

## Give the BALL to the poet – A New Anthology of Caribbean Poetry, Edited by Georgie Horrell, Aisha Spencer and Morag Styles and Illustrated by Jane Ray (Commonwealth Education Trust)

A celebration of Caribbean culture and environment is threaded throughout this vibrant anthology alongside the anger and sorrow begotten of the interdependent history of migration, slavery and exploitation between the Caribbean and Britain. This collection was shortlisted for the 2015 CLPE Poetry Award.

This wonderful collection does not shy away from addressing provocative issues or language. It will be important for teachers to read the whole anthology before introducing it to children in order to decide how best to introduce the more controversial poems.

### Overall aims of this teaching sequence.

- To develop the skills of reader response through the use of book talk, close reading and critical reflective study of a selection of poems.
- To respond to, interpret and deepen appreciation of poetry by using art and drama.
- To know how to compose free verse poetry as inspired by a study of a range of poems.
- To broaden understanding of the politics, culture and language of the region through an analysis of the poetry.

**This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 7 class.**

### Overview of this teaching sequence and outline for potential extended study

The breadth and range of poems featured in this collection allow children to explore the complex nature of language and how fundamental it is in determining identity. The sequence provides the opportunity to reflect critically upon and respond to the ways in which language is used to express, convey, represent, symbolise and signify pertinent points, themes and messages. Reader response and the use of book talk therefore forms an integral part of the majority of the sessions detailed in this sequence.

The range of poems inspired by the people, experiences, and heritage of this region allow for an exploration of the different facets that influence how we view ourselves, others and the world. The teaching sequence will allow pupils to reflect on these facets with due consideration given to themes addressed in the poems within the collection, such as colonialism, slavery, language and identity, migration and relationships.

Children will reflect upon the ways in which the poems illustrate how language can be hijacked to

serve political purposes and conversely how it can be manipulated as a weapon of resistance and used to regain autonomy of personal expression. Through this study children will gain an insight into the rich and diverse language, history, geography, culture and politics of the region and how these have influenced and shaped individual, national and regional identities.

In light of the vast breadth and scope of the subject matter explored in the collection the sequence provides a mere introduction to the range of invaluable and interesting learning opportunities that the anthology could inspire. Teachers are encouraged to build on their children's interest in the range of aspects studied and consider how this could be extended. Suggestions of other areas of interest could include (but are not limited to) a study of:

- the evolution of the English language and its variations as influenced by the languages of different regions that were colonised and within the UK as well as the effects of globalisation and social media;
- Patois, Creole and the ways in which languages and dialectical variations within countries and across countries in the Caribbean have been influenced by colonisation;
- the history, politics and culture of the region;
- folk songs such as the origins of Trinidadian Calypso music and its roots in the period of slavery or Jamaican Mento songs that evolved and were inspired by songs such as, 'Day Da Light' (p.60). These could include , 'The Jolly Boys', 'Take me back to Jamaica, Blue Lu Lup's, 'Lord Fly' and Gully Ride's, 'Lord Composer;'
- hip hop, reggae and other contemporary music genres and how they are influenced by the history, politics, language and culture of the region. For example you could facilitate an exploration and consideration of the music of Bob Marley as an expression of resistance and elevation of individual, national and regional pride. His song, 'So Much to Say,' for example references the key historical figure, Paul Bogle, who features in the poem, 'Ballad of Sixty Five' (p.58);
- folk tales from the region.

The sequence outlines twenty sessions in an attempt to illustrate the scope and potential for exploration that this collection affords. However the number of sessions can be reduced or extended upon based on the professional discretion of the teacher and your context.

