



## **Michael Rosen learning resource**

Cross curricular activities to support using Michael Rosen's poems in class

**Age 8-12**

**CFE Levels Second to Third**

**Resource created by Scottish Book Trust**

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## About this resource

The activities in this resource have been designed to be used with five poems by Michael Rosen: “Boogy Woogy Buggy”, “Don’t”, “Washing Up”, “Chocolate Cake” and “Do I know you?”.

For other resources on using poetry in the classroom see our resource on [Introducing and exploring poetry in the classroom](#) or visit [the Poetry section of our website](#).

## “Boogy Woogy Buggy” activities

Read the poem together as a class, then watch Michael perform his poem. You can watch Michael perform [“Boogy Woogy Buggy”](#) on YouTube (48 seconds). Do your pupils notice anything about the rhythm of the poem?

### Activity 1: Performance

LIT 2-04a, LIT 2-07a, LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-16a

This is a very rhythmic poem. Having watched and read the poem, split pupils into small groups to discuss and explore how they would read it aloud. Pupils could use some musical instruments, such as claves, to set up a beat to accompany the poem. Ask pupils to decide how they want to perform it, then rehearse and each group can

perform it for the class.

### Activity 2: Everyday interventions

LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-22a, LIT 2-23a, LIT 2-24a, LIT 2-28a

Divide your class into pairs. In these pairs ask pupils to create a list of all the everyday inventions they can think of, such as a Hoover or microwave or kettle. For each one, ask pupils to discuss what special thing it allows them to do, what special qualities it has, what life would be like without it— make lists of these special features to go with each invention. Ask pupils to write a short paragraph about what they think life would be like without their chosen item.

For cross-curricular links, you could use this activity to inspire a project exploring life in a previous era. Ask pupils to research and consider what life might have been like in a chosen era, and what life was like without all the modern inventions they are used to.

### Activity 3: Marketing marvels

LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-16a, LIT 2-18a, ENG 2-27a, LIT 2-29a

Ask pupils to collect and bring in magazines or newspapers. Then ask pupils to cut out all the adverts they can find in the magazines and spread them out on the desks. Discuss the claims that the advertisers make about the products they are trying to sell. Do the pupils believe or agree with these claims? What do pupils think of the adverts? What are the adverts' aim? Are pupils persuaded by the advertising? You could collect these phrases and comments and use them as part of a display.

Next, choose one of the inventions the class has discussed in the “everyday inventions” activities and plan and develop a marketing campaign to sell your favoured product to the class. Pupils need to consider who they are aiming their product at – would they want everyone in class to buy it or a targeted group? What advertising will they produce and what will it look like?

### Activity 4: Making music

EXA 2-18a

Ask pupils to find out about different dances like the jive and boogy-woogy. The jive dance originated in 1940's America and is a version of jitterbug and swing dance. You can watch videos of [jitterbug](#) (3 minutes, 25 seconds) and [swing dancing](#) (1 minute, 53 seconds) on YouTube.

Introduce pupils to hand jive dancing. It is a dance from 1940's that involves different patterns of hand movement, including clapping different parts of the body. A good clip to show pupils is the [hand jive](#) (4 minutes, 41 seconds) by Sandy and Danny in Grease (you don't need to show the whole clip, just the parts where Sandy and Danny dance together. This is hand jiving). Ask pupils to research and find out about it as a group. Can your pupils make up a hand jive to go with "Boogy Woogy Buggy"?

### Activity 5: Buggy-making

TCH2-12a, TCH 2-13a, TCH 2-14a, TCH 2-14b

Ask pupils to design and make a buggy with a motor and gears that can carry an Easter egg (or object of choice). Now test it to see how far it will roll down a given slope with varying surfaces.

### **"Don't" activities**

Read the poem together as a class, then watch Michael perform his poem. You can watch Michael Rosen perform his poem ["Don't"](#) on YouTube (1 minutes, 10 seconds). What do your pupils notice about Michael's performance? He uses a lot of gestures in the performance.

### Activity 1: Performance

ENG 2-19a, EXA 2-01a

This is a wonderfully rhythmic poem that cries out for a performance, or at least to be read aloud. Watch Michael perform a variety of poems from his poetry book [The Hypnotiser](#) on his website. This would be a great place to go for your pupils to get

ideas for how to perform a poem aloud. Work with your pupils to create an individual or class performance.

### Activity 2: Don't do that!

LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-06a, ENG 2-27a

Ask your pupils if they have ever been told off. Pupils can discuss in pairs or as a group the sorts of things grownups tell you not to do. Now compare these ideas to those in the poem. Are the things included in the poem something your pupils think they would be told off for?

