



# Poetic Writing: Personal Experience

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii 2 3 4 5

## Sweaty Legs

### THE LEARNING CONTEXT

It was an extremely hot day. The class had just come in from their lunch break and were discussing the discomfort of being so hot. The teacher shared a personal experience of this. The students were then asked to think about their own feelings about being hot and discuss these with a partner. There was some group sharing of ideas and a class collection of “exciting words” on “being hot” was recorded. The teacher explained that they would be recording one of their own thoughts, elaborating on this one experience and writing in the present tense. Kelsey wrote her first draft, which the teacher then edited with her in terms of spelling.

### Teacher-student conversations

Prior to writing, the teacher helped Kelsey to focus on writing about just one idea:

- Teacher: Can you tell me what your body feels like when you're hot?  
 Kelsey: Well, it feels sweaty.  
 Teacher: Do you feel sweaty all over?  
 Kelsey: Especially my legs and my head.  
 Teacher: What do you like to do when you are really hot?  
 Kelsey: Go swimming.  
 Teacher: It's a pity we haven't got swimming this afternoon.  
 Kelsey: Well, I'll go swimming when I get home.  
 Teacher: Is that what you're going to write about?  
 Kelsey: Yeah. When I'm hot I want to go swimming.

### INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING

The teacher could use the guided and shared reading programme to get students to explore:

- a variety of stories based on personal experiences
- stories about favourite experiences.

In addition, the teacher could encourage students to:

- share their own stories with a partner and ask the partner to comment
- publish their stories for a wall display and a class book
- read and respond to work on display.

The teacher could also highlight and discuss features of personal writing when reading to students.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Kelsey towards the next learning step, the teacher might encourage her to focus on:

#### Vocabulary

- increasing range of conjunctions, adjectives, and adverbs

#### Language features

- developing understanding of features such as similes and sound devices

#### Editing

- developing proofreading and dictionary skills.

The teacher could nurture these skills in a rich language environment, where reading and writing are supported by discussion. Specific skills will be taught in the reading and writing programmes, especially in modelling and feedback sessions.

### CURRICULUM LINKS

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum*

#### Level 1: Writing Functions

**Poetic Writing:** Students should write on a variety of topics, beginning to shape ideas.

#### Levels 1 and 2: Reading and Writing Processes

**Exploring Language:** Students should explore choices made by writers, and identify and use the common conventions of writing and organisation of text which affect understanding.

**Thinking Critically:** Students should be able to identify and express meanings in written texts, drawing on personal background, knowledge and experience.

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum*, pages 35-36

### REFERENCE

Ministry of Education (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.



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**WHAT THE WORK SHOWS:** Kelsey vividly conveys a feeling that is very uncomfortable for her. She expands on this through a range of personally significant images, thoughts, and ideas – for example, “sweating in my legs” and “not going to wa-- time putting on sunskem”.

Student's first draft

### Deeper features

#### Voice

Records personal experiences; demonstrates personal voice in response to experience.

#### Ideas

Selects an idea that is personally significant.

#### Structure

Demonstrates sequence.

Comments to support main idea.

#### Sentences

Starting to vary beginnings.

Attempts compound and complex sentences.

#### Vocabulary

Includes appropriate content words, simple verbs.

#### Language features

Appeals to senses.

Today --- is so hot I'm  
<sup>sweating</sup> sweating in my legs and  
 on my head. I hope  
 that <sup>when</sup> I get home  
 Mum will let me go  
 for a <sup>swim</sup> swim. I will stay in  
 the pool <sup>even</sup> even if it's cold  
 I'm not going to <sup>waste</sup> waste time  
 putting on sunskem. I hope  
<sup>sunscreen</sup> sunscreen  
 the sun will go away.

[Today it is so hot I'm sweating in my legs and on my head. I hope that when I get home Mum will let me go for a swim. I will stay in the pool even if it's cold. I'm not going to waste time putting on sunscreen. I hope the sun will go away.]

### Surface features

#### Grammar

Uses basic sentence structure that is grammatically acceptable.

#### Spelling

Spells some high-frequency words correctly.

Developing knowledge of consonant sounds and blends, and vowels demonstrated in content words.

#### Punctuation

Uses capital letters and full stops generally successfully.



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I'm not going to <sup>waste</sup> waste time  
putting on <sup>sunscreen</sup> sunscreen. I hope  
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