

Encountering Wordsworth

School Resource Pack



ORCHESTRAS *Live*

wordsworth
GRASMERE



Encountering Wordsworth celebrates the 250th anniversary of the birth of William Wordsworth through an inclusive large-scale music, poetry and multi-media partnership project, bringing together primary schools and young composers to create a new composition inspired by Wordsworth and his relationship with nature. We explored a range of creative stimulus to get young people thinking about the place Wordsworth lived, the environment around Grasmere, his life, and words.

The Resource Pack accompanying the Encountering Wordsworth film includes a range of cross-curricular activities from the project that you can explore and use to create your own poetry, sounds, music and art inspired by Wordsworth.

Please share your creative work with us and tag @NYMAZmusic

The Encountering Wordsworth film is available at:

www.connectresound.live/watch/

You can find out more about the project

<https://www.orchestraslive.org.uk/projects/encountering-wordsworth>

POETRY

with Wordsworth Grasmere

INTRODUCTION

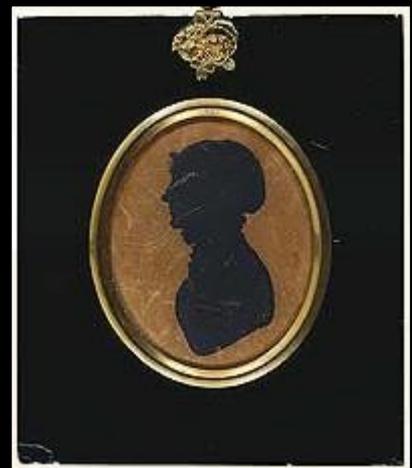
William Wordsworth is one of the best-known English-language poets in the world. His poem 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' (also known as 'Daffodils') is universally known and loved. Wordsworth was born in 1770 and by the time of his death in 1850 he had produced some of English poetry's greatest works. He also influenced future generations of poets.



Most of his life was spent in the Lake District. He was born in Cockermouth (a town in the northern Lakes); educated at Hawkshead Grammar school; and spent much of his adult life in Grasmere and Rydal, right in the heart of the Lake District. He died at Rydal Mount in 1850, and is buried, with his family, in Grasmere churchyard.

He witnessed great social, political, and artistic change. His experiences and attitudes are reflected not only in his poetry, but also in letters and prose works.

Place and family were also important to Wordsworth. This is clear from his abiding love of the Lake District and settled domestic life, celebrated in poems such as 'Home at Grasmere'. Wordsworth's sister, Dorothy, kept her Grasmere Journal during their years at Dove Cottage. The journal gives us an insight into domestic life at Dove Cottage, but Dorothy also records in beautiful detail the places and the people of the Lake District. Wordsworth found inspiration in his sister's response to Nature and their writings feed off each other and their creativity is intertwined.



WRITING BLACK OUT POETRY

William Wordsworth often used his sister Dorothy's journal for inspiration: she writes beautifully about the sights and sounds of the landscape they walked through almost every day.

Use the extract below to create a poem of your own.

- Read through the extract and circle all the words you want to keep (try and end up with no more than 20)
- Put a thick black line through all the words you haven't circled
- Now read the new poem you have created

9th December 1801

The river came galloping past the Church as fast as it could come & when we got into Easedale we saw Churn Milk force like a broad stream of snow. At the little foot-Bridge we stopped to look at the company of rivers which came hurrying down the vale this way & that; it was a valley of streams & Islands, with that great waterfall at the head & lesser falls in different parts of the mountains coming down to these Rivers. We could hear the sound of those lesser falls but we could not see them – we walked backwards & forwards till all distant objects except the white shape of the waterfall, & the lines of the mountains were gone. We had the Crescent Moon when we went out, & at our return there were a few stars that shone dimly, but it was a grey cloudy night.

William and Dorothy's friend and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge once defined poetry as: 'the best words in the best order'.

Now try the following with the words you circled above:

- Write each of your words on a separate piece of paper
- Now arrange the words into the 'best' order
- If you like you can arrange your words into the shape of a river – poetry arranged into a particular shape is called 'concrete poetry'.

WRITING POETRY: SIMILES AND METAPHORS

In one of his sonnets about the River Duddon Wordsworth describes the Duddon as 'a loosely-scattered chain' and then says that it appears 'a glittering snake'. How many ways can you think of to describe a river using similes and metaphors?

Start each line with 'The river'. For example:

'The river like a piece of string' – using the word 'as' or 'like' means that you have created a simile.

If you started like this: 'The river a piece of string' then you would have used a metaphor.

