



NORTH NORFOLK FESTIVAL OF LITERATURE & LANDSCAPE

Reading: 4 poems about pathways

1. Michael Rosen's walking poem for Shakespeare Day 2022

Discussion and activities:

- **List** all the places where you often walk. Make a note beside each to say *why* you go.
- **Tell** your study partner about your favourite walk. Why is it your favourite?
- **Write:** _____ is my favourite walk because _____

- **Draw** a map of that walk.

Listen to Michael Rosen reading out his 2022 poem: Walking poem for Shakespeare Week



After listening for the first time:

- **List** the words you heard most often.
- The poem has a rhythm. **Try to describe** that rhythm in your own words. This is difficult to do!
- **Discuss** with your study partner and then **write down your answer to this question**: what is it about the way the poem is put together that gives it this rhythm?
- What does the rhythm suggest that fits with the subject of the poem? **Write** your answer down.



Listen to the poem for a second time, with a pencil in your hand and **jot down**:

- Words and phrases that suggest there is a back story to this poem.
- Afterwards **look at** those phrases. **Write down** what you think may be going on in the life of the imaginary speaker - the character whose voice you are hearing.
- **Share** your ideas as a class. **Discuss** the differences.
- Suggest why it might be that people have arrived at such different ideas about the story behind the poem? **Write down** your thoughts.

Finally... Michael Rosen was inspired to write the poem by a line in Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, when Shakespeare's hero Prospero already had a lot of very important work on his plate that had taken years to prepare for. He is told alarming news about someone plotting to kill him. He becomes very agitated, and speaks the line:

'A turn or two I'll walk / To still my beating mind'

- **Discuss**: what do this line and Michael Rosen's poem suggest is good about walking?
- **Consider**: have you ever found walking helpful in a similar way? **Write** briefly about how walking helped you.

Note for teachers:

This lesson can be adapted and edited for different abilities and age groups.

Equipment and materials:

- video player and screen and / or audio player **with access to YouTube**
- pen and paper or exercise books for writing and drawing
- children to work in pairs for some of the time (not essential)

Timing:

- the lesson is divided into **five sections** by listening twice to the poem, with writing, drawing and discussions before, between and afterwards
- the poem plays for 1 minute and 40 seconds

Goals

- **understanding rhythm** to recreate in this case the movement of walking
- **suggestiveness of poetry** through sparse use of evocative detail
 - extension point to emerge from discussion that different readers bring different life experiences to a poem, so that no two readings of a poem are quite the same
- practical life hack - **the relationship between walking and thinking**
 - Scientist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) had a dedicated path around a small wood at his home where he would take multiple daily walks to "hard think."
 - Mathematician Albert Einstein (1879-1955) walked 1.5 to 3 miles daily to think about problems that were not solved at his blackboard.
 - Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) frequently took walks of up to eight hours a day, arguing that his best ideas were formulated while walking.
 - Inventor Nikola Tesla (1856-1943) walked 8-10 miles a day as a form of meditation and to work through technical inventions in his mind.
 - Writers William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen were also creative walkers