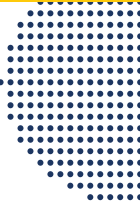





The Manchester Poetry Library and Manchester Children's Book Festival are delighted to host the official launch of 'Belonging Street', a wonderful collection of poetry by Mandy Coe, published by Otter-Barry Books.

Belonging Street teaching resource

In partnership with





“With an invitation to write in every poem, this book is not only a joy to read but an endless source of inspiration for teachers, parents and young writers.”

Becky Swain (Manchester Poetry Library)

Kaye Tew (Manchester Children’s Book Festival)



Write along with Belonging Street

My name is Mandy Coe, I am a poet and illustrator and I often work with children and teachers. Thank you for helping ‘Belonging Street’ belong in your classroom and home!

‘Belonging Street’ is full of illustrations and poems inviting children to write – and I would be delighted if you had a go at writing some poems of your own. The book is suitable for KS2 and its theme is a sense of belonging. It includes riddles and wordplay and themes of nature, the environment and city life.

I have written up a few ideas to get you started, using three poems from the book as a starting point. You can see me reading these poems aloud at the [Otter-Barry Books YouTube channel](#) (five mins).

These activities can be done as a class, in groups or individually, they all include reading aloud, talking and listening and writing. The writing ideas are guided and very doable. But if you want to experiment, illustrate, chase ideas off to other places... I would be delighted. There is no right or wrong, only write and enjoy... and I hope you do!

If you want to let me know how you get on, or enquire about an online school visit, contact me at my website mandycoe.org.

‘Belonging Street’ has been chosen as the Sunday Times Children’s Book of the Week and by the Independent as one of the Top Ten poetry books. It can be ordered direct from [Otter-Barry Books](#).




I My Name Is Grey

I fall as fog and rise as smoke,
I bring the night before night's due.
I belong in pigeons, geese and seals.
I am steel.

I am school sweaters and concrete walls
and a battleship at sea. I am soft
as the dust under your bed and rough
as your grandad's beard.

Sketch an elephant, draw its eye
and in the corner – sign your name.
I am the graphite within the pencil
between your finger and thumb.

I am the owl's wing and winter sky,
I leap in the mad March hare. I hide
in the hedgehog's prickles, and sleep
in the wolf's thick fur.



'My Name Is Grey', is written as if a colour can speak. There is only voice speaking, this is a 'monologue poem'.

Talk and Share

Read the poem aloud, is there anything you particularly like, or are surprised by?

As if being interviewed, grey answers lots of questions. So, the question to the first line might be, how do you move? Can you imagine what some of the other questions are?

What are the biggest and smallest things mentioned in the poem? What do you think are the safest and scariest things mentioned in the poem?

Write

1. In a group, or on your own, list the questions you found – then add a few more.
2. Pick a colour, then imagine what answers your colour might give to these questions.
3. See if you can write a poem using the answers. Don't forget to surprise us. Use big scenes, and small details to keep your poem rich.

Coming Home To You

Today, I spread my wings
then topple from a cliff top to you.
Over miles of sea foam and tides
I make my way home to you.

Today, I uncurl from my shell
and slide inch by inch to you.
Through a green world of things to chew
I make my way home to you.

Today, I stretch, then race
on all four paws to you.
Through a tail-wagging world of smells
I make my way home to you.

Today, I wriggle from water,
then hop on new legs to you.
Past lilies, herons and willows
I make my way home to you.

Today, I unfold myself to dance
from daisy to daisy to you.
Through gardens of green and white
I make my way home to you.



'Coming Home To You' is written in five different voices, each journeying back to where they belong... The poem uses repeated lines to create one rhyme sound (monorhyme).

Talk and Share

Read the poem aloud to hear the rhythm and how the repeated lines rhyme.

- Can you guess which creature is speaking in each verse?
- What clues helped you decide what each creature was?
- Can you spot five words that tell us how each creature moves?

Write

Draw four lines, and at the end of the second, and fourth line, write... to you.

.....
.....to you
.....
.....to you

In a group, or on your own, list some things in nature, e.g. a river, the wind, or lightning. Pick one and think of a word describing how it might move. If you picked an ocean, it might move by flowing. It might flow past islands or ships.

I am going to start this example verse with *yesterday*,

*Yesterday, I flowed,
wave after wave to you.
Past shipwrecks and islands and fishes
I flowed my way back to you.*



The Tree That Saved A Town

The Tree That Walked swayed along our dusty road,
bringing its shadow along our dusty road.
A giant! The Tree That Walked.

The Tree That Walked did not look around,
it did not rest. Caterpillars swung
from invisible threads and birds fluttered,
but not one egg fell from a nest.

It crossed the highway, the railway, a runway.
A film truck followed The Tree That Walked,
a general offered to blow it up, a politician mentioned
climate talks. Headlines shouted, TREE WALKS!

