

Scary — Curriculum Crossover Map

KS2 with KS3 links · SCARY by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck (Hodder)

The strongest fit is PSHE / Health Education “mental wellbeing” — the book maps onto it almost line-for-line.

Subject & key stage	Statutory / curriculum point	Where it lives in SCARY
PSHE / Health Ed — Mental wellbeing (KS1–2, statutory)	A normal range of emotions incl. fear; recognise & talk about emotions with a varied vocabulary; judge whether feelings are proportionate; self-care & self-regulation; where and how to seek support	The fear/anxiety spine: Freeze, Fight or Flight; Fear vs Worry (the scorpion-shaped rock = proportionate vs disproportionate fear); fear-words throughout; The Benefits of Breathing; “talk to a trusted adult”
Health Ed — Mental wellbeing (KS3, statutory)	Recognising when feelings / behaviour are a concern; anxiety; self-regulation; seeking help	Anxiety & anxiety disorders; learned fear (Pavlov / Thorndike); coping strategies
Science — Evolution & inheritance (KS2, Y6)	Adaptation to environment; “adaptation may lead to evolution”; fossils	Apatosaurus; camouflage (spider crab, gharial), venom / poison (cobra, dart frog, death stalker), bioluminescence (glossy worm, viperfish), super-senses (star-nosed mole)
Science — nature of science (Upper KS2 / KS3)	Scientific ideas change over time; modify explanations for new evidence	Apatosaurus displayed with the wrong head for 45 years — a memorable case of self-correction
Science — Living things & habitats (KS2, Y4–6)	Classification; food chains; interdependence; environments can change	Classifying 23 animals across 10+ groups; food webs (sharks→dugongs→seagrass; bees→pollination; vultures / bats / cassowaries as cleaners & seed-dispersers)
Science — Animals incl. humans + Light (KS2, Y6)	Circulatory system; objects are seen because they give out or reflect light	“What makes your heart race?” + breathing; bioluminescence; the viperfish's light-transparent teeth
English (KS2, statutory)	Prepare & perform poems (intonation, tone, volume); recognise poetry forms; learn by heart; write poetry; write reports / explanations / opinions; oracy	23 persona poems to perform & imitate; fact pages to model report / explanation; the “should we fear it?” structure for debate
Geography (KS2 / KS3)	Biomes & climate zones; oceans, deserts, rainforests; climate change (KS3)	Twilight-zone oceans, rainforest (cassowary, dart frog), desert (Gobi bear, death stalker), grassland (lion); the viperfish carbon story; a warming Gobi
Maths (KS2)	Measurement & scale; large numbers; percentages; data handling	Whale shark ≈ a bowling lane; a mole tunnel ≈ 10 football pitches; 100 million sharks; 80% of a lion's day asleep; turn the studies into charts
Art & Design (KS2 / KS3)	Drawing, painting, collage; imagination	Hannah Peck's mixed-media style; observational drawing; “design your own misunderstood creature”

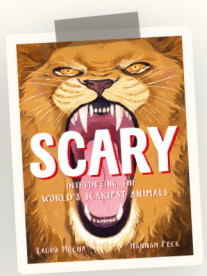
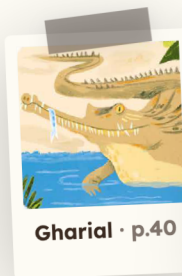
Free curriculum-linked teaching resources for these areas are available separately (persona-poem pack; two PSHE fear/worry activities; a science/English misunderstood-animal case file).

The teaching resources work brilliantly with the following specific calendar days:

- World Crocodile Day (Thu 17 Jun 2027);
- Shark Awareness Day (Wed 14 Jul 2027);
- World Snake Day (Fri 16 Jul 2027);
- International Vulture Awareness Day (5 Sept 2026);
- Halloween (31 Oct 2026);
- National Poetry Day (1 Oct 2026);
- World Poetry Day (21 Mar 2027);
- World Mental Health Day (10 Oct 2026);
- Children's Mental Health Week (1-7 Feb 2027);
- Mental Health Awareness Week (10 May 2027).

Fear or Worry?

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Name

Class

Date

FEAR

FEAR is that fizz you feel when something is happening **RIGHT NOW** that could hurt you. Your heart races, your tummy flips, and your body gets ready to freeze, fight or flee. (Very handy if there's a lion about.)

WORRY (a.k.a. Anxiety)

WORRY (the feeling that grown-ups often call anxiety) – is different. It's what you feel when your **MIND** starts fretting about something that **MIGHT** happen, usually in the future, and usually before you even know if it will.

