from memory with the action.



The Wonder Box

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

1	NAMER	A smooth rock / from the box.	Slow and low. Hold the rock up. Stroke it on smooth.
2	ALL	Ooh! / We wonder, we wonder!	Big round eyes on Ooh. Hand on chin for wonder.
3	NAMER	A shiny shell / from the box.	Quicker and lighter. Turn the shell in the light.
4	ALL	Ooh! / We wonder, we wonder!	Same as line 2. The class knows it now.
5	NAMER	A long stick / from the box.	Stretch long out. Arms wide.
6	ALL	Ooh! / We wonder, we wonder!	Same again, a little louder.
7	NAMER	A green frog / from the box.	Surprised voice. A frog? Hop on the spot.
8	ALL	Ooh! / We wonder, we wonder!	Loudest wonder yet.
9	NAMER	A shiny mirror / from the box.	Slow right down. Hold the mirror up to the class. Wait.
10	ALL	It is me! / I can see me!	The surprise. Point at yourself on each me.

MARKS ON THIS PAGE

/ short pause // long pause word say it stronger word tricky to read word vocabulary | echo-read chunk
 a rhyming pair NAMER ALL who is speaking



VOCABULARY

wonder

to want to know about something

FROM THE POEM · THE WONDER BOX

“Ooh! We **wonder**, we wonder!”

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Action: Hand on chin, eyebrows up



VOCABULARY

smooth

no bumps and no lumps

FROM THE POEM · THE WONDER BOX

“A **smooth** rock from the box.”

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Action: Stroke the back of your hand



The Wonder Box

Syllable stacks · At Willow the stacks build every word of two syllables or more.

Read each stack from the top. Clap one beat for every part, then say the whole word, then find it in the poem.

won-
won-der
wonder

shi-
shi-ny
shiny

mir-
mir-ror
mirror



Ask the Sky

Performance poem · Nature & Seasons · Askers · Sky



Askers: Sky, sky, what do you say?

Askers: Sky, why are you so tall?

Sky: I am standing high upon the moon.

Askers: Sky, sky, what do you say?

Askers: Sky, why are you so bright?

Sky: I paint myself with sunlight.

Askers: Sky, sky, what do you say?

Askers: Sky, why do you cry?

The Askers fall silent. Everyone taps rain on the floor.

Askers: Look! You said it with rain.



Ask the Sky

Performance poem · Nature & Seasons · 9 lines · 3 verses · 53 words · about 1 minute at Hazel pace · no rhymes · a repeated question

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Two voices: the Askers and the Sky.

The Askers are quick and curious. The Sky is slow, low and far away. The poem ends when the Sky answers without a word, and the class has to hear the silence.

Day 1 · Hear It – then Grow It begins

about 25 min · whole class + partner talk

Perform

ADULT · MY TURN
2 min

Read the whole poem, eyes on the class. Give each speaker a voice: **ASKERS** quick, up at the end, like a knock at a door · **SKY** slow and low, as if from far away. Stop dead after line 8. Count two. Tap rain on the table, then say the last line softly.

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

Who is asking? then **How does the sky answer the last question?** Listen for: it rains, it cries with rain. **bright**: hold up the word card. “Bright means full of light. The sun is bright. A torch is bright.” Everyone opens their hands like rays.

Reader Talk

ADULT · MY TURN
5 min

Read again, children following on the screen. Say out loud three choices, no more:

1. “Sky, sky has a question mark at the end, so my voice went up.” (line 1)
2. “The Sky is far away, so I made it slow and low.” (line 3)
3. “I stopped after cry, because the Sky answers with rain, not words.” (line 8)

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

How would the Sky say “I paint myself with sunlight”? Try it on your partner. Then: **Which word do the Askers shout?** (Look)
Ask two pairs to show their Sky voice. Pick the slowest and lowest.

Echo Read

MY TURN, YOUR
TURN
8 min

One line at a time, fully expressed. Children copy the voice, not just the words. Split lines 3 and 6 into two chunks (marked on the teacher’s copy). Everyone taps rain after line 8. Finish with one whole-class read, teacher as Sky.

Days 2–5 · the one decision for each day

5–10 min a day

DAY 2 · GROW IT

Cold Choral + Echo

Likely wobbles, echo only these:
line 3 standing high upon
line 6 paint myself
line 9 Look! You said it

DAY 3 · GROW IT

Guided Choral

Chase one feature: **a question mark makes the voice go up.**
Put It Together: half the class asks, half the class is the Sky. Swap.

DAY 4 · GROW IT

Partner Read + Kind Tip

Tips to model first:
“Make the Sky sound further away.”
“Wait after cry.”
“Make Look the loudest word.”

DAY 5 · SHOW IT

Perform in two groups

ASKERS the whole class
SKY three children at the back, standing on chairs if it is safe
Everyone taps rain. One child points up on Look.

WATCH FOR

Tricky words: what the a says /o/ · said the ai says /e/ · silent the i says /igh/ · sky why cry myself the y says /igh/.

Children may read line 3 as “standing on the moon”. Praise the meaning, then point to upon and say it together.

YEAR 1 LINKS

Join in with predictable phrases · appreciate rhymes and poems, and recite some by heart · check the text makes sense · discuss word meanings.

By Friday most of the class should be able to say all three Askers questions from memory.



Ask the Sky

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

- | | | | |
|---|---------------|--|---|
| 1 | ASKERS | Sky, sky, / what do you say ? | Like knocking on a door. Voice goes up at the end. |
| 2 | ASKERS | Sky, why are you so tall ? | Look up. Stretch tall on tall. |
| 3 | SKY | I am standing high upon the moon. | Slow, low and far away. Echo in two chunks. |
| 4 | ASKERS | Sky, sky, / what do you say ? | Same knock as line 1. |
| 5 | ASKERS | Sky, why are you so bright ? | Hands open wide like rays. Hold up the word card. |
| 6 | SKY | I paint myself with sunlight. | Slow and proud. Mime a big paintbrush across the sky. |
| 7 | ASKERS | Sky, sky, / what do you say ? | Quieter this time. Something is changing. |
| 8 | ASKERS | Sky, why do you cry ? // | Gentle. Then everyone stops. Count two. Tap rain with fingertips. |
| <i>The Askers fall silent. Everyone taps rain on the floor.</i> | | | |
| 9 | ASKERS | Look! / You said it with rain . | Point up on Look. Rain is soft and slow. |

MARKS ON THIS PAGE

- / short pause // long pause **word** say it stronger **word** tricky to read **word** vocabulary | echo-read chunk
 a rhyming pair **ASKERS** **SKY** who is speaking



VOCABULARY

bright

full of light and shining

FROM THE POEM · ASK THE SKY

“Sky, why are you so **bright**?”

