

2. Choose a starting point, and ask the participant(s) to give you a first sentence. You may need to make some suggestions to start this part of the activity off. Here are some examples.

Stories from the past

- If someone went on holiday to Lower Largo, you could create a list poem with them which describes the things they liked to do, which could begin something like this:

At Lower Largo I ate fish and chips
At Lower Largo I played hide and seek
At Lower Largo I rode on a horse
Etc....

Stories from the present day

- You could have a discussion about the things that people like to see when they go out for a walk. It could begin something like this:

I saw a blackbird hopping on the lawn
I saw a squirrel running up a tree
I saw the children leaving school
Etc...

Stories from the future

- You could talk about people's plans for spending time with their families. Your poem might begin something like this:

I will...
Listen to their stories
Give them a hug
Take them for a walk
Etc...

One participant can create several sentences, or several participants can create one or two sentences each. You can then combine the sentences to create a poem.

THEY MAKE ME SMILE AND FEEL FREE OF
WORRY AND CARE, NOSTALGIC AND HAPPY.
I CAN'T FIND OTHER WORDS.

3. Record the poem in a way which provides a good experience for all the participants. This might involve writing it down, or using a smartphone or tablet to make a sound recording.

You can publish the poems in various ways; online, as a display or exhibition or, as a booklet. They can also be used to stimulate conversation among participants, their visitors and other residents.

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Poetry writing

WHEN I WAS A CHILD I WOULD
TRANSLATE THE SOUNDS OF THE
GARDEN. THEY WOULD SWOOP
DOWN TO FEED. THEY ATE
CRUMBS, OFTEN SECONDS AND
THIRDS, THEY HOPPED, PECKED
AND PICKED UP EVERY WEE
SEED. TODAY I WATCH THEM
THROUGH THE WINDOW. I SEE
THEM GOING HIGH UP IN THE
SKY. I WATCH THEM PECK AT
THE CRUMBS.
THEY GO AWAY IN THE
BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS AND
THE SEASONS MAY CHANGE
THEY WILL ALWAYS BE

This activity enables participants to write a type of poetry called “list poems” by drawing on memories, everyday events and future plans. Writing poetry can seem daunting, but this is a very simple activity that anyone can do.

List poems are very simple poems which contain a list of things. They can rhyme but they don't have to and lines can be repeated. Some list poems have lines that begin with the same words.

The conversations you have with participants can help to create this simple type of poetry. It can be done in groups or as a one-to-one activity.



Here's a simple example, which includes rhymes (but remember yours doesn't have to!).

Cats Sleep Anywhere

Cats sleep anywhere, any table,
any chair.

Top of piano, window-ledge, in the
middle, on the edge.

Open draw, empty shoe, anybody's
lap will do.

Fitted in a cardboard box, in the
cupboard with your frocks.

Anywhere! They don't care!

Cats sleep anywhere.

Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)

Ingredients

- A quiet space that allows people to hear and be heard easily.
- Plan enough time for the activity. This can vary from 10 – 15 minutes for a one-to-one activity or up to an hour for a group.
- Something to record the poems you create, either in writing or through a sound recording with a smart phone, tablet or other device.

Method

1. Choose a subject to discuss, by encouraging residents to make suggestions based on their own interests, experiences, hopes and dreams. Here are some examples.

The past – a home, holiday, garden, dancing, cinema, restaurants, friends, relatives, neighbours, pets.

The present – visitors, meals, birds, flowers in the garden, stories in the papers or on the news.

The future – plans, hopes and dreams (include festivals and birthdays).

CATS SLEEP ANYWHERE, ANY TABLE, ANY
CHAIR. TOP OF PIANO, WINDOW-LEDGE
MIDDLE, ON THE EDGE. OF
SHOE, ANYBODY'S