

Poetryclass Fresh Ideas for Learning from The Poetry Society

End Hunger Poetry Challenge

Teacher Resource Pack

Curriculum links

Outline

This resource offers teachers ways to encourage students to enter the End Hunger UK Poetry Challenge run by Young Poets Network and the End Hunger Campaign. This challenge is for poets aged 11-25 who currently reside in the UK and aims to inspire people to add their voice to the debate on how food poverty can be tackled in the UK. Poems will be judged in three age categories: 11-15 years, 16-18 years and 19-25 years. The challenge is open to young people working on their own, or to teachers submitting the work of students in their class. Winning and commended poems will be included in a touring exhibition, which is calling for the government to start measuring how many people cannot afford to eat in the UK. If hunger is not measured, how can it be dealt with?

The following resources and materials provide:

- Background information and activities to introduce students to the issues involved in the campaign.
- Activities to generate poems in response to these issues.
- Ideas to take this work further within your school.

N.B. This is obviously a sensitive topic and teachers should adapt resources accordingly. Before you begin, you may wish to have a discussion about stereotypes, and why it can be problematic to write a poem imagined from someone else's point of view.

Learning Objectives

- To investigate issues of poverty and hunger and develop a personal response.
- To generate creative, impactful poetic responses which apply this knowledge.

England

English

Writing

- Write for a range of purposes and audiences KS3
- Adapt writing for a wide range of purposes KS4
- Plan, draft, edit, proofread KS3 & 4

Spoken English

- Improvise, rehearse, perform KS3 & 4

Economics

Income and wealth inequality

Northern Ireland

English: communicate in oral and written formats; show awareness of audience and purpose

Scotland

Literacy and English: enable learners to listen, talk, read and write appropriately for different purposes, audiences and contexts

Social Studies: politics, inequality, needs, rights, responsibilities

Wales

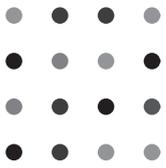
English and Literacy Framework: KS3 & 4

Oracy: developing and presenting information and ideas

Writing: organising ideas and information

Range: produce poetic writing, using imagery and poetic devices

ESDGC: Wealth and Poverty



Background information

End Hunger has provided a PowerPoint which outlines the basic ideas behind the issue.

Divide students into groups. Ask each group to fill out **Worksheet 1** (below) during the PowerPoint presentation, as you talk them through it. Discuss these responses after the PowerPoint.

Worksheet 2 (below) contains some definitions provided by End Hunger UK. They can be given to students as a summary at the end of the PowerPoint.

Listen

- Distribute Worksheet 3 (below), containing quotations and stories from those dealing with food poverty.
- Discuss the stories with students and how they make them feel.
- Ask them to choose one testimonial or case study and highlight all the nouns in one colour, the verbs in another colour, and the adjectives in another colour. These strong images, which may have moved them, might help them write their poems later.

Poetry challenge

When reading the testimonials on Worksheet 3, the students may have felt sad, angry, or helpless.

The End Hunger UK poetry challenge with The Poetry Society on Young Poets Network is calling for poems in response to this crisis, written by young people aged 11-25 based in the UK. Selected entries will be published and included in a UK-wide touring

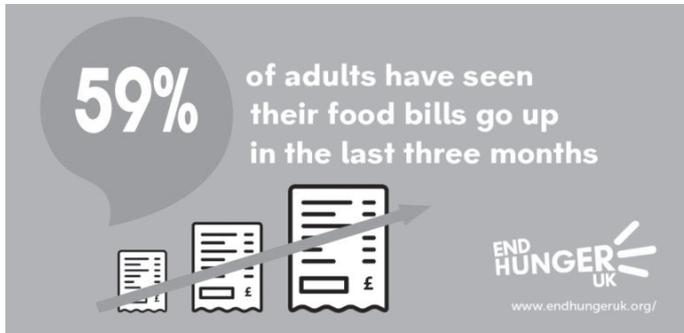
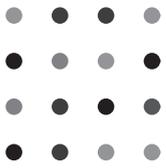
exhibition as part of the End Hunger UK campaign, with the chance to make real change. The poems, as part of this exhibition, will alert MPs and change-makers across the country to the scale of the UK's hunger crisis, and could help to change policy.