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Action: Open your hands like sun rays



VOCABULARY

silent

making no sound at all

FROM THE POEM · ASK THE SKY

“The Askers fall **silent**.”

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Action: Finger to lips, freeze



Ask the Sky

Syllable stacks · At Hazel the stacks build every word of two syllables or more.

Read each stack from the top. Clap one beat for every part, then say the whole word, then find it in the poem.

stand-
stand-ing
standing

up-
up-on
upon

sun-
sun-light
sunlight

si-
si-lent
silent



The Question Machine

Nonsense verse · School Life · Inventor · Class · Machine



The machine hums. The Class tap the floor.

Inventor: I built an object, bolts and wire,

Class: and wound it up to never tire.

Machine: What is the shape of yesterday?

Inventor: I asked for answers! Go away!

The machine buzzes. The Class clap their hands.

Class: It measured every sum we knew.

Machine: Why are the puddles always new?

Inventor: I turned a wheel to force it plain.

Machine: Why does the rain not mind the rain?

The machine rattles. The Class stamp their feet.

Inventor: I stopped and dropped my spanner there.

Class: The questions spun and filled the air.

Machine: What makes a question want to be?

Inventor: I wonder what is asking me.



The Question Machine

Nonsense verse · School Life · 12 lines · 3 verses · 81 words · about 1½ minutes at Yew pace · rhymes: wire/tire · yesterday/away · knew/new · plain/rain · there/air · be/me

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Three voices, and a machine that only asks.

The Inventor wants answers. The Machine gives questions. The joke lands only if the Machine sounds like a machine and the Inventor gets crosser each verse, then goes quiet.

Day 1 · Hear It – then Grow It begins

about 25 min · whole class + partner talk

Perform

ADULT · MY TURN
2 min

Read the whole poem, eyes on the class. Give each speaker a voice: **INVENTOR** proud, then cross, then quiet · **CLASS** matter of fact, like a news report · **MACHINE** flat robot voice, no feeling. Do the sounds in the stage directions yourself: hum, buzz, rattle. Slow right down for verse 3.

Partner Talk

CHILDREN · YOUR TURN
4 min

What did the Inventor want the machine to do? then **What does it do instead?** Listen for: it only asks questions.
spanner hold up the word card. “A spanner is a tool that turns nuts and bolts.” Everyone twists a spanner in the air, then drops it.

Reader Talk

ADULT · MY TURN
5 min

Read again, children following on the screen. Say out loud three choices, no more:

1. “The Machine has no feelings, so I made it flat, like a robot.” (line 3)
2. “Two exclamation marks in one line. The Inventor is cross.” (line 4)
3. “The last line has no exclamation mark and no question mark. I made it quiet and slow.” (line 12)

Partner Talk

CHILDREN · YOUR TURN
4 min

How would the Machine say “Why are the puddles always new?” Try it on your partner. Then: **Which line is the Inventor’s quietest?** (line 12)
Ask two pairs to show their Machine voice. Pick the flattest.

Echo Read

MY TURN, YOUR TURN
8 min

One line at a time, fully expressed. Children copy the voice, not just the words. Split lines 2, 7 and 10 into two chunks (marked on the teacher’s copy). Tap, clap and stamp at each stage direction. Finish with one whole-class read of verse 3.

Days 2–5 · the one decision for each day

5–10 min a day

DAY 2 · GROW IT

Cold Choral + Echo

Likely wobbles, echo only these:
line 1 built · line 5 measured
line 8 does the rain not mind
line 10 questions spun

DAY 3 · GROW IT

Guided Choral

Chase one feature: **the rhyme at the end of each pair.**
Put It Together: three groups, one voice each.
Swap so everyone has been the Machine.

DAY 4 · GROW IT

Partner Read + Kind Tip

Tips to model first:
“Make the Machine flatter.”
“Make the Inventor crosser on Go away.”
“Slow down for the last line.”

DAY 5 · SHOW IT

Perform in three groups

INVENTOR one confident reader, or a group of three
MACHINE a group of six, arms stiff, in one voice
CLASS everyone else, with the taps, claps and stamps.

WATCH FOR

Tricky words: built the ui says /i/ · knew silent k · measured the ea says /e/ and the s says /zh/ · does the oe says /u/ · questions the t says /ch/ · want the a says /o/ · answers silent w.

Children may read line 8 as “Why does the rain not mind the rain?” with the same rain twice as a mistake. It is meant. Say it slowly and let them wonder.

YEAR 2 LINKS

Recite poetry with appropriate intonation to make the meaning clear · discuss and clarify the meanings of words · recognise simple recurring language · ask and answer questions.

By Friday most of the class should be able to say all four Machine questions from memory.



The Question Machine

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

The machine hums. The Class tap the floor.

1 **INVENTOR** I **built** an object, / bolts and wire, ^a Proud, busy. Mime tightening a bolt.

2 **CLASS** and wound it up | to never tire. ^a Wind a handle together. Keep tapping the floor.

3 **MACHINE** What is the shape of **yesterday**? Flat robot voice, no feeling. Voice up on yesterday.

4 **INVENTOR** I asked for **answers!** / Go away! Cross. Stamp on answers, shoo on away.

The machine buzzes. The Class clap their hands.

5 **CLASS** It **measured** every sum we **knew**. ^b Matter of fact. Hold up the word card on measured.

6 **MACHINE** Why are the puddles always new? ^b Robot voice again. Puzzled tilt of the head.

