

LETTERS HOME

THE FIRST WORLD WAR POETRY KIT

THE FIRST WORLD WAR
CHANGED THE WAY
WE LIVE

EVEN NEW WAYS
TO WRITE POEMS
WERE CREATED

THIS BOOK
CONTAINS WORD GAMES
THAT WILL HELP US LEARN
ABOUT SOME OF THIS
NEW POETRY

THE STABBED DOVE AND THE FOUNTAIN

Gentle faces st^a ^b ^e ^d **D**ear flowered lips
 MIA MAREYE
 YETTE and you
 ANNIE MARIE
 where are
 you oh
 young girls
 BUT
 near a
 fountain that
 weeps and prays
 this dove is enraptured

All memories of long ago
 Oh my friends who have gone to war
 Spring upward toward the skies
 And in stagnant pools
 With melancholy
 Where have Bruegel and Max Jacob died
 Derain with eyes as grey as dawn
 Where are Raynal Billy Dalize
 Whose names in a cathedral
 Like footsteps in a cathedral
 Gemlitz who enlisted
 Perhaps already dead
 Fountain weep for my sorrow

THOSE WHO LEFT FOR THE WAR IN THE NORTH ARE FIGHTING NOW
 Evening falls **O** bloody sea
 Gardens where rose-laurel warlike flower bleeds in abundance

Guillaume Apollinaire - The Stabbed Dove and the Fountain
 Calligrams / Guillaume Apollinaire ; translated from the French by Anne Hyde Greet
 Published: [United States] : Unicorn Press, 1973.

CALLIGRAMME

find out more

LETTER

GAME

1

The French poet Guillaume Apollinaire was a soldier in the First World War. He sent letters home with poems on that also look like pictures.

What shapes can you see in Apollinaire's poem?

Can you make your own shape poem?

Writing Tips:

You can make your poem from words that exist in another poem, or words from any book.

Only use the words you need to make your poem.

You can change the meaning of a poem by making it a different shape.

2

BLESS the **HAIRDRESSER.**

He attacks Mother Nature for a small fee.
Hourly he ploughs heads for sixpence,
Scours chins and lips for threepence.
He makes systematic mercenary war on this
WILDNESS.

He trims aimless and retrograde growths
into **CLEAN ARCHED SHAPES** and
ANGULAR PLOTS.

BLESS this **HESSIAN** (or **SILESIA**N) **EXPERT**

correcting the grotesque anachronisms
of our physique.

LETTER
GAME

Some artists thought words in books should show lots of energy.

2 This time, draw your own letters from the alphabet that are full of energy.

(There's an example on the next page)

Drawing Tips:

You can pick just a few letters of the alphabet or split the letters between different people. You don't have to do the whole alphabet.

You can use real objects. Can you make letters by bending paper clips, joining dot patterns on a dice, or stretching rubber bands between your fingers?

You can be inspired by other things that are full of energy like tornadoes, water, lightning, and stars.



Trench (bold,italic), 2010
© Henningham Family Press

In this example the Henningham Family Press were inspired by the Vorticists to make an ABC that looks like the trenches soldiers lived in.

Some poets thought poems had become too wordy and had too many rules.

3

Now read this poem by Richard Aldington:

'Insouciance'

In and out of the dreary trenches
Trudging cheerily under the stars
I make for myself little poems
Delicate as a flock of doves.

They fly away like white-winged doves.

Collected Poems 1915 - 1923, London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1933

Can you describe a moment that you remember from your life?

Writing Tips:

Try making your description into a poem by taking words away, using punctuation and adding spaces.

Try not to use any words that you don't need. Be quick!

Try and write a poem that has its own rhythm. It doesn't have to rhyme or have rules about the number of words or sounds in each line.

IMAGISM

find out more

Some poets were angry that words had been used to start the First World War.

Hugo Ball expressed his anger writing sound poems that made little sense. You can see a picture of him reading on the next page.

Now you are going to make your own sound poem. Either invent your own words or change the words from another poem.