Up our dusty road it came, rustling past
the dusty sign that read, 'Welcome to Dusty Town.'
A place where dogs' tongues hang out by miles
and the grass is always dry and brown.

But now the fuss has all died down, we rest
in the shade of The Tree That Walked, to watch
the leaves and touch the bark. This morning
we heard the dawn chorus for the first time.

This morning The Tree That Walked
had scattered its seeds. We'll grow
ourselves a forest, we thought, and made
a brand-new sign: 'Welcome to Woodland Town'.

'The Tree That Saved A Town' is a 'narrative poem' as it tells a story. It creates enough magic, like a fairy tale, to let us imagine a tree really can pull out its roots and walk.

Talk and Share

- Read the poem aloud and see if there is a rhythm.
- The poem describes lots of details, like a small film. Is there any image you particularly remember?
- Why do you think the tree chose to go to 'Dusty Town'?
- Can plants really move? How does a forest grow bigger, swallowing up rivers and valleys and hills?

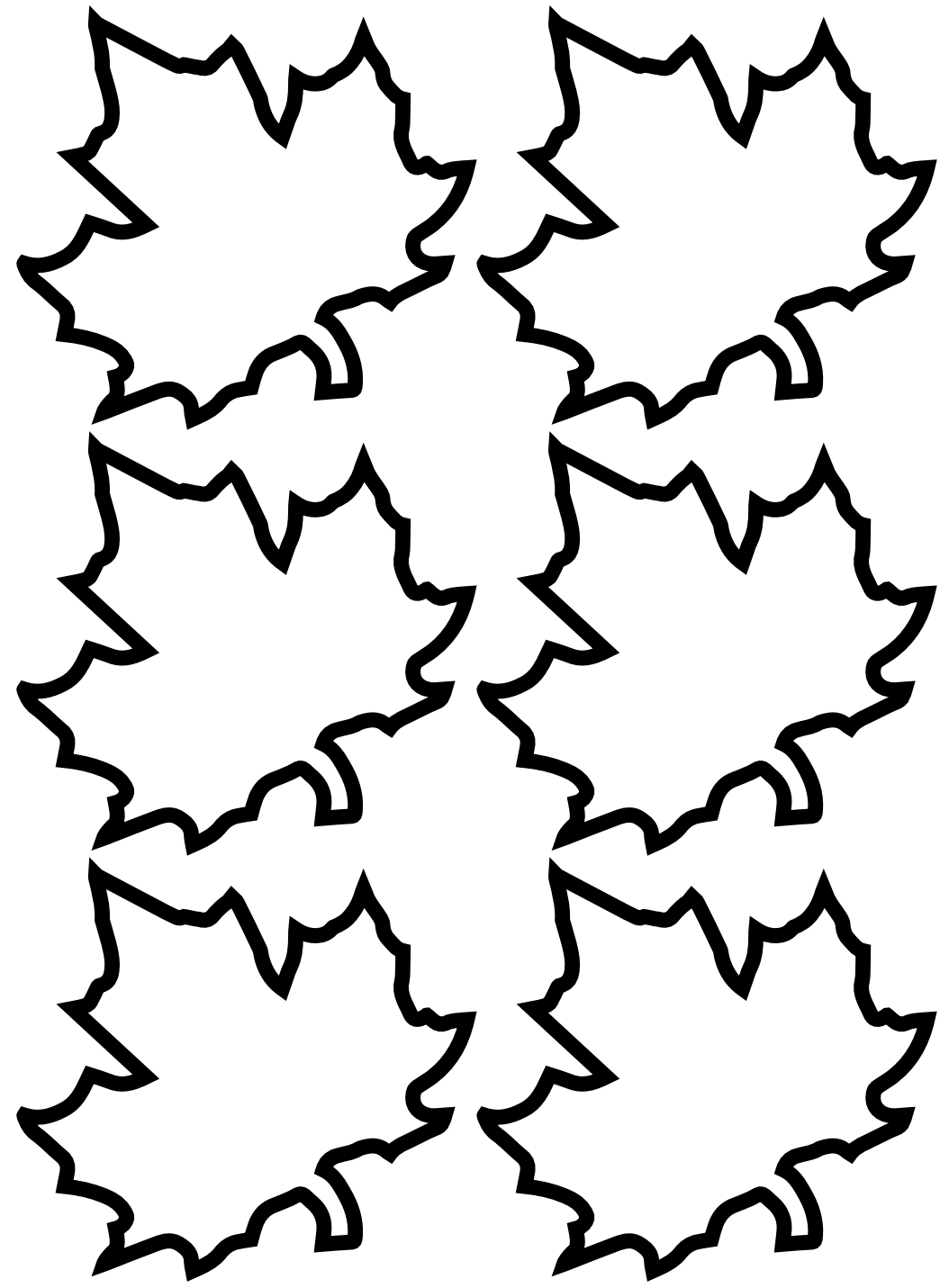