Distribute and read Worksheet 4 (below), 'Daughters' by Phoebe Stuckes (Foyle Young Poet of the Year 2013).

Discuss how it is a manifesto for women. In pairs, ask students to answer the following:

1. Why do many of the lines start with 'Let us...'? Why does the poem use the pronoun 'us'? What effect does that give?
2. List all the verbs, nouns and adjectives used in the poem. How does the poet's diction (the type of words they're using) support or contradict their message?
3. Can you pick out which words convey that women are trapped in some way?
4. Which line best targets how women should free themselves, in your opinion?
5. What images/pictures does the poem create?





Ask students to free-write for 5 or 10 minutes, starting with or inspired by the phrase ‘Enough of...’

OR ‘Let us...’, thinking about their feelings after reading the testimonials/case studies above, and watching the PowerPoint.

- Free-writing is a prewriting technique in which a person writes continuously for a set period of time without regard to spelling or grammar, or even necessarily sense. The only important thing is that they keep writing. Free-writing helps writers overcome blocks of apathy and self-criticism.
- If they get stuck they can come back to the phrases ‘enough of’ or ‘let us’.

Students can then edit their free-writing to compose a similar poetic manifesto for everyone who is angry about food poverty.

- Suggest they can use the structure from the poem, taking ‘Let us’ to start every line.
- Remind them to use concrete images, including colour and all of the senses (smell, sound, taste, touch, sight).
- Wherever possible they should create clear physical pictures to show what they want either to take people from or what they want to take people to.
- They could read the poems aloud and record them if possible. You can enter the Young Poets Network challenge with poems written down or performed as video/audio files.

Editing

After the first draft, ask students to give feedback on each other’s work using the following tips:

- Query any unnecessary words e.g. often ‘the’ or ‘and’ can be omitted.
- Have they used the most specific word they can find? e.g. Instead of ‘take away curry’ use ‘chicken korma’.
- Have they used details – including colour – to create clear pictures?
- Have they thought about where their lines should start and end?
- Have they considered what title they should give the poem?

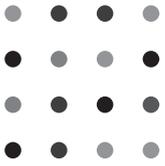
Share your students’ poems

Why not use the poems your students write to raise the issue of food poverty in your school and beyond? You could:

- Film students reading their poems and send them to your MP
- Ask students to perform in assembly
- Run a poetry show/slam
- Create a wall display
- Ask students to edit a pamphlet of their poems to distribute in school

And don’t forget to enter them into the Young Poets Network challenge. Send an entry form (downloaded from the bottom of the challenge page) and your students’ work via email to educationadmin@poetrysociety.org.uk or by post to YPN End Hunger UK challenge, 22 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BX.

Young Poets Network is The Poetry Society’s online platform for young poets up to the age of 25. We’ve features, challenges and competitions to inspire new writing, plus advice and guidance from rising and established poets. Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter @youngpoetsnet. youngpoetsnetwork.org.uk



Worksheet 1

Which issue most interested you? Why?

Which image impacted you the most? Why?

What difficulties stand in the way of improving the situation?

What one thing do you think we should change?

Write down three things you thought or felt after the presentation.

Which new key terms have you learnt? Which key terms are you still not sure of?



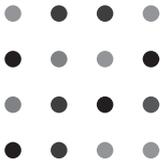
1 in 6 adults have skipped a meal as they cannot afford it

1 in 7 worry about not having enough food to eat

1 in 12 have gone a whole day without eating



www.endhungeruk.org/measure



Worksheet 2

Background information & definitions

Food poverty – not being able to eat enough food because of a lack of money.

Food insecurity – when someone isn't able to buy food because they don't have enough money to pay for it. This can be mild (worrying about being able to afford to eat) to severe (going without food).

Food bank – places where people can receive food if they are unable to buy it themselves. Two thirds of food banks in the UK are run by the Trussell Trust, a charity which aims to supply emergency food parcels to people who need them. Food banks are generally not funded by the government. To receive food bank vouchers, someone would need to be referred to a food bank by another agency, such as a social worker, a doctor or a Citizen's Advice worker.