7 **INVENTOR** I turned a wheel | to force it plain. ^c Grunting effort. Big wheel turn. Echo in two chunks.

8 **MACHINE** Why **does** the rain / not mind the rain? ^c Slower. This one is strange. Let it hang.

The machine rattles. The Class stamp their feet.

9 **INVENTOR** I stopped / and dropped my **spanner** there. ^d Freeze on stopped. Let a pencil drop on spanner.

10 **CLASS** The **questions** spun | and filled the air. ^d Swirling hands. Voices rise like a swarm.

11 **MACHINE** What makes a question / **want** to **be**? ^e Softest Machine line. Almost human now.

12 **INVENTOR** I **wonder** / what is asking me. ^e Slowest line in the poem. Hand on chin. Point at yourself on me.

MARKS ON THIS PAGE

/ short pause // long pause word say it stronger word tricky to read **word** vocabulary | echo-read chunk
^a rhyming pair **INVENTOR** **CLASS** **MACHINE** who is speaking



VOCABULARY

spanner

a metal tool for turning nuts and bolts

FROM THE POEM · THE QUESTION MACHINE

"I stopped and dropped my **spanner** there."

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Action: Twist your wrist, then drop it



VOCABULARY

measured

found out how big, how long or how much

FROM THE POEM · THE QUESTION MACHINE

"It **measured** every sum we knew."

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Action: Hands wide, then closer, then closer



The Question Machine

Syllable stacks · At Yew the stacks build every word of three syllables, then the tricky two-syllable words.

Read each stack from the top. Clap one beat for every part, then say the whole word, then find it in the poem.

yes-
yes-ter-
yes-ter-day
yesterday

ob-
ob-ject
object

mea-
mea-sured
measured

pud-
pud-dles
puddles

span-
span-ner
spanner

ques-
ques-tions
questions



Is a Flame Alive?

Performance poem · Nature & Seasons · Side A · Side B · Chorus



Chorus: Is a flame alive? Is a flame alive?

Side A: Observe its movement – it will dance and sway.

Side B: The curtains dance as well when people pass that way.

Side A: Cover it, it chokes – respiration needs the air.

Side B: A car needs oxygen – the engine burns fuel there.

Chorus: Is a flame alive? Is a flame alive?

Side A: Blow, and see it flinch – sensitivity to air.

Side B: A weather vane turns too, but does it even care?

Side A: Watch its growth – it climbs the wick and grows.

Side B: A puddle grows the same when someone tips the hose.

Chorus: Is a flame alive? Is a flame alive?

Side A: Touch a second wick – reproduction, a second flame.

Side B: A match lights flames as well. A spark can do the same.

Side A: Watch the smoke curl up – excretion, grey and thin.

Side B: A chimney gives off smoke, and no life lives within.

Chorus: Is a flame alive? Is a flame alive?

Side A: Watch the candle shrink – nutrition, the wax it eats.

Side B: A bonfire eats its wood – but it only heats.

Someone blows the candle out.

Chorus: The candle's out. The smoke curls up and goes.

Chorus: Is a flame alive? Is a flame alive?



Is a Flame Alive?

Performance poem · Nature & Seasons · 20 lines · 4 rounds · 178 words · about 2 minutes at Chestnut pace · rhymes: sway/way · air/there · air/care · grows/hose · flame/same · thin/within · eats/heats

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

An argument with no winner.

Side A believes the flame is alive and has the science words. Side B doubts, and has an answer every time. The blow-out ends it before anyone wins, and the last chorus must sound unsure.

Day 1 · Hear It – then Grow It begins

about 25 min · whole class + partner talk

Perform

ADULT · MY TURN
2 min

Read the whole poem, eyes on the class, with a candle if your school allows it (a torch works). Give each side a voice: **SIDE A** certain, hands on the science words · **SIDE B** cool, shrugging, a little mocking · **CHORUS** a real question that gets louder each time. Blow out after line 18. Whisper the last two lines.

Partner Talk

CHILDREN · YOUR TURN
4 min

Who wins the argument? then **Why does the poem stop?** Listen for: nobody, the candle went out. **flinch**: hold up the word card. “To flinch is to make a tiny jump away from something that startles you.” Everyone flinches from an imaginary flame.

Reader Talk

ADULT · MY TURN
5 min

Read again, children following on the screen. Say out loud three choices, no more:

1. “Side A uses science words, so I said them clearly, like a teacher.” (line 4)
2. “Side B always answers back, so I made it quicker and cooler.” (line 5)
3. “After the candle goes out I whispered, because nobody knows the answer.” (line 19)

Partner Talk

CHILDREN · YOUR TURN
4 min

How would Side B say “but does it even care?” Try it on your partner. Then: **Which chorus is the loudest, and which is the quietest?** (line 16, line 20)
Ask two pairs to show their Side B. Pick the coolest.

Echo Read

MY TURN, YOUR TURN
8 min

One line at a time, fully expressed. Children copy the voice, not just the words. Split lines 3, 10 and 19 into two chunks (marked on the teacher’s copy). Everyone freezes at the blow-out. Finish with one whole-class read of the last round.

Days 2–5 · the one decision for each day

5–10 min a day

DAY 2 · GROW IT

Cold Choral + Echo

Likely wobbles, echo only these:
line 4 respiration · line 7 sensitivity
line 12 reproduction · line 14 excretion
line 17 nutrition

DAY 3 · GROW IT

Guided Choral

Chase one feature: **the dash is a tiny pause before the science word.**
Put It Together: two halves of the room, A and B, and everyone on the Chorus.

DAY 4 · GROW IT

Partner Read + Kind Tip

Tips to model first:
“Say the science word like you own it.”
“Make Side B sound bored.”
“Whisper after the candle goes out.”

DAY 5 · SHOW IT

Perform in two halves

SIDE A half the class, standing left
SIDE B half the class, standing right
CHORUS everyone. One child at the front blows the candle out.

