EISTEDDFOD – CELEBRATING OUR POETRY

SUPPORT MATERIALS

If you need further support on specific aspects of outdoor learning these materials can enhance the engaging experiences you are providing. They can support you as you design, plan and implement your curriculum. Outdoor learning is a great way to develop learners' integral skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, personal effectiveness, planning and organising). You will want to focus on why learning matters and ensure you are meeting your learners' needs.
These materials show paths that could be taken through the activity. These are not meant to be prescriptive. You should adapt your approach depending on your learners' needs and interests and your local area.

OVERVIEW

Learners consider what a poem is and use their ideas to start writing a poem about being outside. They explore what an Eisteddfod is and the key characteristics of a typical Eisteddfod poem. Learners gather ideas for an Eisteddfod poem, including from the outside environment and write a group poem to enter the school Eisteddfod competition. They consider the importance of the Bardic chair and decorate an old chair to make their own Eisteddfod chair for the winning poem.

CURRICULUM FOR WALES

Areas explored:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Science and Technology

Activity also incorporates aspects of cross-curricular skills outlined in the LNF and DCF.

RESOURCES

Internet enabled device and internet access.
Means of taking photographs, e.g. smart phones, tablets, cameras, etc.
Means of decorating an old chair to become a bardic chair, e.g. scrap paper, recycled materials, cardboard, paints/pens, sticky tape, glue.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

- Most tasks require learners to work in pairs or groups.
- Encourage learners to share their ideas, and through open questioning, explain and justify their ideas when possible. Focus questions have been suggested to guide learners through the tasks.
- Some tasks might be more effective if pairs or groups of learners have access to an internet enabled device.
- When taking learners outdoors, it is essential that the Countryside Code is adhered to and any relevant risk assessments have been carried out with risks mitigated.

TASK 1

WHAT IS A POEM?

The task starts by asking learners to consider what a poem is. Invite learners to explore the outside environment and to use their senses to note their ideas. Encourage them to use the sentence starters as a basis for writing a simple poem and to consider how they might make their poem look and sound more exciting and interesting.

Evidence suggests that younger learners are reluctant to engage with poetry as they can find it boring and are not interested in the topics presented: Our latest research reveals over half of children missing out on poetry benefits - National Literacy Trust.

However, the National Literacy Trust's research report Where a quiet voice can become a loud voice highlights the significant benefits poetry brings to younger learners and their lives, offering a unique way to foster creativity, support mental well-being and encourage self-expression.

The Trust's 2022 report Children and young people's engagement with poetry in 2022 also provides an insight into younger learners own ideas about poetry, providing several pages of direct quotes.

The Trust outlines ideas relevant to educators, to encourage young learners to engage with poetry, including:

- Providing a range of poetry that appeals to different interests.
- Creating an environment where learners feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings through poetry.
- Introducing poetry in a way that is accessible and enjoyable.
- Providing opportunities for learners to perform and write poetry.
- Fostering a positive attitude towards poetry.

National Poetry Week encourages people of all ages to read, write and share poetry. The annual event takes place in October with National Poetry Day falling on the first Thursday of the month.

TASK 2

HOW CAN WE WRITE A POEM FOR A SCHOOL EISTEDDFOD?

Learners consider their ideas about what an Eisteddfod is through creating a group mind map and accessing a video clip of a Key Stage 3 school Eisteddfod.

Background information about the National Eisteddfod is available from a variety of sources:

- Welcome to the National Eisteddfod - Eisteddfod
- What is an Eisteddfod? - Museum Wales

This task also presents an opportunity to explore the common themes for Eisteddfod poems, including memory, city, ruins, nature, war and love. Encourage learners to explore these themes and other common ground within Eisteddfod poems and to gather ideas from a range of sources outside of school to use as a basis for writing a poem. As the outdoors is emphasised as the inspiration for learner Eisteddfod style poems, it might be fitting for learners to share their poems in an outside setting. This could involve them sitting in a circle and provide an opportunity to make a connection to Gorsedd circles and the Gorsedd of the Bards.
'Our own pageantry and peacockry' – the Gorsedd of the Bards - Museum Wales

These are deeply rooted in tradition, where the Archdruid leads ceremonies within a circle to symbolise the continuity of Welsh poetic heritage.