Food parcel – could contain soup, pasta or rice, pasta sauce, baked beans, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tea or coffee, tinned fruit, biscuits and breakfast cereal. Some food banks also give out other items such as toilet paper, deodorant, tooth paste and sanitary products.

Fuel vouchers – some food banks also operate a fuel voucher system, and can send vouchers via text which allows people to get free gas and electricity up to a certain value.

Minimum Wage – the legal amount set by the government that an employer must pay their staff. This is £7.38 per hour for those under 21, and £7.83 per hour for those over 21.

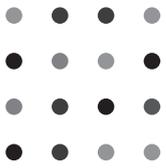
Real Living Wage – a salary based on the actual cost of living calculated by the Living Wage Foundation, to give workers enough money to pay for essentials such as housing, fuel and food. The current living wage is £10.20 per hour in London and £8.75 per hour for the rest of the country. Employers are not required by government to pay this to their staff.

Welfare state – at the end of the Second World War many people in the UK were living in poverty. The government at the time identified key issues which needed to be tackled to lift people out of poverty: a national health service, free education, council housing and full employment. The Welfare State is funded by taxes to look after those who fall ill, cannot work or can't afford rent payments, for example.

Universal credit – a new type of social security payment for people aged 18+ but under State Pension age who are on a low income or out of work. It includes financial support for people with disabilities, carers and people too ill to work, as well as for housing, children and childcare. According to the government, the new system simplifies payments, but in some cases people have waited five weeks before payments, and have had to turn to food banks.

Poverty premium – the extra amount people who are on lower incomes pay for the same goods and services as those on higher incomes, e.g. because they cannot buy in bulk.

The Money Shop – a type of high street shop offering loans, generally at higher interest rates than banks. They tend to be used by people who are unable to get loans elsewhere because, for example, they may be on low incomes or not have paid back a previous loan.



Worksheet 3

Quotes are taken from the report *Below the Breadline: The relentless rise of food poverty in Britain, 2014, unless otherwise stated.*

Patricia, East London, helped by Tower Hamlets Foodbank

“I have lost a lot of weight. My survival tactic is hot lemon and water and sugar because it breaks the wind down and stops the hunger pangs. Sometimes I feel so sick. When I get paid I can eat for the first two weeks. I cook from scratch a lot. I eat chicken and rice, spaghetti bolognese, I eat tins of sardines, frozen mixed veg and stuff, Iceland pizza. And then I’m out of money, then I go to my neighbour.”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

“A family in destitution, in a country as wealthy as this, is a disgrace that should not happen. I think the current welfare system does need reform and I don’t disagree on the principles with which the government is working, but it cannot be at the cost of casting people into destitution.”

Kathleen Kerridge – author and journalist

“I work – two jobs – and my husband works full-time. We should be able to afford good, nutritious food. We should be able to afford food. The reality, though, is multiple days when dinner has been a tin of chopped tomatoes, some Tesco Value dried mixed herbs, and 20p pasta; we have to regularly feed our family on around £1.50 for the entire meal – not per head. By the time our rent is paid, money put on the gas and electric keys, the bills paid... there’s nothing left. We drink water, we eat the cheapest food, but we struggle to afford even that.”

– from *A Menu to End Hunger in the UK*, Oxfam, 2017.

Lee, Rhondda

“Agencies are the only people hiring round here and many only offer zero hours. You can work full time one week and be idle the next. You can’t plan or budget or keep a family on that basis. I was losing money with all the days not working and quit and then had my Jobseekers docketed for leaving a job.”

Written evidence from Debs Banks, Debt Caseworker, Better Leeds Communities

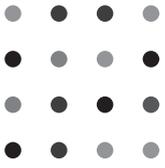
“A client came to see me. He lived in a council rented property which was a high-rise flat. He told me that he either could afford to pay for credit on his electric meter or he could buy food. He told me that he couldn’t do both. The client told me that he suffers from arthritis and that the cold affected him greatly. He had to sit under a duvet in an attempt to stay warm.”

– from An Evidence Review for the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom, 2014.

Michael’s story

Michael in Durham has recently used Durham Food Bank on a few occasions. He was sanctioned twice for four weeks at a time as he was ‘not adequately seeking employment’. Michael is aware that there is a lack of jobs in the north east, which makes it difficult to provide evidence that he is constantly looking for work.