Writing Tips:

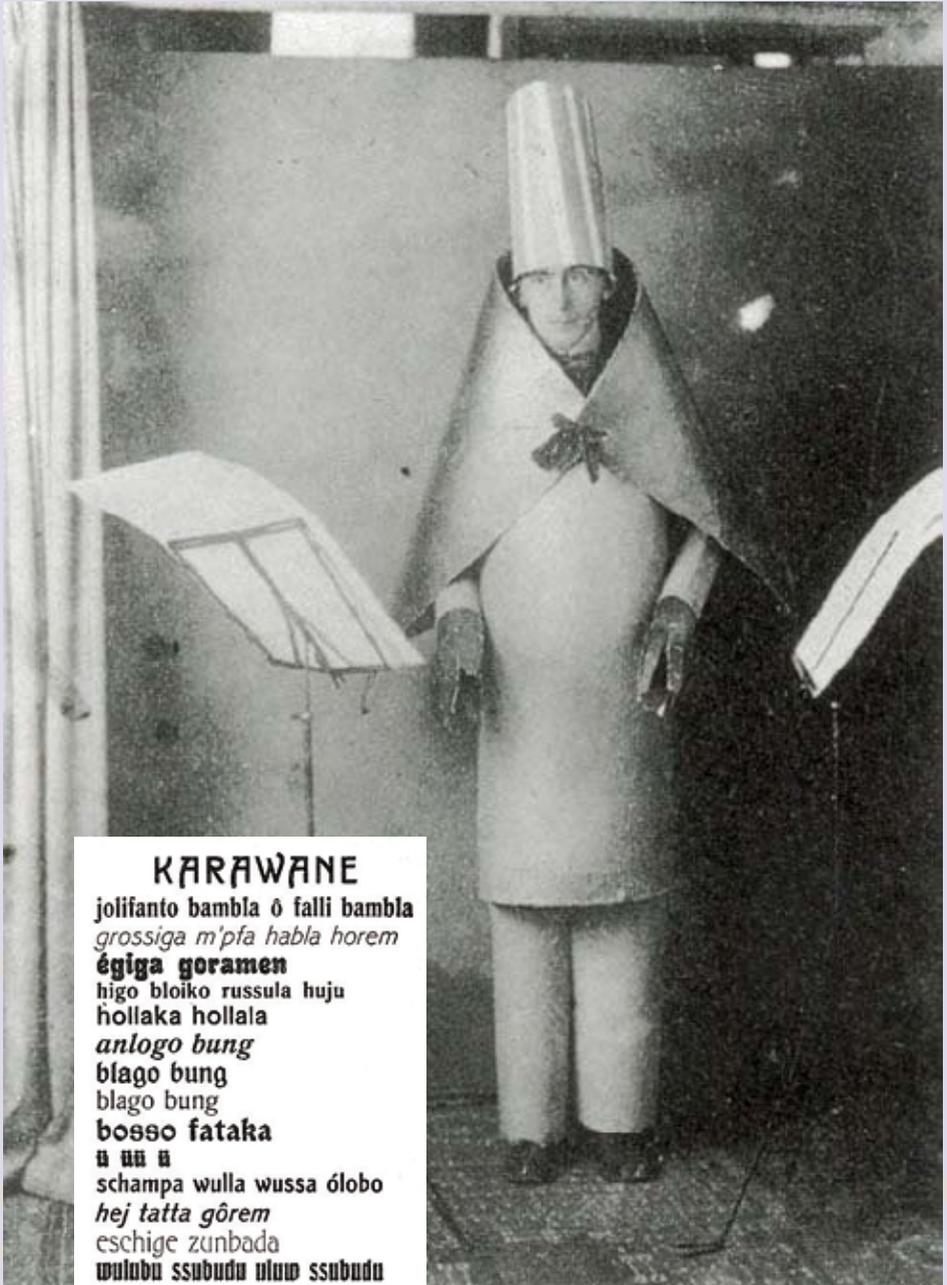
Make noises together in pairs first before trying to write them down.

If using a poem by someone else remove either all of the vowels or all of the consonants in their poem and see what you are left with.

Can you make it funny, sad or beautiful? Does it make your language feel fresh? Does it feel annoying? How well can you communicate?

DADA

find out more



KARAWANE

jolifanto bambla ò falli bambla
grossiga m'pfa habla horem
égiga goramen
higo bloiko russula huju
hollaka hollala
anlogo bung
blago bung
blago bung
bosso fataka
ü ü ü
schampa wulla wussa ólobo
hej tatta görem
eschige zunbada
wulubu ssubudu uluw ssubudu
tumba ba- umf
kusagauma
ba - umf

Hugo Ball wearing a tin suit and reading his Dada poem 'Karawane'.

Public Domain

Words build poems, but they also help us build peace by working together.

DNA is the structure our bodies use to build themselves. We are now going to copy the way DNA works to build 3D shape poems together.

You will need 12 short pieces of card (3 each of blue, red, yellow and green), 2 longer strips of card, and some tape.