Sometimes it's a bit of **BOTH**. And sometimes a feeling gets switched on by something that can't actually hurt you at all – like a rock that just happens to be shaped like a scorpion. Eeek! (It's fine. It's a rock.)

WHAT TO DO

Read each 'aagh!' moment below. Is it FEAR, WORRY – or a bit of both? Tick your answer (if it's a mix, tick both!), then scribble down in **Why?** what makes you think so.

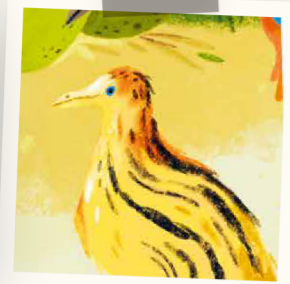
The 'aagh!' moment	Fear?	Worry?	WHY?
1 A dog you've never met comes bounding over, growling.	☐	☐	
2 You keep thinking about a test that's still two weeks away.	☐	☐	
3 A shadow shifts on your bedroom wall and your heart leaps.	☐	☐	
4 You lie awake wondering if your friend is cross with you.	☐	☐	
5 A spider drops down on its thread, right in front of your nose.	☐	☐	
6 You feel sick the night before a swimming race.	☐	☐	
7 A car horn BLARES as you step near the road.	☐	☐	
8 You picture the whole class laughing if you put your hand up.	☐	☐	
9 A stick on the path looks exactly like a snake.	☐	☐	
10 You keep thinking, 'What if I forget my lines in the play?'	☐	☐	

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Remember: you can always talk to a trusted adult. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Asking for help is a brave thing to do.

Is the feeling the right size?

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Cassowary chick · p.14-15

Name Class Date

IS IT THE RIGHT SIZE?

Feelings come in all sizes. A GIANT feeling about a GIANT danger? Makes total sense — that's your body doing its job. But sometimes a feeling puffs itself up much BIGGER than it needs to. When the size of the feeling matches the size of the danger, we say it's **proportionate**. A feeling that grows bigger than the danger isn't 'wrong' — it's your careful brain trying extra hard to keep you safe.

WHAT TO DO

For each one, circle how big the feeling might be (0 = calm, 5 = ENORMOUS). Then decide: does it match the real danger, or has it puffed up bigger than needed? Jot down one thing that might help.

The moment	How big?	The right size?	What might help?
1 A wasp lands on your arm and you leap up and run.	0 1 2 3 4 5 calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
2 You have to read aloud in assembly tomorrow.	0 1 2 3 4 5 calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
3 A car horn beeps right behind you at the kerb.	0 1 2 3 4 5 calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
4 There's a small, harmless house spider in the bath.	0 1 2 3 4 5 calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
5 You're starting at a brand-new school next week.	0 1 2 3 4 5 calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	

When a feeling gets bigger than it needs to be, one thing that helps me is...

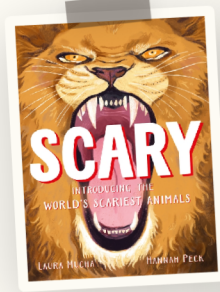
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My calm-down toolkit

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Sharing a worry · p.62-63

Name

Class

Date

SETTLE BACK DOWN

When a feeling gets TOO big, you can help your body settle back down. Here's one trick to try — you can do it anytime, anywhere.

FIVE-FINGER BREATHING

- 1 Spread one hand out like a star.
- 2 Start at the bottom of your thumb. Breathe **IN** slooowly as you trace **UP** one side of a finger.
- 3 Breathe **OUT** slooowly as you trace **DOWN** the other side.
- 4 Keep going, up and down, finger by finger. That's five slow breaths — and a calmer you.

TRACE YOUR HAND HERE

Spread your hand flat and draw around it. Then follow your finger up one side as you breathe in, and down the other as you breathe out.

OTHER THINGS THAT HELP ME FEEL CALM

.....

.....

PEOPLE I CAN TALK TO WHEN A WORRY GETS TOO BIG

.....

.....

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Remember: you can always talk to a trusted adult. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Asking for help is a brave thing to do.

Fear or Worry?

TEACHER NOTES

PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing) & Science · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

AT A GLANCE

Subject: PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing) & Science (the body's 'freeze, fight or flight' response).

Age: KS2 (Years 3–6); easily stretched to KS3.

Time: one lesson (45–60 min) or two shorter sessions.

You'll need: copies of *Scary*; this sheet; ideally the spreads 'Freeze, Fight or Flight' (pp.14–15), 'A Scorpion-Shaped Rock' (pp.42–43) and 'The Benefits of Breathing' (pp.62–63).

