

# Perform a Poem

## Poem to perform and activity sheet

*Michael Rosen wrote this poem for Children's Book Week 2008. Michael has given permission for pupils to perform it in videos for Perform-a-poem.*

*Pupils can also write their own verses or their own new versions of the poem and perform them for the site.*

### **I opened a book**

I opened a book  
and a hand fell out.  
I turned a page  
and heard a shout:  
'I'm lost in a wood,  
my mother's no good.'  
I couldn't bear to look  
so I closed the book.

But the girl called out:  
'Don't leave me here  
I need you to help me.'  
I was cold with fear  
so the book stayed shut.  
I put it back on the shelf.  
I put it out of my mind  
but then it opened itself.  
Right there in front of me  
it opened up wide  
and I heard a voice  
say, 'Come inside.'

The hand that fell out  
jumped back in the book,  
the girl inside  
gave me a long, cool look,  
and before I knew it  
I was in that wood  
running and running  
as fast as I could...

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### Activities

1 Read the poem with your class. With the whole class, discuss different questions about the poem.

Is there anything in the poem that reminds pupils of anything else they've read in books or seen in a film or TV programme? Talk about these different things and how they are like the poem or different from it. Pupils might want to think about:

- a girl in a wood
- someone calling for help
- a magic book
- a story or film that doesn't end with a 'happily ever after'

2 If pupils could ask the girl, or the poet, or even the trees some questions, what would they ask? What answers to those questions can they come up with?

3 Create a refrain or chorus to go in between each verse. This could pick up on any of the words or ideas in the poem and use rhythm and rhyme. For example, 'The book, the book, the magic book / There was no escaping the magic book'.

4 Using musical instruments or the children's voices, create a tune for the poem and perform it as a song, accompanied by a hand-clapping rhythm built up with the class. Think about the mood of the poem and how the music might convey it.

5 In small groups give the children ten minutes to decide what happens next in the poem, and then ask them to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

6 As a whole class or in small groups, ask children to come up with words to describe the wood – eg cool, shady, dark, peaceful, scary. Ask them to think about what the girl looks like. Is there anything else in the wood? How would the poet be feeling once inside the book?

7 See if any of the words they have chosen rhyme with each other, and together build up a new verse or verses for the poem. For help getting started, use these beginnings for each line: I saw / I felt / I heard / I tried.