### Teaching Approaches

- The teaching approaches that will support the learning are summarised at the start of the session.
- Reading Aloud
- Book Talk
- Visualising
- Response to illustration
- Readers Theatre
- Responding using art
- Freeze Frame
- Shared Writing

### Outcomes

- Poetry composition
- Research
- Note taking

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DictoglosS</li> <li>▪ Debate</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Exploring Poetic Devices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personification</li> <li>▪ Refrain</li> <li>▪ Metaphor</li> <li>▪ Assonance</li> <li>▪ Alliteration</li> <li>▪ Rhyme</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opportunities to develop reading fluency.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The use of Readers Theatre and opportunities to discuss, perform and experience the poems read aloud will support the development and consolidation of reading fluency.</li> </ul>

### Teaching Sessions:

#### Session 1: Change Influenced by Migration and Colonisation

This session could be preceded by a visit to the Black Cultural Archive Heritage Centre. <http://bcaheritage.org.uk/> Alternatively or additionally pupils should be provided with archive photographs of culturally diverse areas of the UK in order to compare the influence that migration has had on the architecture, economy and culture of the area. Sites such as the following may be useful sources: <http://www.urban75.org/brixton/history/index.html>; <http://www.brixtonlive.com/about/galleries/archive-photos>; [Accessed 27.04.15] Archive photographs of the Caribbean can also be sourced from the British Library online Caribbean View Collection at <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/carviews/index.html> [Accessed 27.04.15] It may also prove useful to provide dictionaries as well as photographs that illustrate pictorial images of key vocabulary featured in the poems.

#### Teaching Approach:

##### **Book Talk**

*Discussion about books and poetry forms the foundations for working with literature. Children need frequent, regular and sustained opportunities to talk together about what they have read as a whole class. The more experience they have of talking together like this the better they become at making explicit the meaning that a text holds for them This book talk is supportive to all readers and writers, but it is especially empowering for children who find literacy difficult. It helps the class as a whole to reach shared understandings and move towards a more dispassionate and informed debate of ideas and issues.*

**Initiating Discussion** - *Once they have heard a book or poem read aloud, the class can begin to explore their responses to it with the help of what Aidan Chambers' (Tell Me: Children, Reading & Talk with The Reading Environment. Thimble Press 2011) calls 'the four basic questions'. These questions give*

