

# Mini-beast magic

Can you sense how a poem affects  
your feelings and mood?

Can you write a celebratory poem  
with different moods?

Opening doors reading strategy:  
Mood Monitor

Think of the best adjective to describe your group's insect: THINK-PAIR-SHARE



worm



cricket



grasshopper



ladybird



butterfly



moth



gnat



beetle

# Noun phrases: we can add description before or after the noun...

<b>Before...</b>	<b>After...</b>
Wriggly worm	Worm that wriggles
Spotty ladybird	Ladybird with spotty wings
Colourful butterfly	Butterfly so colourful

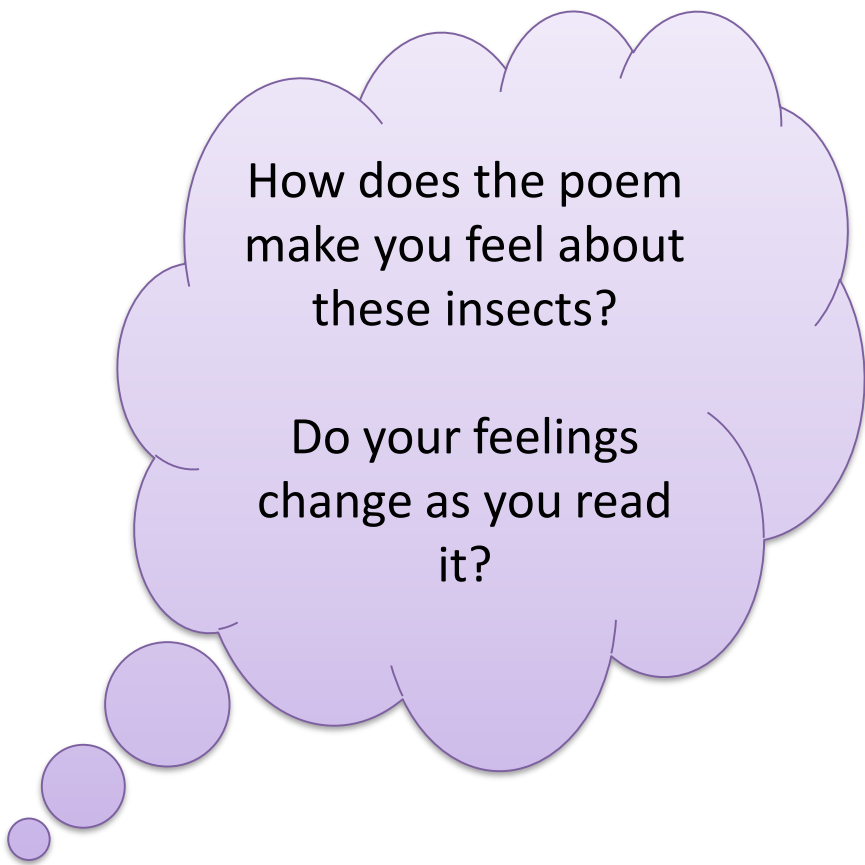
Perform our class poem!

Hurt no living thing:  
Ladybird, nor butterfly,  
Nor moth with dusty wing,  
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,  
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,  
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,  
Nor harmless worms that creep.

Christina Georgina Rosetti

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How does the poem  
make you feel about  
these insects?

Do your feelings  
change as you read  
it?

Some insects are just named and some are described with noun phrases. Why might that be?

Can you find any repetition of words or sounds? What do they add?

How does Christina Rossetti celebrate insects and their different kinds of beauty?

Why might she have put the insects in this order?

Do the rhythm and rhyme change how you feel as a reader?



# Excellent responses might include these key concepts:

## Creating mood through the music of language (prosody)

- ✓ The prayer-like seriousness and calm that comes from the command verb in the opening line
- ✓ The feeling of safety – like incantation – in the repetition of ‘nor’
- ✓ The playful alliteration that introduces a note of fun and celebration: ‘chirping cheerily,’ ‘light of leap’
- ✓ The end rhymes and internal rhymes which bring a song-like celebration to the mood

## Creating inferences through word choice

- ✓ The economical but precise choice of noun modification. The glamorous ladybird and butterfly need no modification, whilst the lowly worm is adorned with pre and post modifiers!

## Affecting reader viewpoint through structure

- ✓ The careful ordering of the insects. The dusty winged moth is slipped in after the more loved butterfly and ladybird and is painted more carefully. Rosetti also chooses to include the least ‘beautiful’ insects towards the end. Year 2 at Overton also wondered whether Rosetti was moving from the air to the earth in her ordering – though some were troubled by the gnat appearing where it does!

# Your poem!

- Will you use the same command verb 'Hurt no...' to start as Rossetti?
- What living things will you choose and why?
- What order will you put them in?
- Can you use noun phrases before and after each insect name?
- Which creatures need more modification – a more detailed phrase?

# Wings to fly

- Write your own mini-beast poem inspired by Christina Rossetti. Try to include changes in mood: how will your opening mood be different from your ending? A simple writing frame could be provided for writers who might need a stepping stone before they compose without scaffolds:

*Hurt not the humble snail:*

\_\_\_\_\_ snails that \_\_\_\_\_

*Snails with* \_\_\_\_\_

*Snails* \_\_\_\_\_ *ing* \_\_\_\_\_ *ly*

*Snails so* \_\_\_\_\_

- Write a poem to celebrate and notice creatures that are less obviously beautiful to humans, or perhaps are all too common and taken for granted.
- Write a poem to celebrate different aspects of just one living thing. This could be an endangered animal, noticing all the most precious things we are in danger of losing should they become extinct.

How can we celebrate the snail?

\_\_\_\_\_ snails that \_\_\_\_\_

Snails with \_\_\_\_\_

Snails \_\_\_\_\_ing \_\_\_\_\_ly

Snails so \_\_\_\_\_

Beautiful bugs,  
Even snails and slugs,  
The ladybird's wings  
And the cricket's springs  
When the delicate moths  
And the grasshopper hops,  
Kind butterflies and beetles  
Scuttle by when the worms  
Wriggle gently and the earwigs  
Eat earscreechingly  
The bees buzz beautifully  
Beautiful bugs

By Indigo Targett

Year 2

Grasshoppers spring  
Crickets croak  
Ladybirds crawl  
Moths dance in the air  
Worms slither  
Gnats crazy dance  
Butterflies flutter and  
Beetles scutter.

Aren't insects a wonder?

By Freya Berry

Year 2

No matter what you are  
We're all equal by far.

Even gnats with itchy bite,  
Even spiders that give a fright.

Although snails are slow,  
And worms are low,  
Everything is special.

Every creature has something to hide,  
So try to find the bright side.

By Gabby Macleod  
Year 2