HOW IT LINKS TO THE BOOK

Scary draws a clear line between fear (the fizz you feel when something could hurt you right now) and worry / anxiety (what you feel when your mind is busy with something that might happen). It captures the difference with an image: a scorpion-shaped rock — it can't hurt you, so why does it still make your heart jump? The book also shows the body's automatic 'freeze, fight or flight' reaction, and a simple breathing trick for calming down. This resource turns those ideas into a discussion and two quick sorting activities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I can explain the difference between fear and worry.
- I can judge whether a feeling is the right size for the situation (proportionate), and name something that helps when a feeling grows too big.

SUCCESS CRITERIA (pupil-friendly)

- I can say what fear is and what worry is and give an example of each.
- I can sort situations into fear and worry and spot when it's a mix of both.
- I can rate how big a feeling is and decide whether it matches the real danger.
- I can name at least one thing that helps me feel calmer, and one person I could talk to.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England)

Health Education – mental wellbeing (statutory): a normal range of emotions (incl. fear/nervousness) and a scale of emotions; recognising and talking about emotions with a varied vocabulary; judging whether a feeling and behaviour is appropriate and proportionate; simple self-care techniques; where and how to seek support. Supports SCARF, Jigsaw and similar PSHE schemes.

Science (optional) – KS2 'animals, including humans': how the body responds, incl. heart rate; explored further at KS3.

KEY VOCABULARY

fear · worry · anxiety · proportionate · trigger · fight / flight / freeze · self-regulation · calm

TEACHING THIS SENSITIVELY — PLEASE READ

Keep the focus on normalising feelings and strategies, not any individual child's worries. Don't ask pupils to share personal fears publicly. Signpost a trusted adult in school and, for home, Childline (0800 1111), YoungMinds and Place2Be. If a child discloses something worrying, follow your school's safeguarding procedures. Avoid self-harm or eating-disorder content, which needs specialist handling.

Be clear in your own mind (pp.32–33): everyday fear and worry are normal and useful, but when anxiety flares 'too much... or lasts too long' — an anxiety disorder — that's the signal to involve a trusted adult, gently and without labelling any child.

LESSON SHAPE

1. Starter (10–15 min) — Book talk: read the spread aloud and talk: what surprised you? Has anything changed your mind? Then recap fear vs worry (pp.42–43): share the scorpion-shaped rock — it can't hurt you, so why might it still make your heart jump?

2. Main (25–35 min) — Pupils complete Sheet 1, then Sheet 2. Discuss as a class — there are no 'silly' feelings.

3. Plenary (10 min) — Sheet 3: teach five-finger breathing; agree who pupils can talk to if a worry gets too big. Outcome: collect the class's own calm-down strategies onto a shared 'Calm-Down Toolkit' wall or class book, so children can borrow each other's ideas.

DIFFERENTIATION

Support: fewer scenarios; definitions as a sentence bank; work in pairs; use 'both' freely.

Challenge: pupils write their own scenarios; discuss whether a feeling can be both fear and worry; when is worry helpful?

SEND / EAL: pre-teach vocabulary with pictures; allow oral responses; use thumbs / traffic-light cards for the size scale.

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

Completed sheets; contributions to discussion; pupils' own examples on Sheet 3.

GUIDANCE FOR SHEET 1

No single 'right' answers — the aim is the reasoning. Rule of thumb: fear = body reacting to something happening now; worry = mind thinking about something that might happen. Many situations are a mix — welcome that. Suggested sort: dog bounding over – fear; test in two weeks – worry; shadow on the wall – fear from a harmless trigger; friend maybe cross – worry; spider by your nose – fear, often oversized; night before a race – worry; car horn at the road – fear, proportionate; class laughing – worry; stick like a snake – fear from a harmless trigger; forgetting lines – worry.

GUIDANCE FOR SHEET 2

Again, no fixed answers — the point is matching feeling to real danger, kindly. Rough steer: wasp on your arm – a jump is natural, but running can be bigger than needed; reading aloud tomorrow – some nerves are proportionate and can help focus; car horn at the kerb – a big jump matches real danger; harmless bath spider – usually oversized; new school next week – understandable and proportionate, and it eases with time. 'Bigger than needed' never means 'wrong' or 'silly'.

The Fear-o-meter

How scared are you... really?

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 ·
Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck,
published by Hachette Children's Group



Name

Class

Date

Everyone feels fear — even grown-ups, even lions! Fear is your body's clever way of trying to keep you safe. But sometimes our fear grows **BIGGER** than the danger really is. Let's do a little experiment... on your own brain.

STEP 1 · BEFORE

Pick an animal from **SCARY** that gives you a little shiver — not your biggest fear. Draw it or write its name:

Colour the fear-o-meter to how scared you feel right now:

0	1	2	3	4	5
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0 = totally calm · 3 = a fizz of fear · 5 = as scared as I get (AAGH!)