If you add adjectives and verbs you can make your poem really come alive: 'The river a blue string' or 'The river unravelling like a ball of string'

Think about:

- the way the river looks
- the way the river sounds
- the way the river moves

As well as your similes and metaphors maybe you could include some:

- alliteration – words that begin with the same sound
- personification – can you compare the river to a person or animal. If you want a good example of this, then look up 'The River' by Valerie Bloom online.

MUSIC

with Manchester Camerata

RHYTHM & WORDS

This section teaches you how to get your class to apply rhythm to the lyrics you have created in the previous chapter.

You can deliver this to the whole class or have the children working individually/in small groups by giving them different sections of the song to work on.

STEPS TO PLAY

1. To start with you need to establish a pulse; this needs to be steady throughout. Choose one line from your song and ask the children to say that sentence in a rhythm (rap style) over the pulse.
2. Try clapping the pulse to accompany the children as they put rhythms to the words. Make sure the pulse remains the same speed. When thinking of the tempo (speed) of the pulse, consider what your topic is about. For example, if your song is about the rolling hills of Cumbria you may want the tempo to be slow and lazy, or if your song is about the rushing river Duddon as it flows into the sea your tempo will be much faster!
3. Sometimes children can compose a rhythm that is monosyllabic, where every syllable is said on the beat. However, for rhythms to be more interesting, encourage the children to say the words/syllables with different durations or by having gaps between words/syllables. This change of duration is what creates rhythm.
4. When experimenting creating different rhythms, make sure the children can still say the words clearly and it is achievable to perform. Experiment and edit until you and the class are happy with what you have created and can speak the words rhythmically and with confidence.

WARM UP

Do as I Do

Select one child to be the leader with the rest of the class copying them.

The leader creates a repetitive sequence of actions along to a steady pulse, adding one action at a time until everybody has got to grips with the full sequence.

STEPS TO PLAY

1. The leader performs a simple movement (such as raising their hand/stick out a leg/clapping in slow motion) and the children are required to copy the action or movement as soon as they can, as if they are mirroring the leader.
2. The leader can vary the speech/difficulty of the action at any time.

Watch out for

The leader changing the actions too quickly

5. For a beginner, it is beneficial to group each line of lyrics into 4 beats:

1	2	3	4
The	ri-	ver	is
Win-	ding	(clap)	and
Twis-	ting	(clap)	(clap)

6. Once you've composed the rhythm for each line, try saying all of them one after another to the pulse. As a general rule, each section/block of lyrics should last a certain number of beats – ideally to multiples of 4.

Verses = 16-32 beats.

Chorus = 8-16 beats.

CONSIDER

Have different lengths of verses and/or choruses.

Have sentences that overlap into the next count of 4.

Use sound effects to help the children remember the lyrics as well as the rhythm.

Try not to go in with 'your own idea' and allow yourself to be more flexible. Give the children a chance to lead their own learning here. This helps to build and develop their confidence. We have also found that the children are better at creating their own rhythms than we are!

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

✓ *Every sentence following the same/a similar rhythm. Although there ought to be some repetition of rhythms, you don't want it to be the same on every line.*

✓ *Rhythms becoming too complicated – solve this by making each sentence fit 4 beats of pulse, or the whole section you are working on fitting a multiple of 4 beats of pulse (eg whole verse over 8, 12, 16 beats).*

✓ *Not being able to keep a steady pulse – use a metronome from the internet.*

✓ *Every syllable on the pulse - solve this by using different durations for each word/syllable.*

✓ *If you're doing the activity over multiple sessions make sure the tempo is the same for each session.*

✓ *Just one or two children taking over – solve this by asking the children to work in groups and then ask for feedback to allow everyone to share ideas.*

MELODY - APPLYING PITCHES TO RHYTHMS

You can create a melody using a keyboard or other melodic instrument such as pitched percussion (chime bars, xylophones, or glockenspiels). If you don't have any of these resources available in school, there are interactive versions online.

STEPS TO PLAY

1. Watch the 'Reflections on Wordsworth' film and discuss what different parts of the music sound like (e.g., does 'glistening snake' sound like a snake sliding around? It's okay if you don't know why it sounds like that!)

2. Use the table below as a guide when choosing which pitches to use for your melody, as specific scales can help conjure up different moods and feelings. Think about specific sections or the overall theme/topic of your song and choose which scale best sums that up from the table below. E.g., if one section of your song is about a waterfall, use the chromatic scale (all notes!) in your melody. If another section is about the countryside at night, you could use the Harmonic scale (notes C, D, E, F, G, Ab, B) or the Octatonic scale (notes C, D, Eb, F, F#, Ab, A, B) to reflect this!

SCALE	PITCH	MOOD
Major	C major – C, D, E, F, G, A, B	Happy, uplifting
Minor	C minor – C, D, E, F, G, Ab, Bb	Sad, reflective
Harmonic Minor	C harmonic minor – C, D, E, F, G, Ab, B	Scary, haunting
Whole Tone	C, D, E, F#, G#, A#	Dreamy
Blues	C, Eb, F, F#, G, Bb	Jazzy
Chromatic	All of the pitches!	Free-falling, exciting
Major Pentatonic	C, D, E, G, A	Joyful, used a lot in folk music
Minor Pentatonic	C, Eb, F, G, Bb	Used in rock and folk music
Octatonic	C, D, Eb, F, F#, Ab, A, B	Dark, mysterious
Hexatonic	C, Eb, E, G, Ab, Bb	Exotic

3. Start off by picking one pitch only to work with. Pick one line from your song, the first line of the chorus can be a good place to start, and play the rhythm of that line on the chosen pitch. When children are confident with this, give them a chance to experiment playing this rhythm using 3 different pitches from your scale. Gradually increase pitches available to the children, so that they have the opportunity to experiment playing the rhythm using the whole scale.

TERMINOLOGY

For this section there are some key words that you will need to know the meaning of:

Pitch - whether the sound is high or low

Melody - a collection of pitches into a phrase

Scale - a set of musical notes ordered by pitch, from which you can create melodies.

4. Repeat the process for each line of your song. When moving on to a new line, sing the previous line first, to ensure the lines flow nicely from one to another. This can be done by keeping the first pitch of the new line close to the last pitch of the previous line. For example, if the last line ends on a 'D', you may want to choose a 'C' or 'E' pitch to start your next line.

Tip – Don't jump around pitches too much as children may find it too hard to sing and play. Check the melody works by singing it back often.

Tip – Don't be afraid to experiment with this! Let the children know that it is an ongoing process to refine and edit music, it is what good musicians do, there is no wrong answer at this stage.

SOUND ART

by Dan Fox at Sound Intervention

Dan Fox at Sound Intervention took the Young Composers on the Encountering Wordsworth project on a soundwalk to listen to the sounds around Grasmere, here's how to use a device you might have to go on your own soundwalk! Can you use the sounds you collect in the music and poetry you created in the two previous sections?

LOCATION SOUND RECORDING TIPS

If you want to record sounds outdoors, here are a few tips!

If you have a smart phone, you already have a device capable of high-quality audio recording. There are built-in recording Apps such as Voice Memos on the iPhone but there are many free apps available. Some have editing capabilities and even multi track recording (for layering one sound over another).

Reduce Wind

One of the main problems capturing good audio outside is wind. It causes the bass rumbling sound that 'covers up' the sound we want. We have all called someone in a windy place and heard the nasty sound drowning out our conversation.

Wind rumble is caused by the membrane on the microphone that picks up vibrations being flattened by the wind pressure. To stop it we need to protect the microphone.

This can be done in various ways - professionals use a 'dead cat' or windshield - a fluffy basket that encloses the microphone. The long hair of the fur slows the wind, and an acoustically transparent material base layer catches any residual flow. Finally, there is a basket around the microphone with an air gap between the basket and the mic. An elastic suspension system acoustically decouples the microphone from the basket. The effect is slowing the wind without losing too many high frequencies or creating handling noise.

To do this with a phone there are various options:

- 1) Buy an off-the-shelf fluffy that covers the end of the phone where the microphone is.
- 2) Make a DIY version. There are several YouTube videos on how to do this, but one good way is to get some blu-tac, roll it into a worm and bend that into a small ring. Stick it around the opening where the mic is (if you don't know where the mic is, Google a diagram of your model of phone). Over the Blu-Tac stick a small piece of material - ideally a bit of fluffy fleece. It could be from an old stuffed toy or a furry cleaning cloth, just make sure it's not too thick or it will reduce the amount of sound that can get through. Experiment. It doesn't have to look good. Some people cut up foam hair rollers, cut plasters into small strips or cut up sponges.
- 3) Put the phone in the pocket of a thin jacket or hold it under your shirt but try not to let it touch the clothing.
- 4) Find a sheltered spot -around the corner of a wall, close to the ground or behind a wall (somewhere with less airflow). If you are camping or on the beach, a small tent can be a very effective windshield whilst still letting sound through.

