

What to do today

IMPORTANT Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and any weblinks or use of internet.

1. Read a set of poems

- Read the three poems by Grace Nichols: *Moon-Mad, Darkness and Light, You*. Read each in your head and then out loud.
- Read *Questions on Poems by Grace Nichols*. Think about your answers and then write them as clear sentences.

2. Compare a pair of poems

- Read the traditional poem: *You!*
- Compare this poem to Grace Nichols' poem: *You*. What can you find that is similar? What can you find that is different? Which of the two poems do you prefer? Why?
- Use your ideas to complete the form *Comparing two versions of You* and write a paragraph comparing the two poems.

3. Learn a poem by heart

- Read *I'm Telling You*.
- Practise learning this poem off by heart. You could use *Top Tips for Learning a Poem by Heart* to help you.

Well done. Try performing the poem to somebody else. Which bits can you remember well? You can check your answers to the Grace Nichols Questions at the end of this pack.

Try the Fun-Time Extra

Choose your favourite of these five poems. Copy it out in your best handwriting and add illustrations.

Moon-Mad

Look at the moon!
A crescent sky-ship sailing
out of a cloudy cocoon

Look at the moon!
A cauldron of amber
spelling, rain-come-soon

Look at the moon!
A Mexican gold plate
over Montezuma's tomb

Look at the moon!
A full-blown O
(I was trying to avoid the word balloon)

Just open the window of your room
and look at the - wolf-raising
sea-swelling shape-shifting
myth-making moon
holding us
in the bloom of a moon-lock.

Grace Nichols

p.25 *Cosmic Disco*

Darkness and Light

Darkness, how I love you, Darkness,
Guardian so kind over our sleep-tight
Keeper of dreams until the moment is right

*Light, you're a nuisance
I'm not ready to wake
Remove your harsh face
Give me a break*

Light, how I love you, Light
Revealer of what I need to see and hold
Lighter of paths that bathe us in gold

*Darkness, you're a nuisance
You make me stump my toe
Remove your presence
And your gloomy shadow*

Sorry, Darkness. Sorry Light –
Light that becomes Darkness
Darkness that becomes Light

Grace Nichols

p.76 *Cosmic Disco*

You

You-

With the rivers of your arteries
and the pumping planet
of your heart

You-

With the twin-suns of your eyes
that becomes half-moons at night
pulling the tides of sleep

You-

With the milky-way of your brain
shooting instructions from your
follicles to your feet

You-

with the atoms of a million
trillion cells -
A universe yourself.

Grace Nichols

p.78 *Cosmic Disco*

Questions on Poems by Grace Nichols

Moon-Mad	Darkness and Light	You
1) What is the poem about?	1) Who does the poet address?	1) What is the poem about?
2) How many lines are there in each stanza ?	2) How does the poet feel about Darkness and Light at the beginning?	2) Find an example of alliteration . What effect does this have?
3) Find an example of two words which rhyme ?	3) What adjective is used to describe Light in the 2nd stanza?	3) What image is created by 'pumping planet'?
4) Find two words that alliterate in the same line.	4) Describe the rhyme scheme .	4) What does the metaphor of 'half-moons' refer to?
5) Which is your favourite metaphor in the poem?	5) How does the poet change her mind at the end?	5) Does it matter that this poem does not rhyme ? Explain your answer.

You!

You!

Your head is like a hollow drum.

You!

Your eyes are like fans for blowing fire.

You!

Your nostril is like a mouse's hole.

You!

Your mouth is like a lump of mud.

You!

Your hands are like drum-sticks.

You!

Your belly is like a pot of bad water.

You!

Your legs are like wooden posts.

You!

Your backside is like a mountain-top.

Traditional (Africa)

Comparing two poems on 'You'

Things I noticed about Grace Nichols' poem ...

Things I noticed about the traditional African poem ...

Which I preferred and why...

I'm Telling You

I'm as wise as an owl.

I'm as cunning as a cat.

You're as slimy as a snail.

You're as dirty as a rat.



I'm as brave as a lion.

I'm as strong as an ox.

You're as weak as a kitten.

You're as sneaky as a fox.

I'm as bright as a button.

I'm as hard as nails.

You're as useless as a yacht

Without any sails.

Sean Forbes

Top tips for learning a poem by heart

- Read the poem aloud several times slowly.
- Copy the poem out a couple of times.
- Be strategic. Poems with pattern, metre and rhyme are much easier to learn by heart than free verse.
- Learn and internalise the “story” in the poem
- Understand the poem by knowing every word’s meaning
- With a card, cover everything but the first line of the poem. Read it. Look away, see the line in the air, and say it. Look back. Repeat until you’ve “got it.”
- Uncover the second line. Learn it as you did the first line, but also add second line to first, until you’ve got the two.
- Then it’s on to three. Always repeat the first line on down, till the whole poem sings.