‘You have a work diary, you get sanctioned if you don’t bring it in with you, fill it out correctly or do the right amount of job searches. I didn’t do enough job searches. I had to do 22 a fortnight, it’s too many. I live in a remote area seven miles from Durham and it costs me £5.90 return to get to the library to use the internet. How can I pay for that? I only have a pay-as-you-go phone and then just for incoming calls. If I do get a job please tell me how I’m going to get there. I’ve been told by employers, “You’re never going to be able to do the early shift patterns when you’re so far away.” I don’t get as far as interviews.’



Kamika and her daughter with a foodbank manager, London.

Carol, helped by Knowsley Foodbank

“I’m in a two-bed flat. I’ve applied for a one bedroom (flat) but there just aren’t any there. So I have to pay bedroom tax – I’m on discretionary housing at the moment which I have to apply for every three months. I’ve only got three months until I’ve used up my entire 12 months. Then I’ll have to start paying £12 a week but I won’t be able to pay it. It’s a constant worry. I’ve never been on anti-depressants before but I am now because of the stress from being sanctioned and having no money. I need them now to cope.”

Holly, single mother to one child, helped by Chichester Food Bank

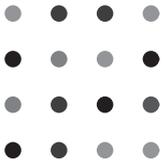
“The neighbours were always in the hallway smoking drugs and letting their dogs foul. We had to sleep in the lounge with the door closed. But the council refused to move us. My parents gave me their savings so I could put a deposit down on a private rented property near them but the rent doubled. I was getting into debt; we were barely getting by. But when my daughter got ill I had to stop working and I couldn’t keep up with the rent. We came back from the hospital with no money and no food. That’s when I went in search of a food bank. Even if I worked full time I wouldn’t be able to pay my rent and live. We have to raise wages, lower rent, do something so that people can afford to live.”

Mary, single mother to four children, helped by East Bristol Foodbank

“You’re going [to] a million different supermarkets to try and get the best prices. It’s difficult. As if you don’t have enough stress on your hands without going from supermarket to supermarket... You really, really have to watch your budget or else you have to go without something somewhere else... The supermarkets are doubling prices on everything and it’s always on the value ranges... Tuna used to be 30p in the Tesco value range and it’s now 89p!”

Carol’s story

Carol is 53. She has often worked as a carer doing 12-hour shifts, six days a week, with long travel either side and with gaps in employment. She has been claiming JSA [Job Seeker’s Allowance] for about two years. In May 2013 she fell sick, so called the Jobcentre to rearrange her appointment. They told her that it would be fine. She subsequently went to the rearranged interview and all seemed well. She then received a form from Jobcentre Plus about the missed appointment which she filled in and returned. Then in September 2013, she went to sign on and found that she had not received her money. When she queried it she was told she had been sanctioned because of the missed appointment back in May. She ended up being sanctioned in total for six weeks. She is now on anti-depressants and blood pressure medication as a direct result of the stress she has been put under. She had no money for food or fuel and was referred to a local food bank. Carol appealed but lost, as there was no record made of her calling Jobcentre Plus to cancel her appointment due to sickness. She provided the name of the young woman she had spoken to, but they were not able to find her as she no longer worked there. They ruled that as Carol could not ‘prove’ her version of events, the sanction could stand.



Worksheet 4

Daughters

by Phoebe Stuckes

Enough of pulling off high heels to run
Or else waiting alone in unclaimed ugliness.

No more crying out for guitar heroes
Or going back to old loves for the safety.

Let us build bonfires of those unanswered prayers.
Let us learn how to leave with clean and empty hearts
Let us escape these attics still mad, still drunk, still raving
Let us vacate these badly lit odd little towns
Let us want none of what anchored our mothers
Let us never evolve to be good or beautiful
Let us spit and snarl and rattle the hatches
Let us never be conquered
Let us no longer keep keys in our knuckles
Let us run into the streets hungry, fervent, ablaze.

You
Are a mighty thing
A captive animal, woken with a taste for blood.
Feed it,

You Amazon, you Gloria, you Swiss army knife of a woman.

*Phoebe Stuckes was a winner of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award
2013 (bit.ly/1ISbKXD)*