WATCH FOR

Tricky words: people the eo says /ee/ · curtains the ai says /uh/ · weather the ea says /e/ · climbs silent b · touch the ou says /u/ · oxygen the y says /i/ · chimney the ey says /ee/. The seven science words are long, not tricky: use the syllable stacks before Day 2.
Children may read the last chorus as a shout, like the others. Point to the blow-out and ask what changed.

YEAR 3 LINKS

Prepare poems and play scripts to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action · recognise some different forms of poetry.
Science: the seven life processes. By Friday most of the class should be able to say all seven from memory in the poem’s order.



Is a Flame Alive?

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

1	CHORUS	Is a flame alive? / Is a flame alive ?	A real question. Second alive stronger than the first.
2	SIDE A	Observe its movement – / it will dance and sway. a	Confident, sure of itself. Sway on sway.
3	SIDE B	The curtains dance as well when people pass that way. a	Cool, unimpressed. A shrug. Echo in two chunks.
4	SIDE A	Cover it, it chokes – / respiration needs the air. b	Hand over the flame on cover. Say the science word clearly.
5	SIDE B	A car needs oxygen – / the engine burns fuel there. b	Quick answer back. Rev an engine.
6	CHORUS	Is a flame alive? / Is a flame alive ?	Both sides together. Louder than line 1.
7	SIDE A	Blow, and see it flinch – / sensitivity to air. c	Blow gently on Blow. Flinch on flinch. Word card.
8	SIDE B	A weather vane turns too, / but does it even care ? c	Mocking. Care goes up like a real question.
9	SIDE A	Watch its growth – / it climbs the wick and grows. d	Hands climb up on climbs. Word card on wick.
10	SIDE B	A puddle grows the same when someone tips the hose. d	Flat, obvious. Echo in two chunks.
11	CHORUS	Is a flame alive? / Is a flame alive ?	Getting heated. Faster.
12	SIDE A	Touch a second wick – / reproduction, a second flame. e	Two fingers together, then apart: two flames.
13	SIDE B	A match lights flames as well. / A spark can do the same. e	Strike a match in the air.
14	SIDE A	Watch the smoke curl up – / excretion, grey and thin. f	Voice thins on grey and thin. Finger curls upward.
15	SIDE B	A chimney gives off smoke, / and no life lives within. f	Stern. Lives within slow and certain.
16	CHORUS	Is a flame alive? / Is a flame alive ?	Loudest chorus. Almost a chant.
17	SIDE A	Watch the candle shrink – / nutrition, the wax it eats. g	Hands shrink together on shrink.
18	SIDE B	A bonfire eats its wood – / but it only heats . //	Final word of the argument. Then everyone freezes. One child blows.
<i>Someone blows the candle out.</i>			
19	CHORUS	The candle's out. / The smoke curls up and goes.	Whisper. Watch the smoke go. Echo in two chunks.
20	CHORUS	Is a flame alive? / Is a flame alive?	Quietest line. No answer. Let it hang, then bow.

MARKS ON THIS PAGE

/ short pause // long pause **word** say it stronger **word** tricky to read **word** vocabulary | echo-read chunk
a rhyming pair **SIDE A** **SIDE B** **CHORUS** who is speaking



VOCABULARY

flinch

to make a tiny jump away
from something that startles
you

FROM THE POEM · IS A FLAME ALIVE?

“Blow, and see it **flinch**”

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Reading Fluency



Action: Shoulders up, eyes shut, one hand up



VOCABULARY

wick

the string in the middle of a
candle that burns

FROM THE POEM · IS A FLAME ALIVE?

“it climbs the **wick** and grows”

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Reading Fluency



Action: Pinch a thin string between finger and thumb



Is a Flame Alive?

Syllable stacks · At Chestnut the stacks build every word of three syllables or more.

Read each stack from the top. Clap one beat for every part, then say the whole word, then find it in the poem.

res-
res-pi-
res-pi-ra-
res-pi-ra-tion
respiration

ox-
ox-y-
ox-y-gen
oxygen

sen-
sen-si-
sen-si-tiv-
sen-si-tiv-i-
sen-si-tiv-i-ty
sensitivity

re-
re-pro-
re-pro-duc-
re-pro-duc-tion
reproduction

ex-
ex-cre-
ex-cre-tion
excretion

nu-
nu-tri-
nu-tri-tion
nutrition



The Water's Question

Rhyming poem · Nature & Seasons · Spring · Brook · Stream · Falls · Rapids · Bend · Mouth · Rain



Spring: I start out small, a whisper from below.

Spring: I ask the dark, “Where do I go?”

Brook: “Where do I go?” I ask it, and descend,

Brook: a tributary joins me at the bend.

Stream: “Where do I go?” I ask, and tumble in the spray,

Stream: and erode the bed and roll the pebbles away.

Falls: “Where do I go?” I ask, and then I leap,

Falls: a cold and ringing drop the shadows cannot keep.

Rapids: “Where do I go?” I roar, accelerate through stones,

Rapids: and carry silt and mud and gravel in my bones.

Bend: “Where do I go?” I ask, and slow and swing,

Bend: a lazy meander where the kingfisher takes wing.

Mouth: I reach the estuary, a vast slow spread,

Mouth: and leave my sediment upon the delta bed.

Mouth: The sea says, “Welcome. Rest.” I settle in the deep,

Mouth: and my question finds its answer, and I fall asleep.

Rain: The sun lifts me to vapour, light and clear.

Rain: I gather into clouds and condense up here.

Rain: I fall upon the hills as rain, and then,

Spring: I start out small, a whisper, once again.



The Water's Question

Rhyming poem · Nature & Seasons · 20 lines · 8 voices · 178 words · about 2 minutes at Oak pace · rhymes: below/go · descend/bend · spray/away · leap/keep · stones/bones · swing/wing · spread/bed · deep/asleep · clear/here · then/again

One question travels down a line of eight voices.

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Each speaker takes "Where do I go?" from the one before and hands it on. The poem speeds up to the Rapids, slows to the sea, then rises as rain and starts again. The class must feel the speed change.

