Anti Bullying Poetry Anthology

**Tips and hints for writing your own poetry**

The experience of bullying is often very difficult to write about. This is, perhaps, especially true of poetry because on the one hand you are describing feelings and emotions and on the other, you are trying to shape the experience into a condensed form that talks to the reader very directly. The trick is to use the force of feelings to spark your imagination into new and unexpected descriptions. What do we mean by ‘new and unexpected?’

Let’s start with an example. We might want to describe crying. We could simply write: *I cried* but this would sound dull, it wouldn’t bring my experience to life. Now we know that imagery (where you compare one thing to another) is a strong poetic tool, so we might start again with: *I cried buckets of tears.* Hmmm. Yes. But haven’t we heard that somewhere before? Let’s think of a more unusual comparison e.g. *My tears rolled down my face like rocks from a cliff.* (Richard Blower, Y10, N. Leamington) or *in my heart are buckets and baskets and boxes of tears.* (Y5, Newburgh Middle). Look how much these descriptions manage to say in just a few words. Now let’s concentrate specifically on using a simile. (when you compare one thing to something else by using *like* or *as*). If tears fall, what else falls? *Rain, leaves, bouncing balls, things dropped from pockets, coins.* Start by writing down: my tears fell like…and then add your simile. Try another simile: *his/her insults flew like…or were sharp as…my face went pale as…* (milk, the moon, crumpled paper). E.g my face was as long as a tape measure, assessing misery (Y2, St Giles Primary) It’s easy to move on to drafting a whole list poem using this technique.
2 Already, your poem is different, full of fresh images. So now, instead of tears falling – why not imagine what sport or type of dance they could be doing: tears bungee-jumping, sky-diving, doing the front crawl, tap-dancing: or my tears abseiled with anger, sledged with sorrow (Y5 Redmaid Junior). Here, we are bringing tears to life and playing around with the verbs (doing words) to describe both their movement and the feelings behind them.

3 Try to speak your poem aloud to hear how it sounds. When words begin with the same letter sound, it’s called **Alliteration**. The words literally make music. compose your images so that they use the same letter e.g. *my tears flew and fell like falcons*.

4 Have you come across a Kenning? This is an old Anglo Saxon way of describing people or places e.g. the sea is a *whale-road*. For your poem, you may want to describe the bully. Imagine what they actually do – i.e. steal confidence or create fear. A kenning re-orders this description: the bully becomes a *confidence stealer* or *fear creator*. E.g. dignity drowner, conniving confidence killer (Y8 St Peter’s). Notice the use of alliteration here too.

5 Metaphor performs a magical spell of transformation. A metaphor is an image like a simile, but instead of saying *my heart is broken like a bottle* you can take the word *like* out and have: *my heart is a broken bottle in a back alley* (Y10 Collegiate High). Or instead of: *a bully’s words are like missiles* change to: *a bully’s words are missiles, diving, sinking, cruel* (Y6 Coton End Middle) e.g. *my anger was a growing database, filled with furious information* (Y8 St Peters). These are descriptions filled with impact.
Remember, your poem does not have to rhyme. Sometimes, it’s possible to be so desperate to get the rhyme that the words don’t make any sense and all our good images and ideas get lost. I’m not knocking rhyme. However, to use all the images suggested and then to use a rhyme structure is a challenge. Instead, try putting your new and unexpected images together to tell a story that describes your feelings and what happened to you. Think of your poem as a sandwich filled with images and ideas about: what shape a frown is, what a heart feels like, what size and colour anger is, how tears move. Your poem could be a story of despair, anger, revenge, compromise, resolution or hope from the victim’s or the bully’s point of view. Good luck and remember there are no rights and wrongs in poetry and rules are made for breaking!

*but I shall be a river of revenge*
*flowing with fury*
*all the way to the surrendered sea.*
(Y6 Penycae Junior)

Use your poetry as a powerful way of sharing your experiences with others and to shed light on what goes on in your heart.

**Andrew Fusek Peters & Polly Peters**

**Poems With Attitude** by Andrew Fusek Peters and Polly Peters, Hodder Children’s Books, 2000

**Resources:**
Poems about bullying for teenagers also in Poems With Attitude Uncensored by Andrew Fusek Peters and Polly Peters, Hodder Children’s Books
A play about girl bullying:
Plays With Attitude, Twisted by Andrew Fusek Peters and Polly Peters, Hodder Children’s Books
For younger readers – poems about feelings and bullying:
Sadderday and Funday by Andrew Fusek Peters and Polly Peters, Hodder Children’s Books
Info on our books on [www.tallpoet.com](http://www.tallpoet.com)