

NOW I AM BIGGER – IDEAS FOR POETRY WRITING

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The following exercises are based on poems from the book. Ideally, you would read the book to your class and talk about some of the poems first, using the Teacher's Notes. You can then use the following exercises and examples to encourage your students to write their own poems.

(Please note that all poems and illustrations are copyright-protected, and in Australia must be reported to CAL if you make multiple copies for student use.)

EATING

I want to eat everything
with my hands
even porridge
it goes in my mouth
one handful at a time

but Mummy says
open up
and in goes the spoon
dribble
scoop
wipe

I want to try
the spoon
but the porridge
won't go where I want it
the spoon doesn't work
nothing goes in
my mouth
but air

I'm hungry!



Exercise: What does food look like? What does it taste like? This simple poetry exercise asks students to use their imagination and compare food to other things (this is a way to introduce the use of similes and metaphors – you may want to explain what these are or simply have fun with words).

Choose a food you love or hate, and describe it by comparing it to something different. Imagine eating the food – can you describe the taste? What does it do to your mouth? What does it look like? Here are some examples:

A slice of watermelon
is like a big pink smile.

A cup of hot chocolate
is like a warm hug.

A plate of custard
is like a yellow pond
that I float chocolate frogs in.

A stick of celery
is like the world's biggest, flattest blade of grass.

Lemon juice twists my tongue
upside down.

Chocolate melts in my mouth
like velvet.

Bananas hide
soft sweet secrets.

TEETH

first I grow one
then two
then three
then four

four teeth to bite
fingers
toast
toys
spoons

then more teeth
big ones
little ones
front and back
teeth that make my head
feel hot
and achey

lots of munching
crunching
biting
teeth

grrrrrrr.

Exercise: Choose a part of your body and write a poem about it. What is the part like? What does it remind you of in the world around you? How can you describe it differently?

Here are some examples:

My teeth are a fence
in front of my tongue,
my tongue is the front path
to my throat,
my throat is a doorway
to my stomach.
Come in, food!

My thumb has a mind of its own
and even when my fingers
wave to it
sometimes it just sticks out its tongue
and wiggles it.

Knobbly knees, bobbly knees,
skinny toes, jammy toes,
blinking eyes, winking eyes,
blowing nose, growing nose -
who told a lie?

Why don't I have eyes in the back of my head?
Why don't my arms and legs
bend both ways?
If they did, I could pick up things
behind me!

TEDDY

once Teddy was
big
much bigger than me
bigger eyes
bigger ears
big furry arms

then we were
the same size
I sat on Teddy
he sat on me

now Teddy's small
and I'm big
big enough
to give Teddy
cuddles
when he's scared.

Exercise: What was or is your favourite toy? Why? How did you play with it? Where? Write down all the things you love about your toy, describe it, and then write a poem about it, using some of the words you wrote down.

Clown grins, clown spins,
clown hangs from the tree -
come down, clown,
come down and play again.

Blocks make trucks
blocks make cars
blocks make tall buildings
I can knock down –
bang, crash, tumble!

Annabel's long blonde curls
tickle my face
but I like having her
on the pillow
where I can tell her
my secrets.



Now I Am Bigger is available at all good bookstores, and online at Fishpond, Readings and Boomerang Books, among others. If you're having trouble buying a copy, just email me at sherrylc1@optusnet.com.au .

My website is at <http://www.sherrylclark.com>

My poetry for children website is at <http://www.poetry4kids.net>