Day 1 · Hear It – then Grow It begins

about 25 min · whole class + partner talk

Perform

ADULT · MY TURN
2 min

Read the whole poem, eyes on the class. Stand eight children in a line as a map of the river while you read, so the class sees the question travel. **SPRING** whisper · **RAPIDS** roar · **MOUTH** wide and slow · **RAIN** light and rising. Get faster to the Rapids, then slow right down.

Partner Talk

CHILDREN · YOUR TURN
4 min

What is the water's question? then **Does it get an answer?** Listen for: the sea says rest, then it starts again as rain.
meander hold up the word card. "To meander is to wander along in lazy bends." Everyone draws a lazy S in the air with a finger.

Reader Talk

ADULT · MY TURN
5 min

Read again, children following on the screen. Say out loud three choices, no more:
1. "The first line says whisper, so I whispered it." (line 1)
2. "The Rapids roar, and accelerate means speed up, so I got louder and faster." (line 9)
3. "The sea says three short things, so I stopped after each one." (line 15)

Partner Talk

CHILDREN · YOUR TURN
4 min

How would the Bend say "and slow and swing"? Try it on your partner. Then: **Which speaker is the loudest, and which is the quietest?** (Rapids, Spring)
Ask two pairs to show their Rapids. Pick the one that speeds up.

Echo Read

MY TURN, YOUR TURN
8 min

One line at a time, fully expressed. Children copy the voice, not just the words. Split the long lines into two chunks (marked on the teacher's copy). Everyone says "Where do I go?" together each time it appears. Finish with one whole-class read of the Rain verse.

Days 2–5 · the one decision for each day

5–10 min a day

DAY 2 · GROW IT

Cold Choral + Echo

Likely wobbles, echo only these:
line 4 tributary · line 9 accelerate
line 13 estuary · line 14 sediment
line 17 vapour · line 18 condense

DAY 3 · GROW IT

Guided Choral

Chase one feature: **the repeated question is in speech marks, so it is said out loud.**
Put It Together: eight groups, one speaker each, standing in river order.

DAY 4 · GROW IT

Partner Read + Kind Tip

Tips to model first:
"Speed up through the Rapids."
"Make the sea sound kind."
"End exactly as you began."

DAY 5 · SHOW IT

Perform in a line

SPRING to **MOUTH**
seven groups in a line across the stage, upstream to downstream
RAIN a group at the back who walk to the front as they speak
SPRING whispers the last line.

WATCH FOR

Tricky words: descend silent c · accelerate the cc says /ks/ · meander the e and a say two sounds · vapour the our says /er/ · says the ay says /e/ · answer silent w · again the ai says /e/. The river words are long, not tricky: use the syllable stacks before Day 2.
Children may run the question into the line that follows. Point to the closing speech mark and breathe there.

YEAR 4 LINKS

Prepare poems to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action · discuss words and phrases that capture the reader's interest.
Geography: rivers and the water cycle. By Friday most of the class should be able to name the eight speakers in order from memory.



The Water's Question

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

1	SPRING	I start out small, / a whisper from below. ^a	A real whisper. Crouch low.
2	SPRING	I ask the dark, / "Where do I go?" ^a	The question everyone will repeat. Up at the end.
3	BROOK	"Where do I go?" I ask it, / and descend, ^b	Take the question and pass it on. Hands slope down.
4	BROOK	a tributary joins me at the bend. ^b	Two hands join. Echo in two chunks.
5	STREAM	"Where do I go?" I ask, / and tumble in the spray, ^c	Quicker. Bouncing. Splash on spray.
6	STREAM	and erode the bed and roll the pebbles away. ^c	Grinding hands on erode. Word card. Echo in two chunks.
7	FALLS	"Where do I go?" I ask, / and then I leap, ^d	Pause before leap. Then jump the voice.
8	FALLS	a cold and ringing drop the shadows cannot keep. ^d	Ringing is bright and clear. Echo in two chunks.
9	RAPIDS	"Where do I go?" I roar, / accelerate through stones, ^e	Loudest speaker. Roar is a roar. Accelerate speeds up.
10	RAPIDS	and carry silt and mud and gravel in my bones. ^e	Heavy, rolling. Stamp on silt, mud, gravel.
11	BEND	"Where do I go?" I ask, / and slow / and swing, ^f	Everything slows. Sway on swing.
12	BEND	a lazy meander where the kingfisher takes wing. ^f	Lazy and long. Word card. A quick flick of the hand for the bird.
13	MOUTH	I reach the estuary, / a vast slow spread, ^g	Wide arms. Slow and wide.
14	MOUTH	and leave my sediment upon the delta bed. ^g	Settling. Hands sink. Echo in two chunks.
15	MOUTH	The sea says, / "Welcome. / Rest." / I settle in the deep, ^h	A new voice for the sea: warm and low. Three pauses.
16	MOUTH	and my question finds its answer, / and I fall asleep. // ^h	Softest line. Long pause. Eyes close.
17	RAIN	The sun lifts me to vapour, / light and clear. ⁱ	Light and rising. Hands lift.
18	RAIN	I gather into clouds and condense up here. ⁱ	Hands gather. Echo in two chunks.
19	RAIN	I fall upon the hills as rain, / and then, ^j	Fingertip rain. Then wait: hand it back to Spring.
20	SPRING	I start out small, / a whisper, / once again. ^j	Back to a whisper. Same crouch as line 1.

MARKS ON THIS PAGE

/ short pause // long pause word say it stronger word tricky to read word vocabulary | echo-read chunk
^a rhyming pair SPRING BROOK STREAM FALLS RAPIDS BEND MOUTH RAIN who is speaking



VOCABULARY

meander

to wander along in slow, lazy bends

FROM THE POEM · THE WATER'S QUESTION

“a lazy **meander** where the kingfisher takes wing”

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Reading Fluency



Action: Draw a lazy S in the air



VOCABULARY

erode

to wear something away,
little by little

FROM THE POEM · THE WATER'S QUESTION

“and **erode** the bed and roll the pebbles away”

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Reading Fluency



Action: Rub one palm slowly across the other



The Water's Question

Syllable stacks · At Oak the stacks build every word of three syllables or more.