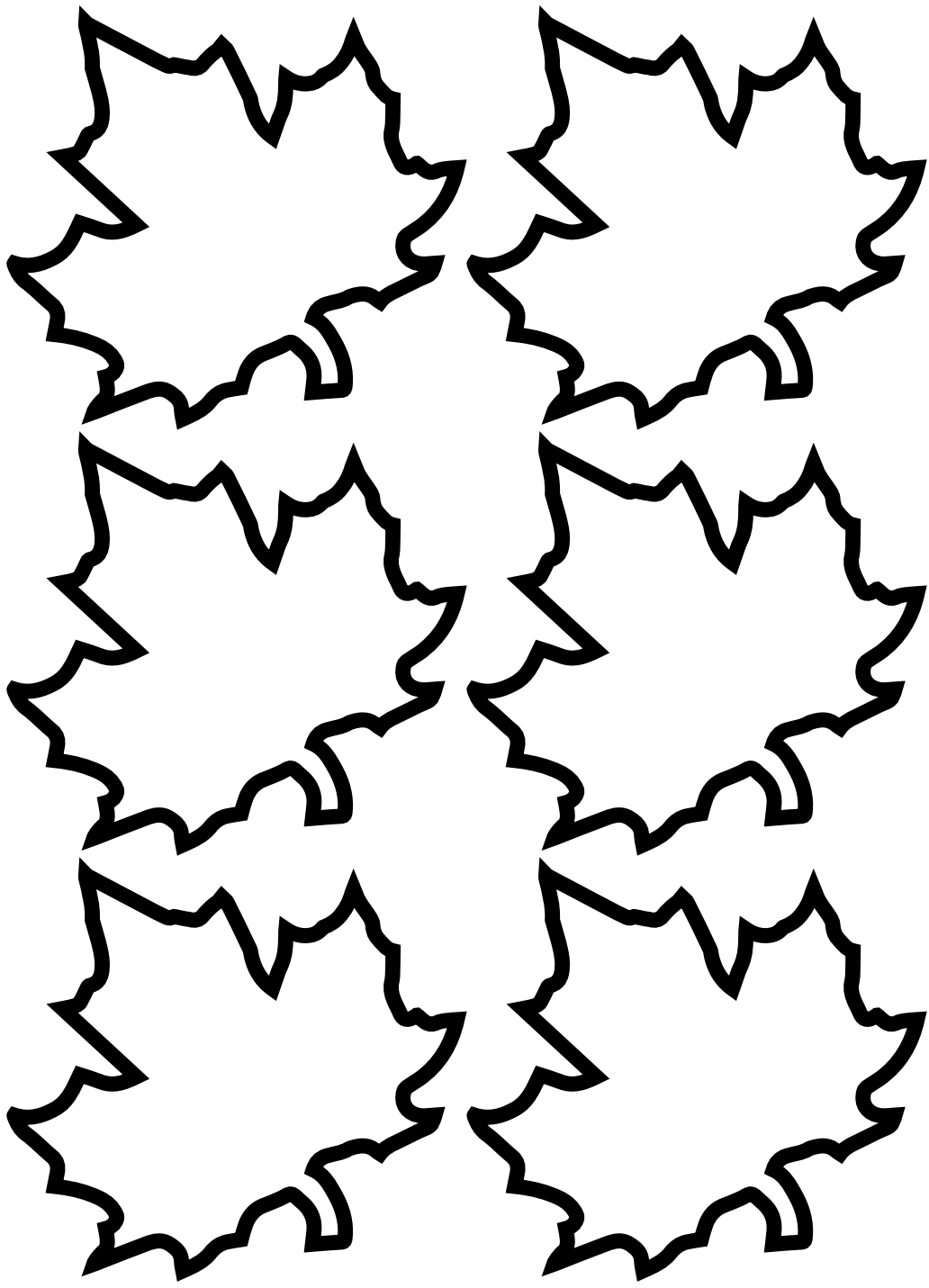
Write

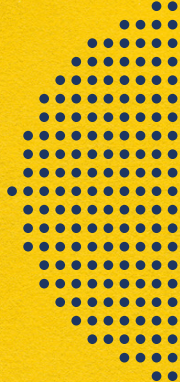


How old do you think the oldest tree in the world is?
Can you find out?

If that tree could write a letter, poem or postcard asking us to look after trees and the environment, can you write down what you think it would say?

I shall include a leaf-template with this, so you can fill the leaves with wishes you imagine trees might have for a long and happy life.

These can be displayed in a POETREE.





“Bookwagon is happy to have discovered *Belonging Street*. Mandy Coe’s poetry speaks to and for every one of us. There is an accessibility and engagement that is direct, empathetic and encouraging.”

| Bookwagon

“There’s definitely something for every taste and every mood from story poems, puzzling ones, riddles and those that really touch the emotions.”

| Red Reading Hub

“[A] magical and warm-hearted new collection from an acclaimed poet and performer in schools and at festivals across the UK.”

| Waterstones

Find out more

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mandycoe.org

mcbf.org.uk