Step 1: Decide together on 4 different kinds of words to go on 4 different coloured cards. These rules can be anything.

For example, Blue cards could be for words that rhyme with 'cheese', Yellow cards could be for verbs (action words), Red cards could be for names that begin with 'D', and Green cards could be for words of three syllables.

You can write your rules down like this:

Blue:

Yellow:

Red:

Green:

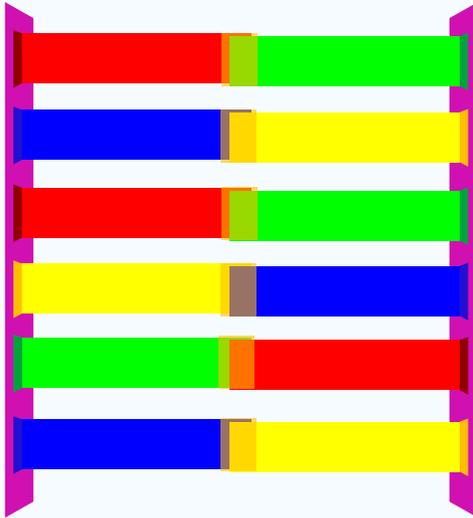
Step 2: Write out the best words you can think of on the coloured cards, following your rules. Add them all to a big pile in the middle for everyone to share.

Step 3: Take six words from the pile. Put these word cards together to make a poem that reads from top to bottom and tape them to your long strip of card.



Step 4: Take six more words from the pile and add these to your poem. Red joins with green and blue joins with yellow. Don't worry about making sense. Be a Surrealist!

There will now be an interesting word pair in each line. You can tape the second long strip to the other end of the lines to finish your poem.



FEELING SUPER-CLEVER?

You can add your DNA shapes together to make a longer chain of poem.

You can choose only two rules (for blue and green) and add similar words or opposites to the blank red and yellow cards. This mutates your poems from one person to another.

DNA has been used by scientists to match soldiers who died in the First World War with letters they sent home. They can reunite their bodies with families living today!

START A MOVEMENT

A group of people that make something new in literature or art are called a Movement.

If you started your own Movement, how would you use words and pictures in a new way?

What name would you give your Movement?

The Movements mentioned in this book are described on the next page.

CALLIGRAMME - Apollinaire's picture poems were called Calligrammes and were originally written in French. This version has been translated by Anne Hyde Greet.

VORTICISM - This group published a magazine called **BLAST** in 1913. They placed bold words in unusual places to make the page feel like a whirlpool. The Henningham Family Press were inspired by this to make their own alphabet called 'Trench'. They made their letters look like the trenches the soldiers lived in.

IMAGISM - American and English poets like Ezra Pound, Hilda Doolittle and Amy Lowell wrote this kind of poetry between 1912 and 1917. They tried to pass on something they had seen to a reader in just a few lines. What did Richard Aldington's poem conjure up for you? It takes a lot of careful editing to make a short poem say exactly what you want to say.

DADA - The German artist Hugo Ball thought that words had let us down and become empty during the War. His poem 'Karawane' used nonsense words and sounds to make the language fresh again. This idea attracted a lot of other artists and poets and became a movement called Dada. "I want my own stuff, my own rhythm, and vowels and consonants too, matching the rhythm and all my own." (*Hugo Ball - Dada Manifesto 1916*)

SURREALISM - The Surrealists were a group that came after the Dadaists and defined what they were aiming for in their 1924 manifesto. This group played a game like this one called Exquisite Corpse which made use of random word combinations.

Our games are based on the letters the soldiers sent home. Two billion letters and 114 million parcels passed to and from the Front Line. These were censored by the army, who put a thick black line through secrets or bad news to stop them reaching home. But soldiers often censored themselves too by not writing bad news so their families would not be upset. Censorship is a kind of editing that can stop you saying what you really want to say.

The Poetry Library is the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world and is based at Southbank Centre. Its collections begin from 1912 which is the starting point of the poems in this book. You can find out more about all of the poets, kinds of poems and movements in this book in The Poetry Library. The library is free to join and members can borrow books, CDs, DVDs and ebooks. You can find out more on our website at www.poetrylibrary.org.uk

Henningham Family Press is the art and writing of David and Ping Henningham. We use our writing to create prints, books and performances. We enjoy how reading allows the dead to speak, and we make live shows that bring our books and ideas to life.

You will find our work in the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Tate, and The Poetry Library. We have performed at Dundee Contemporary Arts, Christie's Auction House, the British Library, and BBC Radio Theatre for BBC Radio 3 'The Verb'.

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