Read each stack from the top. Clap one beat for every part, then say the whole word, then find it in the poem.

trib-
trib-u-
trib-u-ta-
trib-u-ta-ry
tributary

ac-
ac-cel-
ac-cel-er-
ac-cel-er-ate
accelerate

me-
me-an-
me-an-der
meander

king-
king-fish-
king-fish-er
kingfisher

es-
es-tu-
es-tu-a-
es-tu-a-ry
estuary

sed-
sed-i-
sed-i-ment
sediment



Big and Small

Performance poem · Nature & Seasons · Big · Small



- Big:** I am the endless ocean. I swallow up the sun.
Big: I drink the day entire, and then the day is done.
- Small:** You swallow the sun, but I keep a smaller sky.
Small: I am the puddle holding the light until I'm dry.
- Big:** I am the blizzard, tearing the tiles from the town.
Big: I am the tempest that knocks the whole field down.
- Small:** I am the drop that falls from your stormy sky.
Small: One drop, and the smallest shoot reaches high.
- Big:** I am the solitary summit, wearing snow.
Big: I've stood and watched a thousand winters come and go.
- Small:** I am the pebble your summit wore away.
Small: I was the mountain once. The stream made me this way.
- Big:** I am the forest, a gigantic canopy of green.
Big: I hold the whole wood up, and I have always been.
- Small:** I am one seed, and I split to find the light.
Small: Your whole wood began when I stood up from the night.
- Big:** I am the galaxy, a million stars in space.
Big: I am the orbit that swings the planets into place.
- Small:** I am one photon of light, a tiny spark.
Small: I reach your eye across the whole wide dark.

Both halves fall silent.



Big and Small

Performance poem · Nature & Seasons · 20 lines · 5 rounds · 194 words · about 2 minutes at Sycamore pace · rhymes: sun/done · sky/dry · town/down · sky/high · snow/go · away/way · green/been · light/night · space/place · spark/dark

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Two choruses: Big booms, Small answers back.

Big gets grander every verse: ocean, storm, mountain, forest, galaxy. Small never shouts. Small wins by getting quieter and more certain, and the last line must be the stillest in the poem.

Day 1 · Hear It – then Grow It begins

about 25 min · whole class + partner talk

Perform

ADULT · MY TURN
2 min

Read the whole poem, eyes on the class. Give each chorus a voice: **BIG** huge, slow, chest out, arms wide · **SMALL** light, quick, sure of itself. Let Big get louder each verse and Small get quieter. Stop dead after the last line and hold the silence.

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

Who wins? then **How does Small answer the galaxy?** Listen for: one photon, one tiny bit of light that reaches your eye. **tempest** hold up the word card. “A tempest is a wild, violent storm.” Everyone makes a tempest with their arms, then freezes.

Reader Talk

ADULT · MY TURN
5 min

Read again, children following on the screen. Say out loud three choices, no more:
1. “Big says I am the endless ocean, so I made my voice as wide as I could.” (line 1)
2. “Small is only a drop, but reaches high, so my voice climbed on that word.” (line 8)
3. “The last line has no exclamation mark. Small does not need to shout.” (line 20)

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

How would Small say “I was the mountain once”? Try it on your partner. Then: **Which Big line is the biggest?** (line 17)
Ask two pairs to show their Small voice. Pick the one that sounds most certain.

Echo Read

MY TURN, YOUR
TURN
8 min

One line at a time, fully expressed. Children copy the voice, not just the words. Split the long lines into two chunks (marked on the teacher’s copy). From line 13 both halves speak at once, so echo those lines as two groups. Finish with one whole-class read of the last verse, then silence.

Days 2–5 · the one decision for each day

5–10 min a day

DAY 2 · GROW IT

Cold Choral + Echo

Likely wobbles, echo only these:
line 1 ocean · line 5 tearing the tiles
line 9 solitary summit
line 13 gigantic canopy · line 19 photon

DAY 3 · GROW IT

Guided Choral

Chase one feature: **every Big line starts I am. Small’s answer starts small.**
Put It Together: two halves of the room. From line 13, both at once, and still make sense.

DAY 4 · GROW IT

Partner Read + Kind Tip

Tips to model first:
“Make Big bigger each verse.”
“Make Small quieter, not weaker.”
“Hold the silence at the end.”

DAY 5 · SHOW IT

Perform in two halves

BIG half the class, standing, arms wide
SMALL half the class, seated in front, still
Both halves freeze on the last word and count five before they bow.

WATCH FOR

Tricky words: ocean the c says /sh/ · tearing wearing the ear says /air/ · knocks silent k · whole silent w · mountain the ai says /uh/ · photon the ph says /f/ · eye. The big words are long, not tricky: use the syllable stacks.
Children may make Small loud to compete. Ask them to say line 20 as if telling a secret, and see which version the room listens to.

YEAR 5 LINKS

Prepare poems to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience · learn a wider range of poetry by heart.
Science: Earth and space. By Friday most of the class should be able to say their half of the poem from memory.



Big and Small

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

1	BIG	I am the endless ocean . / I swallow up the sun. a	Huge, slow, chest out. Arms sweep wide.
2	BIG	I drink the day entire, / and then the day is done. a	Satisfied. Done is final.
3	SMALL	You swallow the sun, / but I keep a smaller sky. b	Light, quick, a little cheeky.
4	SMALL	I am the puddle holding the light until I'm dry. b	Cup two hands. Echo in two chunks.
5	BIG	I am the blizzard, / tearing the tiles from the town. c	Faster, harsher. Tearing has teeth.
6	BIG	I am the tempest / that knocks the whole field down. c	Word card. Punch down on down.
7	SMALL	I am the drop / that falls from your stormy sky. d	One finger falls. Quiet.
8	SMALL	One drop, / and the smallest shoot reaches high . d	Reaches high climbs up. Finger rises.
9	BIG	I am the solitary summit, / wearing snow. e	Cold and proud. Word card. Stand tall and still.
10	BIG	I've stood and watched a thousand winters come and go. e	Slow. Ancient. Echo in two chunks.
11	SMALL	I am the pebble your summit wore away. f	Small and sure. Echo in two chunks.
12	SMALL	I was the mountain once. / The stream made me this way. f	Almost gentle. This is a true thing.
13	BIG	I am the forest, / a gigantic canopy of green. g	Both halves at once from here. Arms up like branches.
14	BIG	I hold the whole wood up, / and I have always been. g	Always is the boast.
15	SMALL	I am one seed, / and I split to find the light. h	Hands closed, then open on split.
16	SMALL	Your whole wood began when I stood up from the night. h	Standing taller on stood up. Echo in two chunks.
17	BIG	I am the galaxy, / a million stars in space. i	The biggest boast of all. Slow. Vast.
18	BIG	I am the orbit that swings the planets into place. i	Swinging arm on swings. Echo in two chunks.
19	SMALL	I am one photon of light, / a tiny spark. j	Quietest Small line yet. A pinch of the fingers on spark.
20	SMALL	I reach your eye / across the whole wide dark . //	Slow. Point at the audience on your eye. Then silence.