*children accessible starting points for discussion:*

*Tell me...was there anything you liked about this book?*

*Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?*

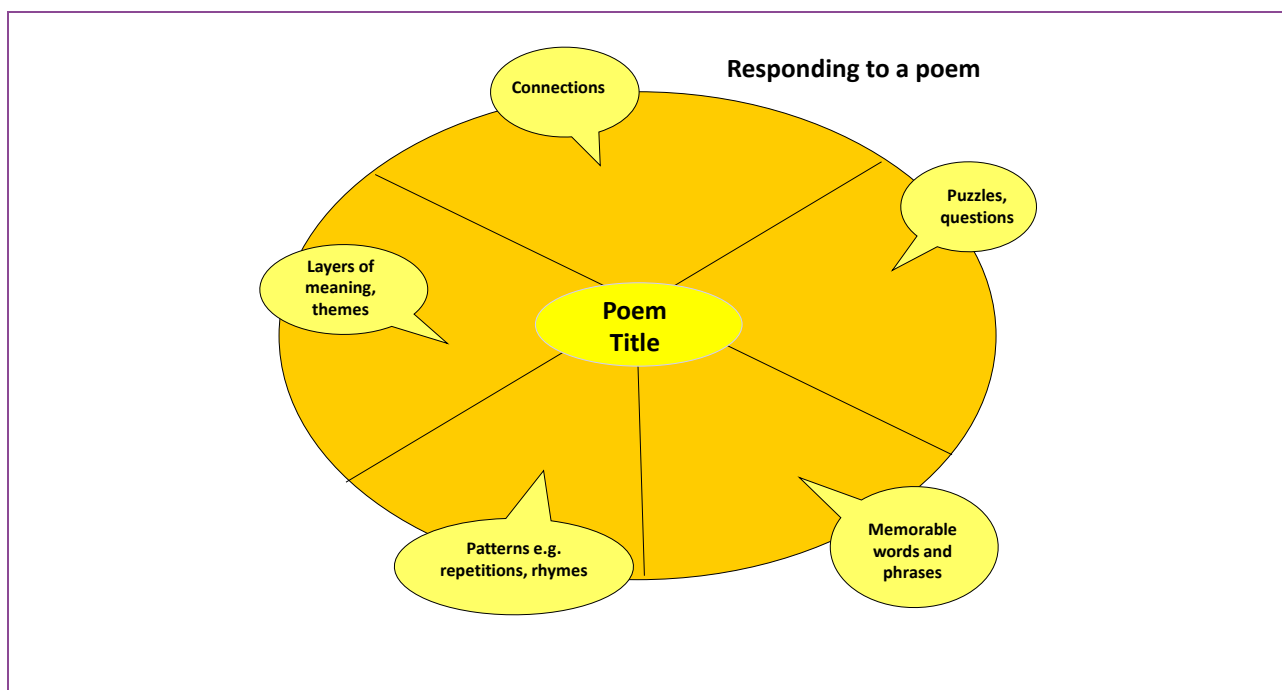
*Was there anything that puzzled you?*

*Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...?*

*The visual organiser featured in this session builds on these core questions and provides a framework to prompt and support discussion of poetry.*

**Focus Poems:**

1. Where the Flora of Our Village Came From, Lorna Goodison (p.40)
  2. The only thing far away, Kei Miller (p.107)
- Before introducing the two poems ask the children to identify what they think they know about the Caribbean and what they would like to find out. Explain that as you move through your study of the collection they will encounter lots of insights into a range of languages, cultures, environments, histories and powerful themes. As you explore the collection through the sessions it may be useful to keep revisiting how the exploration broadens their knowledge and understanding of the region.
  - Provide the children with a mixture of photographs of both parts of the Caribbean and culturally diverse parts of the UK that illustrate how these settings have changed over time and as influenced by migratory patterns and colonisation. Invite the children to comment upon what they notice and to what they attribute these changes. Ask them to consider whether they think such changes are positive or negative.
  - Divide the children into groups of six. Provide half of the class with the first poem and half of the class with the second.
  - Invite the groups to read their poem and use the sub-headers in the visual organiser below to frame and note their discussion.
  - Once the groups have had time to discuss and reflect upon their assigned poem ask them to consider as a whole class whether they feel their poem advocates changes that are influenced by different types of migration as being positive or negative. Encourage them to cite references from the poem. Discuss whether the poems have changed their original views at the beginning of the session. Prior to opening up the discussion to the whole class it may be useful that each group nominates individuals to read the poem to the rest of the class and summarise the key points raised in their discussion.



## Session 2 and 3: Valuing the Richness of our Lives

Prior to the session collect a range of images of settings and scenery from the Caribbean as well as different coloured paper and materials such as foil, sweet wrappers, different textured paper, fruit peel, foliage, rock salt and dried flowers. Provide the children with paints, pastels, PVA glue and the range of materials suggested.

### Teaching Approaches:

#### **Book Talk**

#### **Visualising**

*Asking children to picture or visualise a character or a place from a story or poem is a powerful way of encouraging them to move into a fictional world. Children can be asked to picture the scene in their mind's eye or walk round it in their imaginations. Finally they can bring it to life by describing it in words or recreating it in drawing or painting.*

#### **Response through art**

*Opportunities to draw, both before and during writing, increase children's motivation to write, and can help them to think. Drawing can help all writers to plan their writing, develop their ideas and use vivid description.*

**Shared writing** is one of the most important ways a teacher can show children how writing works and what it's like to be a writer. Acting as scribe, the teacher works with a small or large group of children to create a text together, enabling them to concentrate on their ideas and composition. Teacher and children work as active partners, talking together to share ideas and with the teacher guiding the

*children through all the decisions that writers need to make and helping them shape their thoughts on paper.*

**Focus Poem:**

1. Telemaque, Harold M. Riches (p.90)

- Provide the children with a copy of the poem. Read the poem to the children. Discuss what they picture in their minds as you read the poem.
- Ask them to mark the parts of the poem that stand out to them and invite them to share their choices and why they think their choices are of significance to them.
- Ask them to consider how the poet uses language to create such vivid images.
- Invite the children to create a collage that best represents and captures the essence of the poem.
- Invite them to discuss and note the words and phrases that inspired their art work.
- Referencing the art, discussion and vocabulary generated and drawing their attention to the structure of the poem, model how they might compose their own verse.
- Provide them with the time to compose their art and 'Riches' inspired poem.