Get Close

Sound gets half as quiet every time we double the distance from the source. One of the best ways to get a good audio signal is to get as close as possible to the source of the sound. If you are recording a person speaking, try to get the mic as close as you can to the speaker. If you stand on the other side of the room whilst recording, the signal to noise ratio will be vastly reduced meaning you will pick up more noise (fridges, background heating noises, rustles, noises outside the room) than signal - the audio you want to capture.

Sometimes we need a bit of space for the sound to develop -a cello indoors needs some room to 'breathe' and allow the sound to develop so you capture a mix of the instrument and the space it's in.

Monitor

If you can, wear headphones whilst you record. They will let you know what the microphone is actually picking up. New iPhones don't have a separate headphone socket so in that scenario you either need to record using the mic on the headphones or its possible to buy an adapter that lets you use a 3.5mm 'mini' jack in a lightning socket.

Without headphones you don't know if you are picking up unwanted sounds such as wind rumble. You might find that a small change in the position on the mic makes a massive difference on the balance of the sound. Earbuds are fine, closed-cup headphones are great. Open backed headphones are okay, but they let in sounds from outside the headphones too.

Interfaces

There are lots of plug-in audio interfaces for phones. Depending on the model of phone they can range from adapters that let you plug in headphones and mics to purpose-built microphones or binaural recording headsets.

Purpose built audio recorders have an advantage that they have built in stereo microphones, headphone sockets, visual meters, windshields, and some can be used as an audio interface to record straight into a computer via USB.

Microphones

If you have a recorder or interface that has various inputs, then there are many types of microphones available that can massively increase the range of sounds you can capture. Contact microphones pick up vibrations in materials so they can be stuck onto things like tables, windows, fences. Hydrophones pickup sounds in liquids. Electromagnetic pickups help us record noises created by electronic signals.

Boom or rifle mics are good for picking up sounds further away. Stereo has two capsules that help create a sense of space. Binaural mics are worn next to your ears, so they record exactly what you hear and sound amazing played back on headphones. There are also radio mics which are a high-quality way to capture sounds without needing to stand close to the source.

Post-production

After recording you'll probably need to edit the audio - trim bits you don't want, remove sections, equalise (change the bass/mid/treble), add effects such as reverb, echo, compression. Labelling is very important - unlike un-named images it's almost impossible to tell what a recording is even if you can see the wave form. Always name your recordings.

After editing and mixing you'll export the audio in a format that fits your needs -e.g. .mp3 for easy digital sharing or 16/24 bit .wav for high quality playback.

To do all the above you need a Digital Audio Workstation or DAW. This is audio software. There are free versions such as Audacity or Reaper or paid apps like Logic Pro, Adobe Audition and Ableton Live.

Have a go!

The main thing is just to start having a go. You will learn from your mistakes, probably capture some surprising results, be outside in the environment and have some fun whilst doing it.

There are no rules as to what you create with your recordings. When I started, I had a cassette Walkman with a button that activated a microphone so I could listen through it - it didn't even record but I got hooked on hearing the world around me amplified through a microphone. I am still learning all the time but there are so many resources online that it's really worth delving further in and developing your own ways of working and building your own sound library.

You can hear one of the sounds we collected from the drinking fountain in Grasmere on [Aporee Maps](#). The young composers loved the rhythmical and tuneful drip! You can explore field recordings from all over the world on the website.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

by Cumbria Development Education Centre

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING/RESPONSE TO THE POETRY

Using Dorothy's diary extract below, tell your class about William and Dorothy walking alongside Ullswater, amongst the March daffodils, which led to William's famous poem.

Excerpt from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Grasmere Journal*, 15 April 1802

This excerpt taken from *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth: The Alfoxden Journal 1798, The Grasmere Journals 1800-1803*, ed. Mary Moorman (New York: Oxford UP, 1971), 109-110.

Thursday 15th. It was a threatening misty morning—but mild. We set off after dinner from Eusemere. Mrs Clarkson went a short way with us but turned back. The wind was furious and we thought we must have returned. We first rested in the large Boat-house, then under a furze Bush opposite Mr Clarkson's. Saw the plough going in the field. The wind seized our breath the Lake was rough. There was a Boat by itself floating in the middle of the Bay below Water Millock. We rested again in the Water Millock Lane. The hawthorns are black and green, the birches here and there greenish but there is yet more of purple to be seen on the Twigs. We got over into a field to avoid some cows—people working, a few primroses by the roadside, woodsorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, strawberries, and that starry yellow flower which Mrs C. calls pile wort. When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow park we saw a few daffodils close to the water side. We fancied that the lake had floated the seeds ashore and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more and at last under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful they grew among the mossy stones about and about them, some rested their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness and the rest tossed and reeled and danced and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the lake, they looked so gay ever glancing ever changing. This wind blew directly over the lake to them. There was here and there a little knot and a few stragglers a few yards higher up but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity and unity and life of that one busy highway. We rested again and again. The Bays were stormy, and we heard the waves at different distances and in the middle of the water like the sea. Rain came on—we were wet when we reached Luffs but we called in. Luckily all was cheerless and gloomy so we faced the storm—we *must* have been wet if we had waited—put on dry clothes at Dobson's.

