Young Adult Literature

Task 2

Poetry lesson

Saskia Witte & Ilse Anchelon

Inhoud

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# The Poem – People need people

People need people,  
To walk to  
To talk to  
To cry and rely on,  
People will always need people.  
To love and to miss  
To hug and to kiss,  
It’s useful to have other people.  
To whom to moan  
If you’re all alone,  
It’s so hard to share  
When no one is there.  
There’s not much to do  
When there’s no one but you.  
People will always need people.

To please  
To tease  
To put you at ease,  
People will always need people.  
To make life appealing  
And give life some meaning,  
It’s useful to have other people.  
It you need a change  
To whom will you turn.  
If you need a lesson  
From whom will you learn.  
If you need to play  
You’ll know why I say  
People will always need people.

As girlfriends  
As boyfriends  
From Bombay  
To Ostend,  
People will always need people-  
To have friendly fights with  
And share tasty bites with,  
It’s useful to have other people.  
People live in families  
Gangs, posses and packs,  
Its seems we need company  
Before we relax,  
So stop making enemies  
And let’s face the facts,  
People will always need people,  
Yes  
People will always need people.



# Teaching package

## Introduction

The goal of this lesson is to introduce students to poetry in a light-hearted way. We chose *People need People* by Benjamin Zephaniah Dahl because it is accessible and entertaining. Students can identify with the ‘needs’ from the poem. Also they will probably be surprised with the author of the poem because he does not look like your stereotypical poet. Furthermore the students will be familiar with the vocabulary of the poem.

At the end of this lesson, students will:

* Have seen that poetry can be fun
* Have experienced the joy of rhyming and rhythm
* Be able to think beyond clichés; be aware that one can break through clichés
* Feel empowered to use English to express themselves
* Be able to write a simple poem by themselves
* Have increased cooperation skills from working together in small groups

## Intended teaching level

This lesson is designed for students in the second year of  VMBO BK – KGT. These students needs structure and guidance in order to be able to start a task. It is therefore important that the teacher will give clear instructions before starting a task.

## Learning objectives

* Students expand their vocabulary by learning new words from the poem
* Students practise their communication skills
* Students learn how to listen and compare answers with each other
* Students learn to work together

## Teaching method

Cooperative learning:

* class discussion about what people need. (“onderwijsleergesprek”)
* think - pair - share

Individual learning:

* listening to the poem, recognizing sounds and words
* reading the poem and finding difficult words
* transfer recently gained knowledge into a poem/ short story/ drawing

## Materials

* Spoken version of the poem by Benjamin Zephaniah: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC57oeaDpfM>
* Powerpoint on this lesson
* Student package (student package includes: worksheets, placemat)
* Pencil, crayons
* Stickers, post-its for voting system

## Background information on the poet

*[Poet, writer, lyricist, musician and naughty boy.](https://benjaminzephaniah.com/)*

Zephaniah was born and raised in the [Handsworth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handsworth,_West_Midlands) district of [Birmingham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birmingham), which he has called the "Jamaican capital of Europe". He is the son of a [Barbadian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbados) postman and a [Jamaican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaicans) nurse.

As a [dyslexic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dyslexia), he attended an [approved school](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Approved_school) but left school at the age of 13. He was unable to read or write.

He writes that his poetry is strongly influenced by the music and poetry of Jamaica and what he calls "street politics". His first performance was in church when he was eleven, and by the age of fifteen, his poetry was already known among Handsworth's [Afro-Caribbean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_African-Caribbean_community) and Asian communities.

He received a criminal record with the police as a young man and served a prison sentence for burglary.

Tired of the limitations of being a black poet communicating with black people only, he decided to expand his audience, and headed to London at the age of twenty-two.

Zephaniah has said that his mission is to fight the dead image of poetry, and to "take poetry everywhere" to people who do not read books so he turned poetry readings into concert-like performances.

Zephaniah's first book of poetry for children, called *Talking Turkeys*, was reprinted after six weeks. In 1999 he wrote a novel for teenagers*,*[*Face*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face_(novel))*,* the first of four novels to date.

# Lesson plan

## Pre reading activity

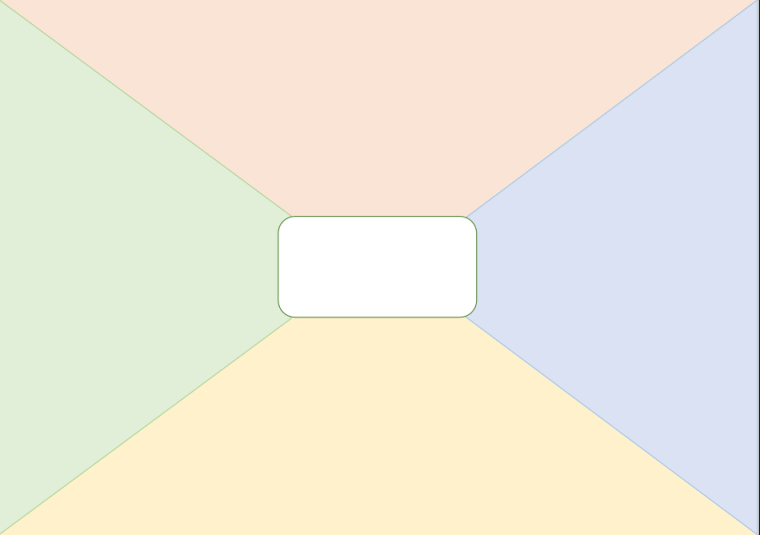
Form groups of 3-4 students, have them sit eye to eye.

Activity 1

* The poet’s picture is shown on the smartboard (or on paper if necessary)
* Students do not get any information about Benjamin Zephaniah except for his name.
* Together they will write a short biography, just by looking at his picture. Who do they think this person is? Where does he come from? What is his profession? Tel them to use their imagination.
* Students write down their answers in their student package

Activity 2

* Teacher gives background information about Benjamin Zephaniah.
* Talk about his life; did they see this coming?
* Explain that during this lesson we will discuss a poem. The main question of this poem is: What do people need?
* Let students think about this question.
* Students will jot down the words they associate with this question in a placemat. The placemat looks like this:



* Student A writes their answers in the red block, student B in the blue block etc.
* They write the shared answers in the central block.
* Every group chooses one word of their shared placemat they think is most important, which they will share with the entire class. The teacher writes these words on the white board.
* The words will be used for the post reading exercise.

## While reading activity

Reading of the poem

* Students read the poem individually and mark words they don’t understand.
* Teacher shows the video clip. After seeing the clip, teacher checks if words are still unclear and explains where necessary.
* Students individually write down 5 things they think are the most important things people need people for (mentioned by Benjamin Zephaniah in the poem).
* Plenary discussion about the most important reasons to need other people.
* Do the words, which they have chosen form their placemat and are on the whiteboard, match with the most important things from the poem?

## Post reading activity

* Students now have the choice depending on their personal interest whether they finish the lesson working on exercise A or B.
* Exercise A: Choose one of the most important words and transfer this into a drawing combined with elements of their own life. You are allowed to draw on paper or use a digital device.
* Exercise B: Write your own poem about what you think are the most important elements mentioned in the Zephaniah poem. You can use the words from the top 5 discussed earlier. The poem should consist out of at least 8 sentences.
* Rhyming not necessary

## Evaluation – next lesson

Students will vote for their favourite poem or drawing. Voting will be anonymous.

The poem/drawing that receives the most votes can be posted (anonymously) on your school’s social media accounts.