



EXPLORING 'TICKETS TO RIDE' BY JULIE STEVENS

Resource written by Rachel Piercey

Getting to know the poem

First, read the title of the poem to your pupils. What do they picture when they hear the expression "tickets to ride"? It's probably a small rectangular piece of card, or an email on a grown up's phone!

Ask them to close their eyes and read the poem aloud to them. After you have finished, ask them what they thought and which parts stuck in their minds. There are no wrong answers! Display the poem (see below) or hand out individual copies and read it again.

Were they surprised by the nature of the "tickets"?

Each ticket takes the speaker on a different "ride" through a wild place. Do they think she really goes on these adventures or is the poem about the power of imagination? Again, there are no wrong answers!

Symbols

A symbol is something that stands for something else, generally something bigger and more complicated than the symbol itself. Show your class pictures of a heart, a dove, a pound sign, and a Union Jack. What do these symbols make them think of?

For the speaker, each different item is a symbol for something bigger. These symbolic items take her to different places where she can "romp among the wild things". Go through each "ticket" and discuss what animal action or animal habitat it symbolises. Some are more obvious than others. Why does a "feather" make the speaker "start to rise"? Why do the jungle creatures run away from a "serpentine stick"?

Thoughtful word choice

Poets choose their words very carefully. Why do you think Julie has chosen the word "rise" rather than "fly" in verse 2? What else "rises" – does it make them think of the sun? What do they associate with the sun?

Why do they think Julie has chosen the word "jewel" to describe the leaf in verse 4? What does the word "jewel" make them think of?



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Alliteration

Julie has chosen for her poem not to rhyme (except for a couple of lines at the end) – but she has still carefully crafted her lines so that they sound good when read aloud.

She has used lots of alliteration to create sound patterns throughout the poem. Ask your class to pick out some instances of alliteration. Which words does it connect together and emphasise?

A poet's perspective: "I love alliteration because it sounds good when the poem is read aloud; it connects words together and gives them extra emphasis; and it echoes the structure of Anglo-Saxon poetry, where the lines were woven together using alliteration." – Rachel

Individual writing

Invite the children to write their own poems, inspired by 'Tickets to Ride'. Ask them to write a list of animal actions they would like to try, and animal habitats they would like to visit.

Which small items would they choose as "tickets" to symbolise these wild adventures?

Where will they keep these "tickets"? Julie's speaker keeps them in her garden – but your class may choose to keep them safe somewhere else!

Now it's time to work these ideas into a poem. They could follow the structure of Julie's poem, using the pattern "One [item], and [action]". Or they could come up with their own structure.

They could try to include some alliteration in their poem, to connect words together. But don't worry about making the poem rhyme throughout. This will give them more freedom for wild ideas, as rhyme can force unnatural word choice.

Encourage them to redraft, scribble out and change things – poets almost never get their poem right first time and their notebooks tend to be very messy! When they're ready to write it up neatly, you may like to use the print-out template below. What will they choose as their title?

Explain that if you have written a poem inspired by someone else, it's important to acknowledge them – and the easiest way to do this is with a short line underneath the title (see below).

We would love to see what your pupils come up with! Tag us on Twitter @tygertygermag with a picture, or email us on tygertygermagazine@gmail.com for some personalised feedback.

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after 'Tickets to Ride' by Julie Stevens

by





TICKETS TO RIDE

by Julie Stevens

There's a place in my garden
where I keep all my tools,
my tickets to ride
where the animals go.

One feather in hand
and I start to rise,
one mud-caked stone
and I'm climbing mountains.

Somewhere for me
to have oodles of fun,
somewhere to romp
amongst the wild things.

One jewel of a leaf
and the jungle calls out,
one serpentine stick
and they're running for cover.

One shell full of water
and I surf angry waves,
one lace from a shoe
and I'm swinging from branches.

Mind where you step,
you could join my next ride;
mind where you sit,
you may end up inside:
 an elephant's trunk,
a shark's mouth, a tiger's jaw!

