



To Rhyme Or Not To Rhyme? Teaching Children to Write Poetry

Sandy Brownjohn

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In Ted Hughes' Foreword to *To Rhyme Or Not To Rhyme?* (1994) he describes the 'incidental fruits' to be gained from following Brownjohn's account of her methods for teaching children to write poetry. He noted that, while her pupils were focusing all their excitement on the one ambition, to write their poem, in fact 'most of the aims of English teaching have been accomplished' in the methods and practices described in Sandy Brownjohn's book. This is a remarkable feat.

I was first introduced to Brownjohn's work through *Does it have to rhyme?, What rhymes with secret?* and *The ability to name cats* many years ago whilst on a PGCE course. As a student and then a new teacher, I drew on these books extensively to inform not only my teaching of poetry, but also of English and literacy generally. So when *To Rhyme Or Not To Rhyme?* was published in 1994, I instantly bought it and am still recommending it now to teachers of all levels of experience. *TRONTR?* contains material from Brownjohn's three previous books for teachers, together with many new ideas about teaching children to write poetry synthesised into a beautifully written, accessible and practical guide.

The book starts with a short section of Brownjohn's personal 'Credo' which presents a compelling rationale for the pedagogy underpinning her approach to teaching poetry. At the heart is the notion that the enjoyment of, and playing with, language is essential if children (or anyone) are going to use words to good effect. She reminds us of the importance of games and play, of enabling children to produce what they want to, rather than what is dictated by lesson objectives and success criteria. She emphasises the importance of developing prior understanding and memory, a full range of perception, of imagination and creativity.

Section One therefore contains games which can be used as warm-up exercises before a lesson or as a lesson in themselves. The activities show how writing can be enjoyable and how a love of playing with language is so important in helping children to produce more sustained pieces. The second part of this section introduces more poetry-orientated exercises. Section Two looks at specific poetry techniques and forms; Section Three is predicated on the assumption that children are now fairly well-versed in the craft of writing so is dedicated to providing ideas for subjects and themes. It also provides practical support for developing poetry in the classroom such as organising book weeks, writers' visits, guidance on learning poems by heart and encouraging children to read poetry.

One of the great joys of the book is that throughout there are examples of poetry written by children with whom Brownjohn has worked. The quality and inventiveness of these poems demonstrate the authenticity and validity of the ideas she provides. It is clear that Brownjohn learnt her craft by doing it herself. This means that she is able to demystify the process of teaching children to enjoy and write poetry. She breaks the process down into small parts, giving examples of how to practise basic techniques in an enjoyable way.

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Brownjohn acknowledges the importance of teachers' inspiration and enthusiasm but also, pragmatically, the significance of good organisation and high expectations. This is one of the many reasons why it is such a great resource for teachers at all stages of experience.

This is an immensely practical guide. It is fully in line with current initiatives such as 'talk for writing' and provides lots of approaches and ideas. Recently Ofsted has reported that there are 'serious weaknesses in subject knowledge' amongst teachers, and UKLA's own research has indicated that teachers' knowledge of poetry is limited. This book is a tremendous resource to support not only unconfident teachers, but also those who have always relished teaching children to enjoy and write poetry.

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To Rhyme or Not to Rhyme by Brownjohn, Sandy. \$72.845d left. Like New, The Ability to Name Cats: Teaching Children to Write Poetry, Brownjohn. \$2.9813d left. Word games by Sandy Brownjohn (Paperback / softback) FREE Shipping, Save Â£s.Â \$3.6524d left. The Poets Craft - A Handbook of Rhyme, Metre an by Pattern Based Writing: Quick & Easy Essay | Teaching Children Poetry. Diamante Poems | Rhyme Schemes | Rhymes | Acrostic Poems | Quatrains | Haiku | Limericks | Clerihew | Tanka | Free Verse | Simile | Metaphor | Alliteration. Combine teaching these pattern based poems with the "Pattern Based Writing: Quick and Easy Essay" writing program and your students will be both highly effective and highly creative authors! To really use rhymes in an effective manner rhyme schemes are important for the teacher to be aware of. Rhyme schemes most often represented using the letters "A" and "B". Rhyme schemes show you the pattern of the rhyme.