

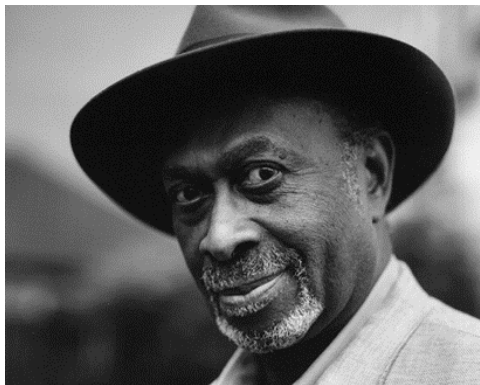
National Poetry Week

Year 5 Poetry Performance

L.O. learn and perform a poem as a class

This week (along with all the classes), we will be learning and performing a poem for our school website class page.

Year 5's poem is called *People Equal*, by Jamaican poet James Berry.



Poet James Berry is known for using a mixture of standard English and Jamaican *Patois* (particular form of language specific to a region - e.g. *Geordie*). His writing often "explores the relationship between black and white communities and in particular, the excitement and tensions in the evolving relationship of the Caribbean immigrants with Britain and British society from the 1940s onwards."

Born in coastal Jamaica in 1925, Berry was one of six children. His parents were subsistence farmers (growing food for their family), and he enjoyed an early life of rural rhythms and experiences. By age ten, however, the young writer began to feel frustrated by what his village could offer.

He began writing stories and poems while still at school. During the Second World War, as a teenager, he went to work for six years (1942-48) in the United States, before returning to Jamaica.

Settling in 1948 in Great Britain, Berry wrote poems and stories, including many books for young readers. In 1990, Berry was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to poetry.

He died in London on 20 June 2017.

People Equal

by James Berry

Some people shoot up tall.
Some hardly leave the ground at all.
Yet-people equal. Equal.

One voice is a sweet mango.
Another is a nonsugar tomato.
Yet-people equal. Equal.


Some people rush to the front.
Others hang back, feeling they can't.
Yet-people equal. Equal.

Hammer some people, you meet a wall.
Blow hard on others, they fall.
Yet-people equal. Equal.

One person will aim at a star.
For another, a hilltop is too far.
Yet-people equal. Equal.

Some people get on with their show.
Others never get on the go.
Yet-People equal. Equal.

L.O. Consider layered meanings of poetic language



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Look at your copy of the poem with your partner -
take each verse at a time and write about what you
think it means.

How do you think we should perform it?

Watch this young performer, Vivvaan Bajpayee, as he reads the poem.
Is there anything he does that we can learn from?





Listen also to Michael Rosen and Valerie Bloom's tips and ideas - can we come up with a poetry performer's toolkit?



Time to practise '*People Equal*' with your partner. After a few minutes, we'll gather our ideas together and decide on what our class performance will sound and look like. Remember - it's going on the website!