TASK 3

THE EISTEDDFOD CHAIR

Learners consider what they think a bardic chair might look like and explore design features and imagery, using a photograph of such a chair. More images can be accessed via this link – National Eisteddfod Chairs - People's Collection Wales. They are required to create chair designs and use these to decorate an old chair to make their own 'Eisteddfod chair'.

It is suggested that you involve learners in sourcing a suitable chair. They could ask family and neighbours, for example, if they have an old dining chair at home or even an old school chair. Local charity shops and second-hand furniture shops might also be an option.

Useful links

For different perspectives and developing learners' ideas you could consider these links close to each Designated Landscape:

Anglesey National Landscape

- Ynys Môn 2026 - Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Anglesey's 'mini Stonehenge' celebrates historic role of Druids in Welsh tradition - North Wales Live
- Eisteddfod essentials - BBC Cymru Fyw

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

- This month marks 200 years since Brecon 1822 Eisteddfod - Brecon & Radnor Express
- 19. The Brecon Eisteddfod of 1822, by Jonathan Williams 13 September 2022 - Brecknock Society and Museum Friends
- Double celebration for Maes star Helena – Brecon & Radnor Express
- 2027 - Eisteddfod
- The 1861 Aberdare Eisteddfod - the first 'modern' Eisteddfod - Eisteddfod
- National Eisteddfod to be hosted by Pontypridd in 2024 - BBC News

Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape

- Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod - International Eisteddfod
- Work starts on Flint's Urdd Eisteddfod site - North Wales Live
- Flint workshop helps craft Wrecsam Eisteddfod chair – Deeside.com
- 2025 - Eisteddfod
- Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod - People's Collection Wales

Eryri National Park

- Eryri to host the National Eisteddfod yr Urdd in 2028 - Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Watch Eisteddfod Bangor 1971 online - BFI Player
- Postponement of the 1914 Bangor Eisteddfod - Eisteddfod
- The 1862 Eisteddfod at Caernarfon - Eisteddfod

Gower National Landscape

- Exciting events at the 1863 Swansea Eisteddfod - Eisteddfod
- Barry National Eisteddfod 1968 - People's Collection Wales
- The Eisteddfod's two legacies to Barry - Glamorgan Star Newspaper

Llŷn National Landscape

- Royal Welsh National Eisteddfod (1925) - British Pathé - YouTube
- National Eisteddfod fans hail 'brilliant' atmosphere as thousands help get festival underway - North Wales Live

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

- 2026 - Eisteddfod
- Eisteddfod Y Garreg Las 2026 - Pembrokeshire Community Hub
- Pembrokeshire school children join hundreds celebrating Eisteddfod Proclamation – Pembrokeshire CC News
- Lost photos of the 1972 Eisteddfod - People's Collection Wales

Wye Valley National Landscape

- BEHIND THE HEADLINES: What is the Abergavenny Eisteddfod's legacy? - South Wales Argus
- 2025 – an annual arts event for young people and adults alike - Abergavenny Eisteddfod Y Fenni
- THE LONG VIEW: The woman of Gwent who helped revive the National Eisteddfod - South Wales Argus
- Newport to host Eisteddfod yr Urdd for the first time ever in 2027 - Urdd Gobaith Cymru

For a broader consideration of Eisteddfods, you could also consider these links:

- Welcome to the National Eisteddfod - Eisteddfod
- Eisteddfod locations - Eisteddfod
- History of the National Eisteddfod - National Library of Wales
- Alternative festivals in Wales - Visit Wales
- Welsh festivals - Festivals in Wales, UK - Visit Wales
- Eisteddfod - Wikipedia
- Eisteddfod yr Urdd and the Arts - Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Stories from past Eisteddfodau - Eisteddfod
- A brief history of the eisteddfod - OpenLearn - Open University
- The Eisteddfod from the air - People's Collection Wales

Other useful activities on Tirlun

Other activities on Tirlun that consider Eisteddfods include:

- How can we welcome others to our world?
- Festivals
- Inspirational Clwydian Range and Dee Valley
- Poetry in the Eisteddfod

These can all be adapted for any location.