Next, ask pupils to come up with a list of daft things they might be told not to do. See if pupils can use internal rhyme (or half-rhyme) in the list in the same way Michael Rosen has done, e.g. don't stick chips on your hips. And don't forget something especially silly to end the list!

Pupils can use these lists to create their own "Don't" poems.

### Activity 3: Thinking about rules and rights

SOC 2-17a, LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-28a, LIT 2-29a

Have a class discussion about rules. Why do we have rules? Who makes them? Who breaks them? Why, when, how? If children were to make the rules, what would they be? This would be a good opportunity to highlight any school rules and discuss why they are in place.

From this discussion, go on to explain that everyone has rights. [The Rights of a Child](#) have been outlined by the United Nations Convention. Discuss the rights of a child as a class. What do your pupils think? Do they think everyone in the world enjoys these rights? Why or why not?

## **“Washing Up” and “Chocolate Cake” activities**

[“Washing Up”](#) (5 minutes, 29 seconds) and [“Chocolate Cake”](#) (7 minutes, 33 seconds) are both long poems which tell a story. Compare these poems to the more rhythmic poems “Don’t” and “Boogy Woogy Buggy”. What do pupils notice about the pace of the poems? What about how Michael performs them? Is the difference evident when they read them on the page?

[Puffin Publishers has an excellent resource with activity sheets to help you explore Chocolate Cake](#) in detail with you pupils.

### Activity 1: Poetry moments

LIT 2-04a, LIT 2-06a, LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-16a, ENG 2-19a, LIT 2-26a, LIT 2-28a, EXA 2-14a

Ask pupils to choose a favourite moment from one of these poems and create a still image of that scene. You can use whatever creative material you prefer as a class, it could be collage, pen and paper, painting, or photography.

Ask pupils to present the image to the class and see if their peers can guess the exact line/s from the poem. Pin the images up on a display board or blu-tack to a white board. If pupils have shown a character, e.g. one of brothers in “Washing Up”, add sticky notes to the images to show what the character is saying, thinking, or feeling.

If you want to extend the activity, divide the poem into sections and ask pupils to create a short series of still images. Once all the images are complete, gather them together and ask the class to present the whole poem in sequence. You can accompany this with a reading of the poem.

### Activity 2: Celebrating the ordinary

LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-28a

Here are some questions you could pose to your class based on the poems. Pupils can write a short account of these experiences.

“Washing Up”: what chores do you have to do at home, and how do try to make them more fun? What is your relationship with any siblings like? 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 a task?

“Chocolate Cake”: have you ever had a similar food incident? Or been naughty and then been caught out like Michael was with the cake? Have you ever eaten the whole chocolate cake like Michael Rosen? Have you ever been found out? What had you done? Why? Who found out and how? Were there any consequences?

### Activity 3: The memory telescope

LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-07a, LIT 2-05a

Ask pupils to pick a moment from the above discussion of memories and incident. Tell pupils to close their eyes, and think about it really carefully. What details can they add – where, when, what, how, who, why? Tell pupils to keep honing in closer and closer on the incident, as if they are using a memory telescope. Try to think about what you could see, hear, smell and feel. Did anyone say anything? What, and how was it said, and to whom? Ask pupils to write these details down and then discuss them in pairs or with a neighbour.

### Activity 4: Storyboarding

ENG 2-30a, ENG 2-31a, ENG 2-27a, LIT 2-28a, TCH 2-04b

Ask pupils to create a storyboard of the memory or incident they have selected. Add words, phrases, text to each panel to bring the incident to life. If you have access to it, you could use comic strip software to create a comic strip of the chosen memory.

### Activity 5: Everyday story poems

LIT 2-27a, ENG 2-31a, ENG 2-19a

Use any or all of the information gathered in the memory activities to write a poem of an incident. Like Michael Rosen, “talk to the page”, ask pupils to tell the story as if they are telling it to a friend. They can add in speech and sound effects to bring it to

life. Pupils do not need to worry about making it rhyme. Now might be a good opportunity to look back at the poem and discuss its structure, and the way Michael breaks his poems up into chunks or repeats words and phrases to create a pattern or an emphasis.

### Activity 6: It escalates

LIT 2-09a, ENG 2-31a, LIT 2-28a

The situation in “Washing Up” escalates quickly – ask pupils to try plotting the events to see how this happened. As a class, discuss how an incident between two people could start small then get more and more out of hand as each one tries to outdo the other, such as eating dinner that turns into a food fight. Can pupils make a poem or a drama out of this?

