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Work out the meaning of a poem

Getting you thinking

Your teacher will read the first four verses of this poem. In small groups, you can then read small sections to each other.

Salford Road

- 1 Salford Road, Salford Road,
Is the place where I was born,
With a green front gate, a red brick wall
And **hydrangeas** round a lawn.
- 2 Salford Road, Salford Road,
Is the road where we would play
Where the sky lay over the roof tops
Like a friend who'd come to stay.
- 3 The Gardeners lived at fifty-five,
The Lunds with the willow tree,
Mr Pool with the flag and the garden pond
And the Harndens at fifty-three.
- 4 There was riding bikes and laughing
Till we couldn't laugh any more,
And **bilberries** picked on the hillside
And picnics on the shore.

Glossary

hydrangeas: plants with blue or pink flowers

bilberries: dark blue berries



- 1 Now, with a partner, work out what these four verses are about.

How does it work?

This poem is mysterious. A mystery poem is not going to *tell* you what is happening. Like a detective, you have to work out what's going on.

Now you try it

Your teacher will now read the next three verses to you.

- 5 I lay in bed when I was four
As the sunlight turned to grey
And heard the train through my pillow
And the seagulls far away.
- 6 And I rose to look out of my window
For I knew that someone was there
And a man stood sad as nevermore
And didn't see me there.
- 7 And when I stand in Salford Road
And think of the boy who was me
I feel that from one of the windows
Someone is looking at me.



- 2 Who do you think the man who stood 'as sad as nevermore' is?

3 Why do you think the man didn't see the little boy?

4 Re-read verse 7. The poet is now standing and looking up at the window. He feels that someone is looking down at him. Who do you think is looking down at him?

Apply your skills

Now your teacher will read the final verses to you.

8 My friends walked out one Summer day,
Walked singing down the lane,
My friends walked into a wood called Time
And never came out again.

9 We live in a land called Gone-Today
That's made of bricks and straw
But Salford Road runs through my head
To a land called Evermore.

from *Salford Road* by Gareth Owen



5 Re-read verse 8. Did the poet's friends really disappear in a wood? What do you think really happened and which word gives you a clue as to what really happened?

6 Look again at verse 9. Can you work out the meaning of this verse? What is this land called Evermore? Is it a real place? As a clue, think of your past. What happens to your past thoughts? What do they become?

7 Which of these adjectives best describes this poem? (If you don't know the meanings of these words, look them up in a dictionary.)

Happy

Very sad

Nostalgic

Intrusive

Can you think of any other adjectives to describe the mood of the poem?

Check your progress:

Good progress >>>

I can understand some of the ideas in the poem.

Excellent progress >>>>

I can understand the meaning and describe the mood of the poem.

Identify different viewpoints

Getting you thinking

Everyone has a viewpoint about things. Some people may want to disagree with other people's viewpoints because they have their own.

With a partner, read a viewpoint from each of the following pairs.

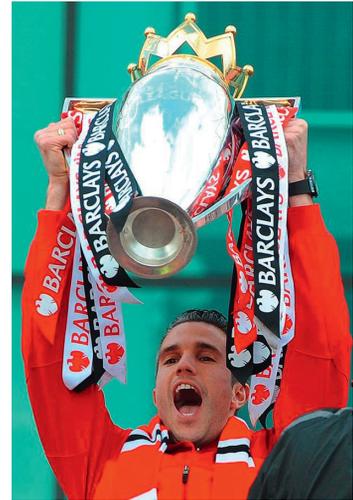
Nathan: I think Liverpool is the best football club in Britain.

Joanne: No way. Manchester United is the best. They've won the league title more times than any other club.

Aisha: It's good to take exercise, stay fit and eat healthy food.

Wayne: Exercise is boring. I like eating burgers; they're tastier than healthy stuff. It's great being on the computer or watching films.

- 1 Some people have given a reason for their point of view and others have not. Can you identify which people have given a reason?



How does it work?

We are all different and think differently about things. We have viewpoints that others may agree or disagree with. Often you will need to recognise a writer's viewpoint in a text.

6.1

Now you try it

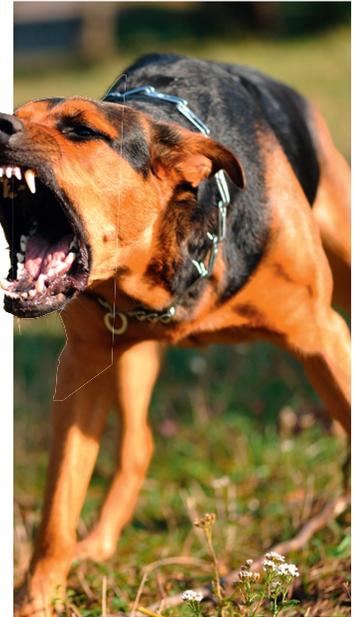
- 2 Look at the four statements below. For each one, write down a different viewpoint, giving a reason for that viewpoint.

'Children should be allowed on the computer for as long as they like because it helps them to learn.'

'All dog owners should keep their dogs on a lead in case the dog attacks someone.'

'Football managers shouldn't be sacked because it's the players' fault if a team is doing badly.'

'Bullies should be separated from all lessons so they learn not to bully.'



Apply your skills

- 3 Which of these kinds of texts do you think might include the writer's viewpoint? Discuss your ideas in a small group.
- A letter to a friend
 - A manual for a washing machine
 - A fairytale
 - A newspaper article about a film

Check your progress:

Good progress >>

I can recognise a viewpoint.

Excellent progress >>>

I can recognise a viewpoint and understand what kinds of texts include viewpoints.

Identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints,
and the overall effect of the text on the reader