

KEY STAGE	AGE
KS1	5-7
KS2	7-11 ✓
KS3	11-14
KS4	14-16
KS5	16-18

AT A GLANCE

- GRAMMAR
- USING ADVERBS
- PUNCTUATION
- HISTORY
- GROUP POEMS

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POETRYCLASS: FRESH IDEAS FOR POETRY LEARNING FROM THE POETRY SOCIETY

WIDE OPEN: TEACHING GRAMMAR WITH POETRY

BY RACHEL ROONEY

In my poem ‘Wide Open’ (copy included overleaf), the magic eye can look backwards or forwards in time, view things close up and from a great distance, see inanimate objects come to life or use X-ray vision. It might also be able to see invisible things such as oxygen or electricity, emotions, sounds and smells, or be able to read other people’s minds - the possibilities are endless! When discussing these points, children soon realise that this poem is describing the powers of the imagination- similar to the ‘third eye’ or the ‘inner eye’ referred to in Hinduism. The poem gives an opportunity for imaginative writing and an accessible way into teaching grammar.

It is aimed at **years 3 and 4** and intended to support the **explicit teaching of grammar terminology and concepts**, as specified in the National Curriculum for English (2013).

Using our magic eye

Read ‘Wide Open’ together and discuss it. What can the magic eye do that our normal eyes cannot?

Now pass around some self adhesive dot stickers for children to place on their foreheads, between their eyes, like bindis. Ask them to close their normal eyes for a few minutes and allow their ‘magic eye’ to open. Visual stimuli such as scientific and historical photos or paintings can be looked at first to prompt creative thinking.

While their eyes are closed, remind them of all the powers that their magic eye has. What will it see through? Where will it go? What tiny objects or creatures can it observe? What can it see happening in the past or the future?

Teaching the curriculum

As a group or class, take suggestions about what their magic eye is able to see. Get them to talk through their answers before writing them on the board. This is an opportunity to introduce some **key points of grammar and punctuation** along with encouraging interesting detail and descriptions. If necessary, refer to the original poem in order to illustrate the points.

For example, if a child says “My magic eye sees a caveman”, you can ask what he’s doing, and where? What happens before, next or during this time? When does it happen? This may result in extended the sentences such as:

- ‘My magic eye sees a caveman sleeping on a grassy bed, while the wolves are howling outside’
- ‘My magic eye sees a caveman make a fire, then dance around it’
- ‘My magic eye sees a caveman, at midnight, counting the stars’.

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 This resource was produced by the Poetry Society with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. It is one in a series of four, each addressing different sections of the Primary National Curriculum as announced in 2013 and designed to support teachers in using poetry to teach the new curriculum creatively.

Teaching the curriculum (continued)

This encourages the use of **time conjunctions** (until, when, as, after, then, before, while, whenever) and **prepositions of time** (at x, on x, in x).

You can also encourage them to extend the sentence by asking when their magic eye might have been working. Did it work yesterday? Will it work tomorrow? How often?

As such, 'my magic eye watches angels fly through the sky' can become 'my magic eye once watched angels fly through the sky'. You can also then explore changing some of these sentences around to make them sound more poetic, e.g. 'Once, my magic eye watched angels fly through the sky'. This encourages the use of **adverbs** relating to time (yesterday, tomorrow, once, sometimes, often, always, all day) and exploration of the effects of **fronted adverbials** ('on the hill a wizard was standing' as opposed to 'a wizard was standing on the hill').