## **“Do I know you?” activities**

### Activity 1: Who am I?

LIT 2-09a, LIT 3-09a, LIT 2-16a, LIT 3-16a

Ask your pupils to read the poem carefully. What do they think Michael Rosen is trying to get them to think about? Have they ever felt lost, misunderstood, and even that they don't understand themselves? Does everyone have a right to be understood? How could they bring this about? Use this poem as a starting point for a Health and Wellbeing discussion on self-awareness and emotions, as well as empathy and respecting others.

### Activity 2: Something small and lost. . .

LIT 2-20a, ENG 2-27a, ENG 2-31a, LIT 3-20a, ENG 3-27a, ENG 3-31a, LIT 2-09a, LIT 3-09a,

Divide the class into pairs. Ask pupils to create images of their own based on the pattern Michael has used. He describes something small as lost inside something bigger: “*I’m an apple in a pie; I’m a note in a flute’s tune; I’m the whisper in the breeze; I’m a star in the Milky Way. . .*” Once the class have created a few lines of their own, ask the pairs to discuss how they think the small object might feel in this



situation. The class can then use the images they have created in this activity to write their own poems or short verse inspired by “Do I know you?”

### Activity 3: Top ten things you like

LIT 2-26a, LIT 2-28a, ENG 2-30a, LIT 3-26a, LIT 3-28a, ENG 3-30a

Ask the class to think of the ten things or items they like most (not just food items!). Ask pupils to think about what each of these items tells the rest of the world about them as a person. Give pupils a sheet of paper so they can make a table, with each word on the left and an explanation of what it tells the world about them on the right. Pupils might want to illustrate each item.

### Activity 4: “Ask me who I am”

LIT 2-26a, LIT 3-26a, ENG 2-27a, ENG 3-27a

Michael Rosen’s line might suggest making a riddle to hide the identity of a famous person or someone the rest of the class would know. Make a list of “I am. . .” statements about the person (perhaps someone you have been studying, or a character from a class novel) in the style of the poem, and see if pupils can guess their identity.

To extend this activity, pupils could conduct an interview with that character or person and record it as a podcast, or set it out as a magazine interview. Pupils could take it in turns to be in the hot-seat and pretend to be the character. Work with pupils to create a list of suitable interview questions first and encourage pupils to think about interesting answers that will engage your audience. They could perhaps practice their interview before filming or recording them.

## Poems

### Boogy Woogy Buggy

I glide as I ride  
in my boogy woogy buggy  
take the corners wide  
just see me drive  
I'm an easy speedy baby  
doing the baby buggy jive

I'm in and out the shops  
I'm the one that never stops  
I'm the one that feels  
the beat of the wheels  
all that air  
in my hair  
I streak down the street  
between the feet that I meet.

No one can catch  
my boogy woogy buggy  
no one's got the pace  
I rule this place

I'm a baby who knows  
I'm a baby who goes, baby, goes.

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## Do I know you?

I'm lost  
I'm lost  
I don't know where I am  
I'm a sock in a washing machine  
A strawberry in some jam  
I'm a letter in a book  
I'm the bubble in some fizz  
I'm a pebble on a beach  
I'm a question in a quiz  
I don't know where you are  
You don't know where you are  
You don't know when I is  
I don't know how you was  
You don't know who I wiz.

So find me  
Find me  
Ask me who I am  
Get me out the washing machine  
Fish me out the jam  
Open up the book  
Let out all the fizz  
Let's walk on the beach  
And I'll answer your quiz  
Then I'll know where you are  
You'll know when I is  
I'll know how you was  
And you'll know who I wiz.

**This poem was especially written for Michael Rosen's appearance on the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour in 2008.**

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## Don't

Don't do,

Don't do,

Don't do that.

Don't pull faces,

Don't tease the cat.

Don't pick your ears,

Don't be rude at school.

Who do they think I am?

Some kind of fool?

One day

They'll say

Don't put toffee in my coffee

don't pour gravy on the baby

don't put beer in his ear

don't stick your toes up his nose.

Don't put confetti on the spaghetti

and don't squash peas on your knees.

Don't put ants in your pants

don't put mustard in the custard

don't chuck jelly at the telly

and don't throw fruit at a computer

don't throw fruit at a computer.

Don't what?

Don't throw fruit at a computer.

Don't what?

Don't throw fruit at a computer.

Who do they think I am?

Some kind of fool?

**“Don't” taken from *Mustard, Custard, Grumble Belly and Gravy* by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Quentin Blake. (Andre Deutsch 1985, Bloomsbury 2006). Text copyright © Michael Rosen, 1985.**

## Washing Up

On Sundays,  
my mum and dad said,  
'Right, we've cooked the dinner,  
you two can wash it up,'  
and then they went off to the front room.

So then we began.  
First there was the row about who  
was to wash and who was to dry.  
My brother said, 'You're too slow at washing,  
I have to hang about waiting for you,'  
so I said,  
'You always wash, it's not fair.'

'Hard cheese,' he says,  
'I'm doing it.'  
So that was that.

'Whoever dries has to stack the dishes,'  
he says,  
so that's me stacking the dishes  
while he's getting the water ready.

Now,  
quite often we used to have mustard  
with our Sunday dinner  
and we didn't have it out of a tube,  
one of us used to make it with the powder  
in an eggcup  
and there was nearly always  
some left over.

Anyway,  
my brother  
he'd be washing up by now  
and he's standing there at the sink  
his hands in the water,  
I'm drying up,  
And suddenly he goes,  
'Quick, quick quick  
come over here  
quick, you'll miss it

quick, you'll miss it.'  
'What?' I say, 'What?'  
'Quick, quick. In here,  
in the water.'  
I say,  
'What? What?'  
'Give us your hand,' he says  
and he grabs my hand  
then my finger,  
'What?' I say,  
'That,' he says,  
and he pulls my finger under the water  
and stuffs it into the eggcup  
with left-over blobs of old mustard  
stuck to the bottom.  
It's all slimey  
'Oh Horrible.'

I was an idiot to have believed him.

So I go on drying up.

Suddenly  
I feel a little speck of water on my neck.  
I look up at the ceiling.  
Where'd that come from?

I look at my brother  
he's grinning all over his big face.

'Oy, cut that out,'  
He grins again  
sticks his finger under the water  
in the bowl and  
flicks.  
Plip.  
'Oy, that got me right on my face.'  
'Did it? did it? did it?'  
He's well pleased.

So now it's my turn  
I've got the drying up cloth, haven't I?  
And I've been practising for ages  
on the kitchen door handle.

Now he's got his back to me  
washing up  
and  
out goes the cloth, like a whip, it goes  
right on the –  
'Ow – that hurt. I didn't hurt *you*.'  
Now it's me grinning.

So he goes,  
'All right, let's call it quits.'  
'OK,' I say, 'one-all. Fairy squarey.'

So, I go on drying up.  
What I don't know it that  
he's got the Fairy Liquid bottle under the  
water  
boop boop boop boop boop boop  
it's filling up  
with dirty soapy water  
and next thing it's out of the water  
and he's gone sqeeesh  
and squirted it right in my face.

'Got you in the mush,' he goes.

'Right, that it,' I say,  
'I've had enough.'  
And I go upstairs and get  
this old bicycle cape I've got,  
one of those capes you can wear when you ride a bicycle in the rain.

So I come down in that  
and I say,  
'OK I'm ready for anything you've got now.  
You can't get me now, can you?'

So next thing he's got the little  
washing-up brush  
and it's got little bits of meat fat  
and squashed peas stuck in it  
and he's come up to me  
and he's in, up, under the cape with it  
working it round and round  
under my jumper, and under my chin.



So that makes me really wild  
and I make a grab for anything that'll  
hold water; dip it in the sink  
and fling it at him.

What I don't know is that  
while I went upstairs to get the cape  
he's got a secret weapon ready.

It's his bicycle pump,  
He's loaded it with the dirty washing-up water  
By sucking it all in.  
He picks it up,  
and it's squirt again.  
All over my hair.

Suddenly the door opens.  
'Have you finished the ...?'  
It's Mum AND Dad.

'Just look at this.  
Look at the pair of them.'

And there's water all over the floor  
all over the table  
and all we've washed up is  
two plates and the mustard pot.

My dad says,  
'You can't be trusted to do anything you're asked,  
can you.'

He always says that.

Mind you, the floor was pretty clean  
After we had mopped it all up.

**“Washing Up” taken from *Quick, Let's Get Out of Here* by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Quentin Blake (Andrew Deutsch 1983, Puffin 2006). Text © Michael Rosen, 1983. Reproduced by kind permission of Penguin Books Ltd.**

## Chocolate Cake

I love chocolate cake.  
And when I was a boy  
I loved it even more.

Sometimes we used to have it for tea  
and Mum used to say,  
'If there's any left over  
you can have it to take to school  
tomorrow to have at playtime.'  
And the next day I would take it to school  
wrapped in tin foil  
open it up at playtime and sit in the  
corner of the playground  
eating it,  
you know how the icing on top  
is all shiny and it cracks as you  
bite into it  
and there's that other kind of icing in  
the middle  
and it sticks to your hands and you  
can lick your fingers  
and lick your lips  
oh it's lovely.  
yeah.

Anyway,  
once we had this chocolate cake for tea  
and later I went to bed  
but while I was in bed  
I found myself waking up  
licking my lips  
and smiling.  
I woke up proper.  
'The chocolate cake.'  
It was the first thing  
I thought of.  
I could almost see it  
so I thought,  
what if I go downstairs  
and have a little nibble, yeah?

It was all dark

everyone was in bed  
so it must have been really late  
but I got out of bed,  
crept out of the door

there's always a creaky floorboard, isn't there?

Past Mum and Dad's room,

careful not to tread on bits of broken toys  
or bits of Lego  
you know what it's like treading on Lego  
with your bare feet,

Yowwww  
Shhhhhhh

downstairs  
into the kitchen  
open the cupboard  
and there it is  
all shining.

So I take it out of the cupboard  
put it on the table  
and I see that  
there's a few crumbs lying about on the plate,  
so I lick my finger and run my finger all over the crumbs  
scooping them up  
and putting them into my mouth.

ooooooooommmmmmmmm

nice.

Then  
I look again  
and on one side where it's been cut,  
it's all crumbly.  
So I take a knife  
I think I'll just tidy that up a bit,  
cut off the crumbly bits  
scoop them all up  
and into the mouth

ooooommm mmmm  
nice.

Look at the cake again.

That looks a bit funny now,  
one side doesn't match the other  
I'll just even it up a bit, eh?

Take the knife  
and slice.  
This time the knife makes a little cracky noise  
as it goes through that hard icing on the top.

A whole slice this time,  
  
into the mouth.

Oh the icing on top  
and the icing in the middle  
ohhhhhh oooo mmmmmm.

But now  
I can't stop myself.  
Knife –  
I just take any old slice at it  
and I've got this great big chunk  
and I'm cramming it in  
what a greedy pig  
but it's so nice,

and there's another  
and another and I'm squealing and I'm smacking my lips  
and I'm stuffing myself with it  
and  
before I know  
I've eaten the lot.

The whole lot.  
I look at the place.  
It's all gone.

Oh no

they're bound to notice, aren't they,  
a whole chocolate cake doesn't just disappear  
does it?

What shall I do?

I know. I'll wash the plate up,  
and the knife

and put them away and maybe no one  
will notice, eh?

So I do that  
and creep creep creep  
back to bed  
into bed  
doze off  
licking my lips  
with a lovely feeling in my belly.  
Mmmmmmmmm.

In the morning I get up,  
downstairs,  
have breakfast,  
Mum's saying,  
'Have you got your dinner money?'  
and I say,  
'Yes.'  
'And don't forget to take some chocolate cake with you.'  
I stopped breathing.

'What's the matter,' she says,  
'you normally jump at chocolate cake?'

I'm still not breathing,  
and she's looking at me very closely now.

She's looking at me just below my mouth.  
'What's that?' she says.  
'What's what?' I say.  
'What's that there?'  
'Where?'  
'There,' she says, pointing at my chin.  
'I don't know,' I say.

'It looks like chocolate,' she says.  
'It's not chocolate cake is it?'  
No answer.  
'Is it?'  
'I don't know.'  
She goes to the cupboard  
looks in, up, top, middle, bottom,  
turns back to me.  
'It's gone.  
It's gone.  
You haven't eaten it, have you?'  
'I don't know.'  
'You don't know? You don't know if you've eaten a whole  
chocolate cake or not?  
When? When did you eat it?'

So I told her,

and she said  
well what could she say?  
'That's the last time I give you any cake to take  
to school.  
Now go. Get out  
no wait  
not before you've washed your dirty sticky face.'  
I went upstairs  
looked in the mirror  
and there it was,  
just below my mouth,  
a chocolate smudge.  
The give-away.  
Maybe she'll forget about it by next week.

**"Chocolate Cake" taken from *Quick, Let's Get Out of Here* by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Quentin Blake (Andrew Deutsch 1983, Puffin 2006). Text © Michael Rosen, 1983. Reproduced by kind permission of Penguin Books Ltd.**