**Session 4 and 5: Exploring the Significance of the Sea**

**Teaching Approaches:**

***Book Talk***

***Response through art***

**Focus Poems:**

1. The Child Ran Into the Sea, Martin Carter (p.88)
2. The Fringe of the Sea, A.L Hendricks (p.94)
3. Hymn to the Sea, Frank Collymore (p.96)
4. Bridgetown, Velma Pollard (p.100)
5. from Windjammer, Paul Keens-Douglas (p.101)

***Critical Reflection***

- Divide the class into five groups. Assign one of the listed poems to each group.
- Invite the groups to read their poem and use the sub-headers in the visual organiser featured in session one to frame and note their discussion.
- Discuss why the sea might be such an integral theme in the poems and in the lives of those who live in the Caribbean.

- Discuss the different ways in which the poets explore the significance and symbolism of the sea and how it serves as a metaphor that mirrors the lives, character, and history of the region and its inhabitants.
- Ask them to mark the parts of the poem that stand out to them and invite them to share their choices and why they think their choices are of significance to them.
- Ask them to consider how the poet uses language to create such vivid images and express emotion.

#### *Response*

- Invite them to use either watercolour or pastels to draw the scene they picture when reading the poem.
- Once the children have completed their artwork conduct a 'gallery walk' that allows children the opportunity to view the artwork of peers.

#### *Composition*

- Once they have returned to their seats ask them to note any words or phrases inspired by the art they have viewed. Collate these to form the basis of a word bank.
- Build on prior class discussion to allow the children to compare and contrast the ways in which the sea is depicted and how this has influenced their artistic response and interpretation.
- Invite the children to use the vocabulary generated, artwork and discussion to compose their own sea inspired free verse poem.

### **Session 6 and 7: The Significance of Weather and its use as a Metaphor**

#### **Teaching Approaches:**

##### ***Book Talk***

##### ***Response through Art***

#### **Focus Poems:**

1. Cyclone, Nicolás Guillén (p.112)
2. Hurricane Hits England, Grace Nichols (p.110)
3. Montage, Mervyn Morris (p.111)

#### *Critical Response*

- The themes underpinning these poems allow for a comparative analysis of the contrast in the

relationship between the weather and the UK, the weather and the Caribbean as well as the interrelationship between the UK and the Caribbean. They allow the reader to consider how the symbolism related to weather can represent how we as a species are aligned with one another whilst simultaneously having the propensity to destroy and be destroyed by one another.

- Divide the children into three groups. Provide one third of the class with the first poem, one third of the class with the second and one third with the third poem. These groups can be divided into smaller groups to aid discussion.
- Invite the groups to read their poem and use the sub-headers in the visual organiser referenced in session one to frame and note their discussion.
- Once the groups have had time to discuss and reflect upon their assigned poem ask them to consider as a whole class how weather is portrayed and how it differs in each poem. Reflect upon why in each instance the poet has used weather as a topic, metaphor or symbol and how this aids our understanding of the region and context explored in the poem. In what ways do the poems deepen our understanding of the relationship of both regions? In what ways do the poems use weather as a metaphor to deepen our understanding of the unifying commonality across regions as well as the tensions of the relationship between both regions?

### *Composition*

- Play footage such as those suggested in some of the following links or similar short videos that give a sense of the devastation and power of such weather.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hgl7BHU5cdU>;  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/9637872/Hurricane-Sandys-deadly-path-through-the-Caribbean.html>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7602155.stm>; Discuss what words and phrases best describe the sounds, movement, shapes, colours and feelings the clip inspires. Note the vocabulary on a flipchart to form the basis of a class word bank.
- Invite the children to use water colours to paint a hurricane as inspired by the poems, discussion and video clip.
- Conduct a gallery walk that provides children with the opportunity to view one another's paintings and use this as inspiration to contribute further to building a word bank featuring words and phrases.
- Invite the children to draw on these contributions to inform their own composition of a free verse poem.

## **Session 8 – Exploring Nature as Metaphor through Drama**

### **Teaching Approaches:**

#### ***Book Talk***



**Reading Aloud** slows written language down so that children can hear and absorb the words, tunes and patterns. It enables children to experience and enjoy stories and poems they might otherwise not meet, enlarging their reading interests and providing access to texts beyond their level of independence as readers. Reading aloud helps children to broaden their repertoire as readers, becoming familiar with a wider range of genres and the work and voice of particular authors and poets. By reading well chosen books aloud, teachers also help classes to become communities of readers, sharing in the rich experience of a growing range of books they enjoy, get to know well and talk about.

Conversations about books and poems help children to explore and reflect on texts in ways that are made meaningful, personal and pleasurable.

Before reading a book or poem to a class, it is always important for teachers to read it themselves.

Reading aloud is a kind of performance. It's helpful to think about the best way to read it and 'lift it off the page' in order to engage children and enable them to respond to the tunes and the meaning.

**Freeze-Frames** are still images or tableaux. They can be used to enable groups of children to examine a key event or situation from a story and decide in detail how it could be represented. When presenting the freeze-frame, one of the group could act as a commentator to talk through what is happening in their version of the scene, or individual characters can be asked to speak their thoughts out loud.

**Thought Tracking** is a technique is often used in conjunction with freeze-frame. Individuals are invited to voice their thoughts or feelings aloud using just a few words. This can be done by tapping each person on the shoulder or holding a cardboard 'thought-bubble' above their head. Alternatively, thought tracking can involve other members of the class speaking a chosen character's thoughts aloud for them.

#### **Focus Poems:**

##### 1. Song of Chatoyee, Philip Nanton (p.59)

- Read the poem aloud to the children and provide the opportunity for discussion and exploration of the layers of meaning. You could use the visual organiser featured in session one to frame the discussion.
- Invite the children to create the landscape depicted in the poem. They could do this by working in groups to create a 'freeze-frame' (still image) that depicts a part of the landscape.
- Once they have created their freeze-frame ask them to hold their positions and explain that you are going to walk around the room and on your signal each child that you select should express in character as the tree, plant, earth, sky, cloud or mountain that they are representing what they have seen and how this has shaped their view on life. This approach is known as 'thought tracking.'
- Use these drama activities to stimulate discussion on themes such as the impact of invasion

- and colonisation in terms of the landscape, people, culture, language and psyche of a country.
- Use this to form the basis of a class debate.

### Session 9: Difference and Imposed/ Self-imposed Hierarchies

In preparation for this session it may prove useful to reference some of the following sites to help inform understanding around the significant influence that history, politics and colonisation had on the language variation and diversity in the region. <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/minority-ethnic/caribbean/> and <http://www.scl-online.net/en.htm>.

#### Teaching Approach:

##### *Book Talk*

#### Focus Poems:

1. Icons, Grace Nichols (p.41)
  2. Noh Lickle Twang! (Not even a little accent), Louise Bennett (p.113)
- Divide the children into groups of six. Provide half of the class with the first poem and half of the class with the second.
  - Invite the groups to read their poem and use the sub-headers in the visual organiser referenced in session one to frame and note their discussion.
  - Once the groups have had time to discuss and reflect upon their assigned poem ask them to consider in their groups what the underlying message of their poem is, how the poet communicates this message, whether it is effective and how their poem explores the notion of hierarchy.
  - Open up the group discussions to allow the children to have a whole class discussion based on the themes arising from their group reflections. Prior to opening up the conversation to the whole class it may be useful for each group to nominate individuals to read the poem to the rest of the class and summarise the key points raised in their considerations.

### Session 10 and 11: Language, Identity, History and Politics

It is recommended that this session is spread over two sessions to allow for opportunities to research, plan, draft, edit and refine their final product.

#### Teaching Approach:

**Dictogloss** is a step by step approach that provides children with the opportunity to digest information, reflect upon their understanding, discuss and collaborate with their peers to refine and consolidate their interpretation of the information. This approach is commonly used when working with children who have English as an Additional Language. However, the skills and knowledge that this approach entails supports the development of learners across the language spectrum. For more information on this approach refer to the work of Pauline Gibbons.

**Focus Poem:**

1. Noh Lickle Twang! (Not even a little accent), Louise Bennett (p.113)
  - Revisit the poem, Noh Lickle Twang! (Not even a little accent) drawing on the discussions from the previous session and building on this to consider the inter-relationship between language and identity.
  - Ask the children to listen carefully as you read the summary in the following link, <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/case-studies/minority-ethnic/caribbean/>. Explain that you are going to read the summary again and again. Ask them to listen carefully.
  - Explain that you are going to read the summary one more time and this time they must note key words, phrases, points that stand out for them.
  - Once you have read the summary invite them to share their notes with a partner and encourage them in their pair to compose their interpretation of what they have just heard read aloud using their notes.
  - Once complete invite each pair to join with another pair and as a group of four refine their versions until they have one group version of the summary.
  - Give them the opportunity to research the history of language in the region to enhance their content.
  - Once they have done so ask them in their group to design and construct a fact sheet that informs readers about the history of languages in the Caribbean.

**Session 12 and 13: Relationships**

There are three suggested components to this section. These can be spread across 2-3 sessions as you deem appropriate for your class to enable them the time to digest, interpret and respond to the poems as well as perform and draft, compose, edit and refine their own poem.

**Teaching Approaches:**

**Book Talk**

- **Readers Theatre** is a valuable way for children to work in a group to perform the text. Children

can begin marking or highlighting parts of the text, indicating the phrases or sections to be read by individuals or by several members of the group. This enables them to bring out the meanings, pattern and characterisation. Children can use a short story, extract from a novel or poem and adapt it to create a script. They then rehearse, and 'performance read' their script in class.

### **Focus Poems:**

1. When Granny, Valerie Bloom (p.76)
2. A hymn for Aunt Grace, Kei Miller (p.82)

### *Critical Reflection*

- Divide the children into groups of six. Provide half of the class with the first poem and half of the class with the second.
- Invite the groups to read their poem and use the sub-headers in the visual organiser referenced in session one to frame and note their discussion.
- Once the groups have had time to discuss and reflect upon their assigned poem ask them to consider in their groups what the underlying message of their poem is, how the poet communicates this message, whether it is effective and how their poem explores the importance and value of family ties and relationships.
- Open up the group discussions to allow the children to have a whole class discussion based on the themes arising from their group discussions. Prior to opening up the discussion to the whole class it is recommended that each group nominates individuals to read the poem to the rest of the class and summarise the key points raised in their discussion.

### *Performance using Readers Theatre*

- To support the children in deepening their appreciation for the rhythm, structure and word choice in both poems invite them to return to their groups and consider how they might perform their assigned poem. Ask them to consider:
  - which parts might be read in unison;
  - which parts might be read with one voice/two voices;
  - which parts might be read loudly/softly/echoed;
  - whether it would be appropriate to include sound effects to enhance the reading;
- The children must then be given the time to rehearse and the opportunity to perform to their peers.

### *Composition*

- Ask the children to think of someone special in their life, what makes them feel special, in what ways do they make their life better by being in it?

- Ask the children to draw a silhouette of the person and on the outer edges of the drawing write words and phrases that describe their appearance, features, expressions and mannerisms such as the way they smile, the sound of their voice and on the inside note down words and phrases that describe the way they make those around them feel with examples such the way they make you feel when you embrace, or the way they look at you when you've done something well.
- Ask them also to note down any fond memories or places they like to spend time in with their special person.
- Using these notes and inspiration from the poets' choice of words and structure invite the children to write their own ode to their special person.

## Session 14: Challenging Stereotypes and Expectations

### Teaching Approaches:

*Book Talk*

*Debate*

### Focus Poems:

1. How's Dat, Benjamin Zephaniah (p.23) and/ or
2. Keeping Wicket, Valerie Bloom (p.24)
3. Gifted, Merle Collins (p.72)

- Invite the children to think about their aspirations for the future and what they picture their future being like.
- Ask the children to use A3 paper to sketch/ draw a scene that encompasses this vision.
- Ask them to fold the paper in half and using a different coloured pen/ pencil on the one side draw or write words that express the factors, people and circumstances in their lives that they perceive support them in achieving this aspiration and on the other half draw or note down factors that they perceive as hindering them.
- Give the children the opportunity to share their sketches and thoughts and draw any similarities/ differences with their peers. Discuss how we might draw on the strength of our circumstances and overcome our challenges.
- Divide the children into groups of six. Provide half of the class with the first poem and half of the class with the second.
- Invite the groups to read their poem and use the sub-headers in the visual organiser referenced in session one to frame and note their discussion.
- Once the groups have had time to discuss and reflect upon their assigned poem ask them to consider in their groups what the underlying message of their poem is, how the poet communicates this message, whether it is effective and how their poem explores the notion of

stereotypes or limiting expectations.

- Open up the group discussions to allow the children to have a whole class discussion based on the themes arising from their group discussions. Prior to opening up the discussion to the whole class it is recommended that each group nominates individuals to read the poem to the rest of the class and summarise the key points raised in their discussion.
- Invite them to consider whether the poems have influenced their considerations from the start of the session and if so in what way.
- The considerations could form the basis of a class debate about the impact of stereotypes.

### Session 15 and 16: Heroes and Role Models

#### Teaching Approach:

*Book Talk*

*Reading Aloud*

#### Focus Poems:

1. Ballad of Sixty-Five, Alma Norman (p.58)

- Read the poem aloud to the children and provide the opportunity for discussion and exploration of the layers of meaning. You could use the visual organiser featured in session one to frame the discussion. What does the poem tell us about Paul Bogle? In what ways does the poem help paint a picture of this significant figure? How does the language, pace and structure of the poem shape our view of Paul Bogle and the resistance movement?
- Use this poem as a springboard to initiate a study of key resistance figures of the region.
- Divide the children into groups and invite them to pick a key figure and work collaboratively to conduct research and create a presentation about their chosen figure.

### Session 17-18: Reconciling the Past and the Future – How memories shape us

#### Teaching Approach:

*Book Talk*

*Reading Aloud*

#### Focus Poem:

1. *from Me Memba Wen*, Frederick Williams (p.30)

- Read the poem aloud to the children and provide the opportunity for discussion and exploration of how the memory is recollected and how the words and language bring the

memory to life. You could use the visual organiser featured in session one to frame the discussion.

- Invite the children to think back on their significant and special memories. Ask them to consider why these memories in particular stand out for them. What pictures form in their mind when they recollect these memories, what sensations do the memories evoke, what smells, sounds and sights feature in these memories?
- Give the children the time to draw scenes from key memories.
- Prior to the session you could invite children to collect photographs and objects of significance. Children could have the opportunity to share some of these items with the class and talk about why they are special. Any photographs or images could be incorporated into their drawings to form a collage of memories.
- Ask children to select one key memory and consider what words and phrases their drawing of this memory inspires and use the grid below to frame their thinking and note their ideas:

<b>What do you see?</b>	<b>How did feel in that moment?</b>
<b>What sounds to you recall?</b>	<b>What smells/ tastes do you recollect?</b>

- Model how they might use their notes, collage of illustrations and the structure and language of, *'from Me Memba Wen'* to compose their own poem.
- Once given the opportunity to draft, refine and write their final piece the poem can then be integrated into the collage and form part of a poetry display.