

A POET IN EVERY PORT

The National Poetry Library is on the move this summer for A Poet in Every Port, celebrating the UK's diverse array of dialects, accents, words and languages! Come in, take a look around and then write your very own poem.

Write your own Word Exchange poem

Everyone's got a poem in them. Just put pen to paper and let it flow.

Word Exchange poems are short poems that celebrate the words, sayings, languages, accents and dialects from where you live. The 'exchange' happens when you:

- Compare words you use with words that parents, carers, grandparents or younger people use.
- Reflect on the words you continue to use that were passed down from older generations.
- Revive lesser-used words from the past by placing them in a new piece of writing. A Word Exchange poem recognises your dialect as part of the history of language.
- Think about the newest words you've discovered in recent years.

A Poet in Every Port's ambassador is the much-loved poet Roger McGough, hailing from Liverpool – here's his Word Exchange poem to inspire you to write your own!

Poetry, the big fish in the Pool of Life Roger McGough

And we should know, we invented the word
As well as kecks, cob ons and the Liver Bird

Antwacky, clobber, bevy and sliced bread
Footy of course, both Blue and Red

Scallywags, woolybacks, scran and whoppers
Jiggers, blerts, and bizzies for coppers

I'm nesh and it's baltic, chucking it down
So ta-ra for now, I'll see yiz round town.

*(Enjoyed writing that, the words seemed to flow
Dialects can be fun, why not give it a go?)*

Warm-up activities (choose at least one):

- **Dialect dash:** Write down as many local or family-specific words as you can (e.g. nicknames for places or food, local pronunciations, slang terms specific to your school/workplace/community, older words you don't hear anymore).
- **Word detective:** Ask someone older or younger than you the question: 'What words have you used, or still use, that I may not have heard of?' Write down their answers.

Write your answers here

It's time to write!

Try to make your poem ten lines long and include up to five 'old' words and up to five 'new' words. This will bring your poem to life and make it unique to you.

Feeling a bit stuck? Try writing a line for each of these prompts:

1. Introduce a local dialect word you love or use a lot.
2. A description of how someone else (older, younger, or from another region) would say that word.
3. Describe your street or town using a dialect word.
4. A sound you hear locally.
5. Introduce a local tradition.
6. Write a line about a food, object or place addressed by its local name.
7. A short memory connected with your area.
8. Repeat a word or phrase from earlier in the poem.
9. What's something in your local area that makes you feel proud?
10. Imagine how the local dialect might evolve in the future.

- Don't worry about perfect grammar.
- Play with rhythm or repetition.
- Try freewriting: write continuously for a few minutes without stopping to edit. This helps you channel your natural voice and use interesting words or phrases you might not use otherwise.
- Highlight local pride: include words that show what's unique or special about your area.
- Mix generations: combine words you use with words older or younger people use to see how they sound together.

Write your poem here

All done?

Drop your poem into the post box in the mobile library for it to be archived in the National Poetry Library's collection. It's home to the largest collection of contemporary poetry in the UK!

Want to record it instead? Come aboard and try out the sound booth!

Snap a photo of your poem and share it on social media using the hashtag **#APoetinEveryPort**.

Are you an aspiring poet or writer? Want to get on stage and perform your poem? Use the QR code to visit the website to find out more and enter the national A Poet in Every Port competition.

A poem needs a poet. Sign your work to become part of the national collection.

Name: _____ Age: _____ Postcode: _____

By submitting this worksheet, I agree to my poem being retained in the National Poetry Library's archive.

- I also give permission for my poem to be shared on social media, considered for the A Poet in Every Port curated anthology and for me to be contacted if selected.

Email: _____



Scan the QR code to join the National Poetry Library (for free!) and to find out more about A Poet in Every Port

SOUTH BANK CENTRE

Post your poem in the box