POETRY IN THE EISTEDDFOD

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

The activity has been written to the specifications of WJEC GCSEs of Iaith a Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg, English Language and Literacy, and Design and Technology (from 2026).
Learners explore war poetry through some well-known poets and critically analyse their poetry and the works of Hedd Wyn (Ellis Humphrey Evans) and Mererid Hopwood. They consider conflict through personal experience and the media before authoring a poem about conflict. Learners consider the design and build of the Bardic Chair through historical images. They use the design process to design a Bardic Chair for their locality and build a prototype. In doing so, they visit the local area for inspiration, consider their sustainability and environmental responsibilities and finally evaluate their prototype.

CURRICULUM FOR WALES

Areas explored:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- 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. when finding inspiration for the chair design.
Materials and software (as required) to design and build an Eisteddfod chair prototype.

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

WAR POETRY

WJEC GCSE English Language and Literacy.

The task starts by learners watching a bilingual video and listening to Cyfandir o gofio by Ifor ap Glyn (nearly 9 minutes) to consider the atmosphere, mood and their own feelings.

They carry out internet research to find poetry by a number of war poets, considering their poetry and starting to build their analysis skills. Other poets included:

Wilfred Owen (1893–1918)

- Known for: 'Dulce et Decorum Est', 'Anthem for Doomed Youth'.
- Themes: The horror of trench warfare, pity for soldiers, and the contrast between public perception and grim reality.
- Died just one week before the Armistice.
- New Poetry Anthology For First Examination – WJEC – Disabled – Wilfred Owen.

- Further details:
  - Wilfred Owen - Wikipedia
  - Wilfred Owen - Biography, Poems, Exposure, & Death - Britannica
  - Wilfred Owen (1893 – 1918) – The War Poets Association
  - Wilfred Owen - War Collections.

Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967)

- Known for: 'Counter-Attack', 'The General'.
- Themes: Anger at military leadership, the futility of war, and the suffering of common soldiers.
- A mentor and friend to Wilfred Owen.
- Further details:
  - Siegfried Sassoon - Wikipedia
  - Siegfried Sassoon - The Poetry Foundation
  - Siegfried Sassoon - War Collections
  - How World War 1 Shaped The Poetry Of Siegfried Sassoon - IWM.

Rupert Brooke (1887–1915)

- Known for: 'The Soldier'
- Themes: Early, idealistic patriotism - he saw war as noble and purifying.
- Died early in World War 1 from illness, before seeing combat.
- Further details:
  - Rupert Brooke - Wikipedia
  - Rupert Brooke - The Poetry Foundation
  - Rupert Brooke - History - BBC
  - Rupert Brooke - Poems.ThePoetrySociety.

Also in New Poetry Anthology For First Examination – WJEC:

- 'Remains' by Simon Armitage,
- 'War photographer' by Carol Ann Duffy
- 'Kamikaze' by Beatrice Garland
- 'Drummer Hodge' by Thomas Hardy.

Two screens have been added here to introduce Waldo Williams, this should assist learners in considering conflict from a different perspective.

Learners research to find out about Ellis Humphrey Evans (Hedd Wyn). They have access to an online bilingual version of Yr Arwr / The Hero if it is appropriate for them to read his most famous poem. A shorter poem by Hedd Wyn is considered on the next screen Hedd Wyn (1887-1917) - Literature Wales. Learners are asked to critically analyse the poem.

Further details about Hedd Wyn can be found:

- Hedd Wyn - Wikipedia
- Yr Arwr, Hedd Wyn - National Library of Wales
- Overview - Hedd Wyn - Resources - Hwb

Mererid Hopwood was the first woman in Eisteddfod history to be awarded the Bardic Chair at the National Eisteddfod in 2001. She is introduced on the next screen. A discussion as to why it took the Eisteddfod so long to award the Bardic Chair to a woman might prove interesting. Further details about Mererid can be found:

- Mererid Hopwood - Wikipedia
- Mererid Hopwood elected Archdruid - Eisteddfod

Learners listen to one of Mererid's poems: Ffordd lydan, ffordd gul, Mererid Hopwood (Wide road, narrow road) (just over 2 minutes) with a pdf available onscreen. They are asked to analyse the poem and consider the roles of war poetry and peace poetry.

Mererid translated the poem into English:

Russian Proverb
a wide road leads to war, a narrow path leads home

Come, Mother, come to the door,
tidy my hair with your comb –
a wide road leads to war,
a narrow path leads home.

Come, Mother, come, cry no more,
it's time for your son to roam –
a wide road leads to war,
a narrow path leads home.

Come, Mother, come as before,
pray 'neath the whispering dome –
a wide road leads to war,
a narrow path leads home.

Come, Mother, tell me who tore
the page that said in the tome –
a wide road leads to war,
a narrow path leads home.

Oh, They tore the page, my Son,
They took it away to hide,
come home, the war is done,
and the path is coffin wide.

On the next screen, learners are asked to consider the statement 'Healthy relationships are fundamental to our well-being' from Curriculum for Wales. Here the idea of conflict resolution is introduced.

Using personal experience or media observation, they are asked to think of a conflict they have experienced recently, either personally or in the wider world. Discussing this with others should lead to ways of resolving conflict in different scenarios.

The final part of the task invites learners to write an anonymous poem about conflict, guided by the onscreen criteria. The poem could be judged, possibly in a school Eisteddfod, and a winner decided.

TASK 2

THE CHAIR

WJEC GCSE Design and Technology.

Learners consider the concept of the Bardic Chair in terms of its worth and value in an Eisteddfod. They are asked to consider what it looks like and sketch their ideas.

The next screen discusses common symbols used in the design of a Bardic Chair.

Invite learners to view the images of Bardic Chairs – People's Collection Wales. Then, to choose three of the chairs, each from a different decade, to compare in terms of the symbols and the changing design over the years.

The next screen gives further information about elements of design including location, motifs and local inspiration.

The design process is introduced with a request to start to think about how they are going to design their Bardic Chair and build a prototype.

Invite learners to watch the video: Chair Design GCSE DT project (nearly 2 minutes) of a student's own design process. Ask them to discuss the onscreen questions.

Explain to learners that they are going to investigate the local area. This should give them ideas about how the chair's design could reflect the locality. Ask them to interrogate the Google map to find local landmarks. Then they can go outside to find places of interest for design inspiration.

The next screen asks learners to consider sustainability and environmental responsibilities as they plan and build their prototype. They then make decisions as to the material(s) they will use and how the material(s) could be shaped/carved to show their symbols and motifs.

Ask learners to create a Mood board to show their ideas as they use the onscreen questions to guide their thinking. Then, to write a design specification.

Invite learners to make a prototype, evaluating each step and amending their design to take account of these evaluations to improve it.

The final screen asks learners to evaluate their prototype against the specification and to discuss any modifications that could be made to improve the prototype and how these modifications could be made. Extend the evaluation by sharing across groups asking others to suggest improvements/modifications to the prototype.

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
- Eisteddfod – celebrating our poetry

These can all be adapted for any location.