



NEW WRITING
NORTH
YOUNG WRITERS



Weird Words and Where to Find Them

Hi there! Grab a pen and paper, and settle in to this tasty menu of writing activities.
Share your work with us afterwards!

Warm Up:

Check out poet Jackie Kay reading her poem 'Old Tongue' at the link below.

What is the poem about?

Can you think of words that only people your region might know? List them.

Now put them into a fun dictionary for people who might not know what they mean.

Example:

Canny (adjective)

Meaning: Nice, good.

Sentence example: 'James was a really canny bloke.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiP684Ss3FI>

Give it a Try:

Here, we are going to build a poem. There are two stages.

Stage One:

On a piece of paper, write down a list of 10 nouns (naming words). These can be anything – house, lights, monkey, ship, James, Canada...

Now grab a book off your shelf, or your fiction reader from school, or even a magazine or newspaper.

Open it at a random page.

Write the first interesting word you see in front of the first noun on your list – so mine might be 'purring house'. It doesn't matter if they don't make immediate sense.

Continue down the list with more pairings.

Mine might read:

'protruding lights'

'marzipan monkey'

'padded ship'

'everyday James'

'quirky Canada'

The idea is that you end up with a list of 10 unexpected word pairings.

Stage Two:

Now work your weird and wonderful word pairings into a poem – the only rule is that you must keep the words together. My poem might start:

I always think mine to be a purring house,
Its protruding lights make it buzz and pulse,
A padded ship against the world outside,
Inside is me, the marzipan monkey...

You get the idea. It doesn't really matter if it doesn't make perfect sense – poetry is about finding new modes of expression, and surprising the reader, and really making them think.

Explore Further:

Have a look at the work of Edward Lear, or Lewis Carroll's Jabberwocky, for examples of how writers play with language to create whole new experiences for their readers. (poetryfoundation.org has lots of free poems for you to explore.)

Can you come up with some new words, like these writers did – for example 'frumious' to mean a mixture of 'fuming' and 'furious', or 'chortle' as a mixture of 'chuckle' and 'snort'.

Try writing a list of ten for starters – and put them into a short dialogue or poem.

This workshop was devised by Lucie Brownlee for New Writing North Young Writers.



Lucie is an award-winning writer, tutor, and blogger. Her work has been adapted for TV, selected by Richard and Judy for their Book Club, and selected in various competitions. She writes everything but poetry (but she'll give anything a go!)

New Writing North Young Writers is a programme for young people aged 12-19. We run creative writing groups, masterclasses and programmes in schools across the North East. We support young people to express their ideas, to work with professional writers and artists, to create and share new work, and to meet other young writers.

We would love to read your writing! Share it with us on social media using #writingfromhome or by emailing youngwriters@newwritingnorth.com. Search for New Writing North Young Writers on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter, where we will also be sharing regular writing prompts. Each week we will select a Young Writer of the Week whose work will be shared on our channels.

Find other writing workshops and much more on our website www.newwritingnorth.com

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