

'A day in school', 'My birthday party' or 'In the sea'. Make sure that whatever happens in the poem is the opposite of normal!

Ask the children to use some or all of the pictures on the photocopiable sheet as subjects or settings for their own nonsense poem. Ask them first to note down their ideas and plan the poem's structure before they write out any lines or verses. They might want to write just one line about each picture or several lines about it. To finish the activity, ask the children to write *Just imagine* as the first line of their poem, listing their ideas underneath to form draft lines.

Ask the children to look for more nonsense poems in books at home and in school. See if they can identify the patterns and frameworks and use them to make new poems. Almost any children's poem by Spike Milligan will provide a fabulous example of nonsense verse. One of the finest and funniest is the immortal 'In the ning nang nong'.

LOOK AT ME

WHAT YOU NEED

Photocopiable page 22, writing materials.

WHAT TO DO

Explain to the children that for this poem, they are going to describe their facial features: ears, eyes, nose and mouth, and what each of these can do. Using an enlarged copy of the photocopiable sheet, read the example adjectives together and ask the children if they can think of any more that could be added.

Then look at the right-hand side of the sheet and brainstorm different things we can do with the features. For example: ears can hear beautiful music, a friend chatting, cars roaring past or a dog barking; eyes can see a colourful rainbow, a shiny apple, the sunlight shining; your nose can smell a delicious dinner, a sweet rose, the muddy field; your mouth can sing a pretty song, whisper a secret, shout across the playground.

Using the verse frame at the bottom of the sheet, create a spoken example, all about yourself, and ask the children if they think it's a good description! Encourage the children to think of words that suit themselves to add to their own copy of the sheet, along with some fun, unlikely and interesting things that their different features might be able to do. Then ask them to combine these ideas to create their self-portraits in poetry.

The *Look at me...* format can be extended into the world of nature or fiction. Particularly useful are characters from traditional tales with which the children are familiar, such as Snow White, Cinderella or Jack:

Look at me,
 My grubby ears can hear Mum saying, 'Have you sold the cow?'
 My shiny eyes can watch the beanstalk growing high,
 My freckled nose can smell the giant as he comes near,
 My open mouth can say, 'I don't want to be the giant's dinner.'

The use of fictional characters can make an effective group poem, with each child taking one feature and devising the description, then putting them together to complete the verse. When including animals, look for chances to extend the children's vocabulary, for example a bird's *beak* or elephant's *trunk*.

OBJECTIVE

- To use and arrange describing words to make a self-portrait poem.