MARKS ON THIS PAGE

/ short pause // long pause word say it stronger word tricky to read **word** vocabulary | echo-read chunk
a rhyming pair **BIG** **SMALL** who is speaking



VOCABULARY

tempest

a wild and violent storm

FROM THE POEM · BIG AND SMALL

“I am the **tempest** that knocks the whole field down.”

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Action: Whirl both arms, then freeze



VOCABULARY

solitary

all alone, with nothing else near

FROM THE POEM · BIG AND SMALL

“I am the **solitary** summit, wearing snow.”

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Reading Fluency



Action: Stand tall and still, hands by your sides



Big and Small

Syllable stacks · At Sycamore the stacks build every word of three syllables or more.

Read each stack from the top. Clap one beat for every part, then say the whole word, then find it in the poem.

sol-
sol-i-
sol-i-ta-
sol-i-ta-ry
solitary

gi-
gi-gan-
gi-gan-tic
gigantic

can-
can-o-
can-o-py
canopy

gal-
gal-ax-
gal-ax-y
galaxy



I Used to Wonder

Narrative poem · Family · Solo · Chorus



Solo: I asked why blue was blue and why the grass was green.

Chorus: Why is the sky blue, and not the grass as well?

Solo: I asked where the dark goes in the morning light.

Chorus: Where does the dark go to sleep while the sun is out?

Solo: I asked why the moon walks with us to bed.

Chorus: Why does the moon follow when we walk home?

Solo: I asked how the rain knows the exact minute to begin.

Chorus: Why does the sea keep pushing at the sand all day?

Solo: Then I learned the answers. The blue is scattered light,

Solo: scattered by the atmosphere, a spectrum, sharp and bright.

Solo: The moon does not follow. It only seems to roam;

Solo: its distance is so vast it walks beside us home.

Solo: The dark does not hide. The planet simply swings around.

Solo: The rain begins its cycle when vapour cools and falls to ground.

Chorus: But why does the sky want to be blue at all?

Solo: I thought an answer was the end of asking.

Solo: So I grew clever, and I put my wonder down.

Chorus: I will not put it down. I ask the sky again.

Solo: Then my little sister looked up and asked me why.

Solo: I opened my mouth to say the clever thing.

Solo: But the words went wrong. The blue would not behave.

Solo: I knew how blue was made. I was never asked why.

Chorus: Why is there blue at all, and not just white?

Solo: And the old question climbed back up my throat.

Solo: And I asked it out loud, the way my sister does.

Chorus: Why is the sky blue at all?

Solo: Why is the sky blue at all?



I Used to Wonder

Narrative poem · Family · 27 lines · 4 verses · 272 words · about 2½ minutes at Cedar pace · free verse · one rhyming pair in verse 2

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

One voice grows up and stops asking. The Chorus never does.

The Solo has two voices: the child who asked, and the clever older child who has the answers. The Chorus keeps asking. The turn comes when the little sister asks why and the answers stop working.

Day 1 · Hear It – then Grow It begins

about 25 min · whole class + partner talk

Perform

ADULT · MY TURN
2 min

Read the whole poem, eyes on the class. **SOLO** warm and fond in verse 1, cool and clever in verse 2, unsteady in verse 3 · **CHORUS** young voices, really asking, never mocking. Long pause after “Then I learned the answers.” Say the last line exactly as the Chorus said it.

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

What changed in the Solo between verse 1 and verse 2? then **Why can't the Solo answer the little sister?** Listen for: knowing how is not the same as knowing why.

scattered hold up the word card. “Scattered means thrown out in every direction. The air scatters blue light across the whole sky.” Everyone scatters seeds with one hand.

Reader Talk

ADULT · MY TURN
5 min

Read again, children following on the screen. Say out loud three choices, no more:

1. “Verse 2 is full of science, so I read it like a textbook, cooler and quicker.” (line 10)
2. “The Chorus says not, so I made that the strongest word in the poem.” (line 18)
3. “The last two lines are the same words, so I made them sound exactly the same.” (lines 26 and 27)

Partner Talk

CHILDREN ·
YOUR TURN
4 min

How would the Solo say “The blue would not behave”? Try it on your partner. Then: **Where does the Solo change from clever to unsure?** (line 21)

Ask two pairs to show the last two lines. Pick the pair that matches best.

Echo Read

MY TURN, YOUR
TURN
8 min

One line at a time, fully expressed. Children copy the voice, not just the words. Split the long lines into two chunks (marked on the teacher's copy). Echo verse 2 quickly and verse 3 slowly. Finish with one whole-class read of the last two lines.

Days 2–5 · the one decision for each day

5–10 min a day

DAY 2 · GROW IT

Cold Choral + Echo

Likely wobbles, echo only these:
line 7 the exact minute · line
10 atmosphere, spectrum
line 14 vapour cools
line 21 would not behave

DAY 3 · GROW IT

Guided Choral

Chase one feature: **the Solo's voice changes at each stage direction.**
Put It Together: one strong reader as Solo, the class as Chorus. Then swap Solo.

DAY 4 · GROW IT

Partner Read + Kind Tip

Tips to model first:
“Make verse 2 sound like a textbook.”
“Make not the strongest word.”
“Say the last line like the Chorus did.”