Other grammar teaching possibilities

The poem also offers a chance to consider:

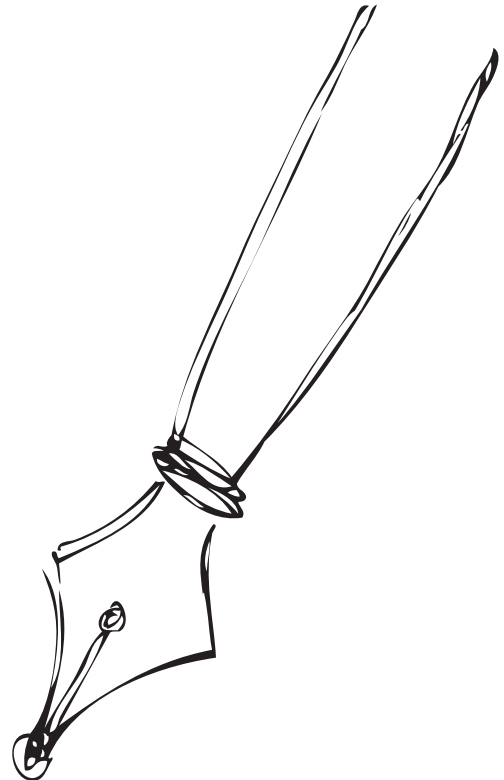
- **Possessive** apostrophes, as in 'ant's belly'
- Using **pronouns** to avoid repetition or ambiguity, as in 'It sees the sun as it squints' or 'my magic eye has read them'
- Use of the **noun phrase** 'My magic eye' rather than a pronoun in the first sentence to establish what is being talked about
- Using **adverbs**, e.g. 'stares hard', and **adjectives**, e.g. 'sticky beak', to add interesting detail
- Using a variety of **verbs** for impact, e.g. 'sees', 'spies', 'watches', 'stares', 'looks at'
- **Repetition** for effect, as in 'wide, wide open'.

Creative approaches

Write a magic eye poem as a class. Key pointers are:

- Break sentences into clauses over two lines
- Describe a variety of magic powers
- Choose a last line that celebrates your magic eye
- At the end, think of a good title.

An example of a group poem created in this way, 'Spectacular', is attached overleaf. Having written a group poem, the children can then try to write their own magic eye poem, using the structure of a template (a sample writing frame is included here). Good luck- and enjoy writing your magic eye poems!



WIDE OPEN

My magic eye sees the sticky beak of a baby chick,
before the eggshell has broken.

It can catch the sun as it squints
and the stars as they wink at me.

My magic eye has discovered an unnamed planet
spinning at the edge of the galaxy.

It watches a woolly mammoth give her last sigh,
then sink quietly beneath the ice.

It stares hard at the soft hairs,
as they vibrate on an ant's belly.

If you have scribbled down secrets in a diary,
my magic eye will have read them.

Yesterday, it spied on your nightmares
and tomorrow it will spy on your dreams.

My magic eye is wide, wide open.

RACHEL ROONEY

SPECTACULAR

My magic eye can see Julius Caesar celebrating,
after a victorious war.

It spies plankton floating in the murky sea,
while the whale slips behind, unnoticed.

My magic eye has searched for craters
on the dark side of the moon.

It glimpses myself as a grandmother
sitting in an armchair, as my grandchildren play.

Yesterday, it spotted the wind quarreling with the sun,
then storming off.

My magic eye is spectacular.

GROUP POEM
(WEST SUSSEX ABLE WRITERS,
YEARS 3 & 4, JANUARY 2013)

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MY MAGIC EYE POEM

My poem title:

.....

POET'S TIP

Try to use lots of different 'seeing' verbs
such as: looks at, watches, glimpses,
spies, spots, notices...

My magic eye can see.....

.....

It.....

.....

My magic eye has.....

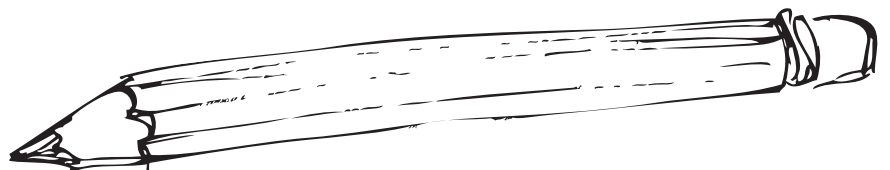
.....

*, my magic eye.....

.....

My magic eye is.....

* insert an adverb of time here, such as:
tomorrow, sometimes, once, often, now, all day



NAME: