

## Meet Our Authors: Michael Rosen

### Teaching ideas for *Washing Up* or *Chocolate Cake, P4-P7* (from *Quick, Let's Get Out of Here*, Michael Rose, illustrated by Quentin Blake, Puffin 1985)

Michael Rosen has a knack for capturing the ordinary details of everyday life in amusing ways that strike a chord with our own experience and make us smile. These poems could have been written about any household with children and so pupils will probably feel they can identify with them. They are very conversational in tone, examples of what Michael Rosen calls “talking to the page,” and he goes on to say, “*Many of you will find talking much easier to do than writing, so why not bridge the gap and see if you can talk to the page?*”

#### Suggested learning experiences

- Create still images of moments in poem
- Explore onomatopoeia
- Explore everyday expressions and sayings
- Explore memories in detail through discussion, still image and storyboarding
- Write instructions for an everyday chore
- Write a story-poem about an everyday incident

#### Overview of possible learning outcomes (at Second Level unless stated)

Listening & Talking	Reading	Writing
Select ideas and explain preferences Plan and prepare a still image Comment on the performance of others Communicate memories clearly and expressively	Discuss style and language features Explore onomatopoeia Increase understanding of vocabulary, structure, punctuation, grammar Enjoy using and choosing language Explore characterisation Justify choices/make personal evaluations using evidence from text	Collect, select and organise ideas and quotations Make notes and annotations Engage the reader through choice of language, structure, punctuation and poetic techniques in creation of story-poem Use the language of instructions to produce a clear instructional text

### Warming up

1. **Think, pair, share activity** – Getting to know the poem - see “Teaching ideas for developing poetry” for details of this activity.
2. **Still image 1: poetry moment** – choose a favourite moment from one of these poems and create a still image. If you are on your own, you can then team up with a partner who can advise as a director; then you can swap roles to help create their still image. Show your images to the class and see if they can quote the exact line/s from the poem that you are trying to show. Add sticky notes to say what your character is saying, thinking, feeling, and share these with the class too, or take a digital photo and annotate it/add speech and thought bubbles; quote a relevant line from the poem below the image and print it out.

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**Listening and talking:** *identify a favourite part of the poem and develop the still image*

**Reading:** *identify chosen part of poem as basis for still image (and quotation)*

**Writing:** *add a quotation or annotations to still image/photograph*

3. **Still image 2: poetry promenade** – chunk the poem and create a series of still images (one per group) to depict the whole poem in sequence. Present them in turn to accompany a reading of the poem.

### Ways with words

1. **Fairy squarey, hard cheese** – do you have any favourite expressions like these in *Washing Up?* “Eaksy-peaksy” is one of mine. Why not collect some, with their meanings.

**Reading:** *identify phrases and sayings through reading*

2. **Onomatopoeia** – collect the onomatopoeic words in *Washing Up*, with their context. Look for onomatopoeic words in other texts, too.

**Reading:** *identify and collect onomatopoeic words*

### Working towards writing - everyday incidents

1. **Celebrating the ordinary** – *Washing Up*: what chores do you have to do at home, and how do you try to get round them, make them more fun? What is your relationship with your siblings? How do you get on when doing chores together? Who is in charge? What happens? Has there ever been a time when you have got into big trouble doing the chores? Have you ever played a trick on a sibling? *Chocolate Cake*: have you ever had a similar food incident? Or been naughty and then been caught out like Michael was with the cake?

**Listening and talking:** *discuss the ordinary events and relationships in your life*

2. **Attention to detail: the memory telescope** – pick a moment from the above discussion of memories; think about it really carefully and see what details you can add – where, when, what, how, who, why. Keep homing in closer and closer on the incident, as if you had a memory telescope. Try to think about what you could see, hear, smell, feel. Did anyone say anything? What, and how was it said, and to whom? Tell these details to a partner, or jot them down.

**Listening and talking:** *discuss a memory in detail*

**Writing:** *jot down details of chosen memory*

3. **Still image 3: memory moment** – use the moment you have chosen in the two previous activities to create a still image with members of your group. Then add sticky notes to each person – what are they saying, what are they thinking, how do they feel? Now create the moment before; then the moment after; now run them together in a slow-motion action replay of the event. Take photos of each stage of your memory, print and annotate them.

**Listening and talking:** *develop a still image of your memory with your group*

**Writing:** *add annotations to still image/photograph*

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4. **Storyboard: a memorable memory** – create a storyboard of your memory/incident. Add words and phrases to each shot. If available, use comic strip software to produce a comic strip of your memory on the computer.

**Writing:** *create a storyboard of a detailed memory*

5. **Write instructions** – for washing up successfully, or for making your favourite dish - or try creating some rules for lying successfully!

**Writing:** *write a set of instructions or rules*

### ***Making poems – “talk to the page”***

1. **Write an everyday story poem** – use any or all of the information gathered in the memory activities above to write a poem of an incident. Like Michael Rosen, “talk to the page”, tell it as if you were telling it to a friend, and add in speech and sound effects to bring it to life. Don’t worry about making it rhyme, but look at the way Michael breaks his poems up into chunks, and the way he sometimes repeats words and phrases to create a pattern or an emphasis.

**Reading:** *explore the form and structure of Rosen’s poem*

**Writing:** *create a non-rhyming story poem of a detailed memory*

2. **One-Up-Man-ship** – the situation in *Washing Up* escalates (try plotting the events to see how this happens). Think of how an incident between two people could start small then get more and more out of hand as each one tries to out do the other. Could you make a poem or a drama or a storyboard out of this?

**Listening and talking:** *develop a drama about an escalating incident*

**Writing:** *write a poem or make a storyboard of an escalating incident*

### ***Homework suggestions***

- **Playing tricks** – what tricks do you play on friends or family? What tricks have been played on you? Make a list. What revenge did you take, or what revenge would you *like* to take?
- **Guilty secrets** – have you ever been found out? What had you done? Who found out and how? Write a short account, or create a storyboard