DAY 5 · SHOW IT

Perform with one Solo

SOLO one reader, standing apart, or three readers who take a verse each
CHORUS the whole class, seated, looking up
The Solo turns to face the Chorus for the last line.

WATCH FOR

Tricky words: exact the x says /gz/ · minute the ute says /it/ · learned the ear says /er/ · pushing the u says /oo/ · atmosphere the ph says /f/ · thought the ough says /or/ · wrong silent w · knows knew silent k · climbed silent b.
Children may read the Chorus as nagging. It is wonder, not a complaint. Model line 23 as gently as you can and ask what changed.

YEAR 6 LINKS

Prepare poems to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience · discuss and evaluate how authors use language.
Science: light. By Friday most of the class should be able to say all six Chorus questions from memory.



I Used to Wonder

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

1	SOLO	I asked why blue was blue / and why the grass was green.	Looking back. Warm, a little amused.
2	CHORUS	Why is the sky blue, / and not the grass as well?	Young voices, really asking. Up at the end.
3	SOLO	I asked where the dark goes in the morning light.	Echo in two chunks. Still fond.
4	CHORUS	Where does the dark go to sleep / while the sun is out?	Curious. Sleep is soft.
5	SOLO	I asked why the moon / walks with us to bed.	Slower. Walks with us is tender.
6	CHORUS	Why does the moon follow / when we walk home?	Insistent. Follow stronger.
7	SOLO	I asked how the rain knows the exact minute to begin.	Echo in two chunks. Exact is precise.
8	CHORUS	Why does the sea keep pushing at the sand / all day?	A little impatient now. All day drawn out.
9	SOLO	Then I learned the answers. // The blue is scattered light,	A change of voice: cooler, cleverer. Long pause after answers. Word card.
10	SOLO	scattered by the atmosphere, / a spectrum, sharp and bright. ^a	Like reading from a textbook. Word card on spectrum.
11	SOLO	The moon does not follow. / It only seems to roam;	Correcting. A teacher's voice.
12	SOLO	its distance is so vast it walks beside us home. ^a	Echo in two chunks. Vast is wide and slow.
13	SOLO	The dark does not hide. / The planet simply swings around.	Simply is dismissive. A small wave of the hand.
14	SOLO	The rain begins its cycle when vapour cools and falls to ground.	Fast, fluent, a little bored. Echo in two chunks.



I Used to Wonder (continued)

SUGGESTED · READ IT LIKE THIS

15	CHORUS	But why does the sky / want to be blue at all?	Cutting in. Why is the strongest word so far.
16	SOLO	I thought an answer / was the end of asking.	Quieter. Admitting something.
17	SOLO	So I grew clever, / and I put my wonder down.	Put it down: hands lower something to the floor.
18	CHORUS	I will not put it down. / I ask the sky again.	Defiant. Not is the loudest Chorus word. Chins up.
19	SOLO	Then my little sister looked up / and asked me why.	Narrating now. Look up on looked up.
20	SOLO	I opened my mouth / to say the clever thing.	Mouth opens on opened. A beat.
21	SOLO	But the words went wrong . / The blue would not behave.	Stumbling a little on purpose.
22	SOLO	I knew how blue was made. / I was never asked why .	How and why are the two poles of the poem. Weight both.
23	CHORUS	Why is there blue at all, / and not just white?	Gentle now. Real wonder, not a demand.
24	SOLO	And the old question / climbed back up my throat.	Hand rises from chest to throat on climbed.
25	SOLO	And I asked it out loud, / the way my sister does. //	Turning to the Chorus. Long pause before the last two lines.
26	CHORUS	Why is the sky blue / at all?	Together, open, unhurried.
27	SOLO	Why is the sky blue / at all?	Exactly the same music as the Chorus. Then hold the look.

MARKS ON THIS PAGE

/ short pause // long pause **word** say it stronger **word** tricky to read **word** vocabulary | echo-read chunk
 a rhyming pair **SOLO** **CHORUS** who is speaking



VOCABULARY



Reading Fluency

scattered

thrown out in every direction



FROM THE POEM · I USED TO WONDER

“The blue is scattered light”

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Action: Fling seeds from one hand



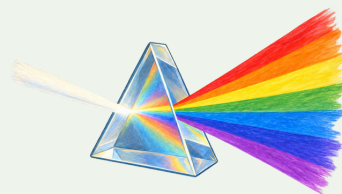
VOCABULARY



Reading Fluency

spectrum

the whole band of colours that light is made of



FROM THE POEM · I USED TO WONDER

“a spectrum, sharp and bright”

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Action: Sweep one hand in an arc like a rainbow



I Used to Wonder

Syllable stacks · At Cedar the stacks build every word of three syllables or more, then the tricky two-syllable words.

Read each stack from the top. Clap one beat for every part, then say the whole word, then find it in the poem.

at-
at-mos-
at-mos-phere
atmosphere

scat-
scat-tered
scattered

spec-
spec-trum
spectrum

va-
va-pour
vapour

be-
be-have
behave

dis-
dis-tance
distance



Seven of many

This booklet is one set from Dawn Chorus Poetry, the poem-of-the-week strand of the Reading Fluency programme. Every stage from Willow to Cedar has many more poems, and each one comes with the same week around it: the plan, the teacher's marked copy, the vocabulary cards and the syllable stacks.

WHAT THE SUBSCRIPTION ADDS

Every poem, every stage

The whole Dawn Chorus library, Willow to Cedar, with a poem-of-the-week planner to run the year.

On the whiteboard

Interactive whiteboard tools for every poem, so the class reads from the screen together.

Ready for the warm-up

Syllable stacks for every poem, on screen and one tap from the text.

Marked copies

Teacher's marked copies with voices, pauses and echo chunks, with more being added.



Scan to find out more

readingfluency.co.uk

The full Dawn Chorus library is for subscribers.



Willow



Hazel



Yew



Chestnut



Oak



Sycamore



Cedar

If this booklet reached you second-hand, welcome. This is where it came from.