Activities:

- Focus on the simile, 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' thinking critically around the question: 'Is a cloud lonely?'
- This can be held as a discussion which you have as a whole class and could lead to a persuasive piece of writing.
- You could get your class to roleplay the diary entry, putting themselves into the roles of Dorothy, William, or any other characters real or imagined.

EXPLORING WORDSWORTH'S WIDER IMPACT AND LEGACY

1. Start with a map of Cumbria just looking at the terrain, predominantly lakes and mountains - much the same now, as 250 years ago.
 - Impose roads upon the map as a trigger for discussion about what has changed.
 - Then ask the question - 'Did Wordsworth have anything to do with any of these changes?' Responses could include changes in population, industry, and growth of tourism.
 - Ask your class to evaluate the pros and cons of the changes.
 - Extra Activity: your pupils/students could choose to represent their own personal response with informative leaflets & posters, stories, and artwork.
2. Use an illustrated timeline from 1700 to date that includes key milestones in the history of Cumbria and Wordsworth's role in shaping tourism, conservation, and traditional industries in Cumbria (preindustrial revolution): farming and mining.

Include on the timeline/areas of discussion the following:

- Early life and school years in Hawkshead
- The poet and the role of Dorothy as diarist influencing the content of his poems
- An early tourist - how Wordsworth and other artists were some of the first tourists coming to the beautiful landscape in Cumbria for inspiration - partly influenced by problems doing the Grand Tour of Europe due to Napoleonic wars and French Revolution
- The boom in tourism in Cumbria during the industrial revolution and Wordsworth's reaction to this rapid change in the landscape as one of the first conservationists believing that the Lake District should be "a sort of national property, which every man has the right to perceive and a heart to enjoy"

THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

Discuss how this climate of opinion expressed by Wordsworth's led to:

- The formation of the Lake District Defence Society - preventing new railways being built in Ennerdale and Borrowdale and reinstating public rights of way on Derwent Water and Latrigg fell
- The formation of the National Trust
- The formation of Friends of the Lake District by Wordsworth's grandson (also a William) - preventing mass forestation of the Lakes post WW1 and protecting upland farming culture
- The formation of the Lake District National Park
- UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2018

Group activity: Using rolls of wallpaper, your class can work in groups to illustrate their preferred period on the timeline. Prompt them to discuss their knowledge of farming, tourism and conservation to flesh out a 'personal response' to Wordsworth's legacy.

Final conclusions can be discussed on what we could all do to maintain and preserve the beauty of the landscape we are lucky enough to live in.

ENCOUNTERING WORDSWORTH

Contents

0'00	Introduction to Encountering Wordsworth
1'55	Johann Strauss (II) – Perpetuum Mobile
5'55"	Reflections on Wordsworth <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 7'30" 'Dripping'▪ 10'16" 'Of snow-white foam'▪ 11'59" 'Silently gliding'▪ 12'43" 'Antiquity Esteem'▪ 15'23" 'Of that serene companion'▪ 16'49" 'Still succeeding'▪ 17'41" Fairfield Primary School Poem▪ 18'26" 'Twinkling stars'▪ 20'16" 'That dunes of Duddon's banks' (with sound beam)
27' 16"	Edvard Grieg – Hall of the Mountain King

Credits

Encountering Wordsworth is an inclusive large-scale music, poetry & multi-media project celebrating Wordsworth's 250th birthday featuring:

Cumbria Calling Young Composers

Sandgate School

Fairfield, Grasmere and St Cuthbert's Windermere Primary Schools

Composer: Laura Bowler

Sound Artist: Dan Fox

Co-produced by [Cumbria Music Hub](#), [Orchestras Live](#) and [Manchester Camerata](#) in partnership with [Wordsworth Grasmere](#) and [Cumbria Development Education Centre](#). We are grateful for funding from Arts Council England, Cumbria County Council Community Grant for South Lakeland and the Scops Arts Trust.

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