

Literacy this week: Author Study

This week your Literacy is all on one document but spread across four days (Monday - Thursday as Friday is a Bank Holiday).

Monday: Comprehension - an interview with Michael Rosen

Tuesday: Hands - Michael Rosen's Poem

Wednesday: Watch and perform.

Thursday: Write a letter to Michael Rosen.

Enjoy the fantastic poetry and learning more about Michael Rosen!

Monday Comprehension

Find out about Michael Rosen by reading this interview and then answer the questions below.



1) Who has been the biggest influence in your life so far?

I think it must be my father and mother. They were teachers and my mother read to me when I was very young. She read to me every night and I can remember many of the stories and I've even got quite a few of the books she read to me. She had a sing-song voice and I once told her but she thought I was criticising her and she got a bit humpy with me. My dad read to us when we were older but he helped me a lot with writing and studying. We spent long hours talking about the world, politics, books and football. He was also very funny, very good at jokes and could speak several languages. All this influenced me. He was a rock to me and a real revelation. He taught me that if you want to do something, you go and do it.

2) Were you badly behaved at school?

Yes. I'm afraid so.

3) Did you do anything that you regret when you were younger? What?

Yes, I sometimes did something very horrible. I would get other children to laugh at someone. I made fun of that person and got others to join in. I'm very, very ashamed of this.

4) Why did you want to be a poet and an author?

I sometimes think of poems as capturing something - a moment, a person, a feeling, a sound. The business of writing is getting it right. It's not really a 'capture'. It's a strange business of translating something from the real world (a scene or a conversation) and turning it into the few words on the page that we call a poem. This change (sometimes I think of it like a 'metamorphosis' as with caterpillars turning into butterflies) is what gets me going and it always has.

5) Is your Jewish background important to you? Why or how?

I know that it's important because its how and why my parents behaved in the way they did. If I try to break that down into exactly what, all I come up with is things like the particular way in which they told stories about their family and their childhoods, the ways in which they used language (they often mixed English with Yiddish). We weren't religious so I can't say that it was that. They also had stories about how they were persecuted when they were children so they brought me up to think about discrimination, prejudice and racism.

6) Did your parents like your career decision?

Not at first. They were very disappointed. I think they thought I was just throwing away a chance of a lifetime to do something really special.

7) How long does it take you to write a poem?

Sometimes it can be quite quick, let's say, less than half an hour. Sometimes it can take months and years. What this means is that I write some of it, and get dissatisfied, leave it and then try again later. And then again, later. And then again!

8) What is your favourite book? Why?

My favourite book for adults is 'Great Expectations' by Charles Dickens. I remember being mesmerised by it. It is a wonderful book about a boy growing up and finding his way in society, thinking that he's posh, when in fact he isn't. I loved 'Catch-22' by Joseph Heller. It is about the crazy, tragic and corrupt things that go on in wartime. My favourite children's books for very young children are 'Where the Wild Things Are' by Maurice Sendak and 'Not Now Bernard' by David McKee. My favourite books for older children are 'Emil and the Detectives' by Erich Kastner, 'The Lonely White Sail' by Valentin Katayev and the first of the Northern Lights trilogy by Philip Pullman. My favourite poets from the past are Carl Sandburg, D.H. Lawrence and Gerard Manley Hopkins. My favourite living poets are Jackie Kay, Matthew Sweeney, John Agard and Tony Harrison.

9) What has been the worst or most embarrassing experience of your career?

In 2003, the very first time I was on television talking about my first book and I was asked what the name of my book was and I forgot.

10) Have you met any of your idols? Who are they?

Just last week I said 'Bonjour' to Thierry Henry and I know Tony Benn.

11) Do you want your books to last for generations? If so why?

If I'm really honest, yes I would. I'm not sure I know why. I'm guessing it's because it's a way of not being lost or forgotten and I my name to be remembered as that great poet. I'm sort of 'egotistical' but I try very hard to balance that by doing as many things as I can to help other people express themselves.

Child: Thanks again for your time and perseverance!

Michael: It's been my pleasure.

1) Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is true or false. (1 mark)

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>
Michael Rosen's background and faith played an important part of his life.		
His class teachers inspired him to be a poet.		
He enjoys sports.		
He doesn't care if he is not remembered or not.		

2) Other than reading and writing novels and poetry, what else does Michael Rosen enjoy? (1 mark)

3) List two things Michael Rosen has been embarrassed about. (1 mark)

1.

2.

4) Who does Michael Rosen look up to? (1 mark)

5) Why do you think the interviewer asked the following questions? Match each question to its purpose. (1 mark)

Were you badly behaved in school?
Who has been the biggest influence in your life?
Why did you want to be a poet and an author?
What is your favorite book? Why?

To encourage other people to read.
To build up excitement in the interview.
To provide general background information.
To find out what made Michael want to be a writer.

6) Look at the paragraph beginning: What is your favourite story...

Find and copy a word that shows Michael Rosen's interest was captured by the book *Great Expectations*. (1 mark)

7) I'm sort of 'egotistical...'

What does this tell us about Michael Rosen's character? (1 mark)

He does a lot of charity work.

He does not like being criticized.

He cares what people think.

He cares more about himself than others.

Tuesday

Main Task: Listen and read Michael Rosen's Poem:

Hands <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vb3vKDyQ244>

These are the hands
That touch us first
Feel your head
Find the pulse
And make your bed.

These are the hands
That tap your back
Test the skin
Hold your arm
Wheel the bin
Change the bulb
Fix the drip
Pour the jug
Replace your hip.

These are the hands
That fill the bath
Mop the floor
Flick the switch
Soothe the sore
Burn the swabs
Give us a jab
Throw out sharps
Design the lab.

And these are the hands
That stop the leaks
Empty the pan
Wipe the pipes
Carry the can
Clamp the veins
Make the cast
Log the dose
And touch us last.

Questions:

1. Why did Michael Rosen write this poem?

2. What is the message?

3. Why is it relevant today?

4. Find the meaning of:

Sharps:

Swabs:

Drips:

5. What does each verse begin with?

6. What kind of word does each line usually begin with?

Task 2:

Rewrite a verse (or two)

Rewrite a verse about the NHS: begin with..

These are the hands...

That...

Or

Choose another profession that you think is really important.

Begin in the same way...

These are the hands....

Wednesday

Visit the Michael Rosen You Tube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/MichaelRosenOfficial>

Listen to your favourite poems and stories. What do you notice about how he tells a story?

How does he use expression, gesture and intonation?

TASK: Choose a short story or poem (it can be one of Michael Rosen's or another favourite author/poet). Practise telling it. Can you video yourself doing it?

Remember to choose your audience- Is it for younger children to entertain them or for an audience of your own age.

Extension: Write something of your own to perform and tell.

Thursday - Thank you letter

Write a thank you letter to Michael Rosen for his poetry.

<https://www.michaelrosen.co.uk/>

You should- Introduce yourself

- Say why you are writing
- Explain which poems/stories you have heard and enjoyed at home and at school and why.
- Ask him some questions about his poetry, his inspirations and being a writer.
- Sign off.

Alternative Task: Write to another poet or author of your choice to thank them.