Circle the words that match — or write your own:

a fizz of fear · a bubbling of panic · wobbly knees · a shudder ·
heart racing · "eek!" · "aagh!" ·

STEP 2 · GET CURIOUS

Find three surprising facts about your animal, using the book.

- 1
.....
- 2
.....
- 3
.....

STEP 3 · AFTER

Now you know the facts... colour the fear-o-meter again. Be honest!

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

My 'before' number was _____ and my 'after' number is _____

STEP 4 · THINK ABOUT IT

a) Did your fear change when you learned the facts? (It's fine if it stayed the same.)

.....

.....

b) When is it good to feel a bit of fear? (Think of an animal that really could hurt you.)

.....

.....

c) When might fear grow bigger than it needs to be?

.....

.....

STEP 5 · A TOOL TO KEEP — FIVE-FINGER BREATHING

- 1 Spread one hand out like a star.
- 2 Start at the bottom of your thumb. Breathe **IN** slowly, tracing **UP** one side.
- 3 Breathe **OUT** slowly, tracing **DOWN** the other side.
- 4 Keep going, finger by finger — five slow breaths, a calmer you.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

All feelings are normal — even the big, wobbly ones. If a fear or worry feels too big, or won't go away, that's not your fault — talk to a trusted grown-up. They can help. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time).

The Fear-o-meter

TEACHER NOTES

PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing), with a Science link · KS2, adaptable to KS3 ·
Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

AT A GLANCE

Age / stage: Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11).

Subject: PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing), with a Science link.

Time: one 40–50 min lesson.

THE BIG IDEA

Children rate how scared they feel of an animal, then learn the facts, then rate it again – and notice what happens. It turns one of the book's messages into a two-minute, repeatable demonstration: fear is normal and often helpful, but curiosity and knowledge help us tell real danger from fear that has simply grown too big.

Important: for some children – especially anyone with a real phobia – the number won't drop, and it may rise. That is a normal, valid outcome to validate, not a failure. Steer those children gently to the breathing tool and a trusted adult, and make sure nobody feels their fear 'should' have gone away.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England – statutory Health Education)

- 'A normal range of emotions... and a scale of emotions' incl. fear – the meter makes the 'scale' literal.
- 'Recognise and talk about their emotions... using a varied vocabulary' – the fear-words bank.
- 'Judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate' – Step 4.
- Self-care and simple self-regulation strategies – the five-finger breathing tool.
- 'Where and how to seek support' – the closing signpost to a trusted adult.
- Science link: what makes your heart race? – the automatic freeze/fight/flight response. Maps to SCARF ('Me and My Feelings') and Jigsaw ('Healthy Me').

WELLBEING & SAFEGUARDING

Keep it normalising and supportive: all feelings are normal; here are ways to manage them; here's how to get help. Avoid singling children out. Run it with your PSHE / safeguarding lead and in line with your school's RSHE policy.

Let children choose a gentler animal (a whale shark, a honeybee) if a particular creature genuinely distresses them – never push a child up their own fear-o-meter. A real phobia or high anxiety needs sensitive, individual handling, not a whole-class spotlight.

Signpost support: a trusted adult at home or school, plus reputable organisations such as Place2Be, YoungMinds and the Anna Freud Centre's resources.

Keep well away from self-harm and eating-disorder content, which needs specialist handling.

HOW TO RUN IT

Hook (5 min) — 'What makes YOUR heart race?' Even the fiercest animals have a fear response – it's a body thing, not a weakness.

Before (5 min) — choose an animal; colour the meter; pick fear-words. Keep it quick and private.

Get curious (15 min) — Book talk: read your animal's spread aloud together and talk: what surprised you? Has anything changed your mind? Then three surprising facts from the book.

After + reflect (10–15 min) — colour the meter again; discuss Step 4 – some fear is wise (hippos, saltwater crocodiles), some is over-sized (a house spider, a scorpion-shaped rock). Take a quick tally of who went down / same / up, and treat 'stayed the same' as completely normal.

Tool to keep (5 min) — practise five-finger breathing together; make breathing bookmarks. Outcome: display the class's before/after fear-o-meter numbers on a wall alongside the Stretch bar chart, and talk about what curiosity changed.

DIFFERENTIATION

Younger / SEND: use a row of faces (calm → really scared) instead of numbers; pre-select two or three low-threat animals; provide facts as picture cards.

Stretch: plot the whole class's before/after numbers as a bar chart (maths link) and describe what the data shows about curiosity and fear.

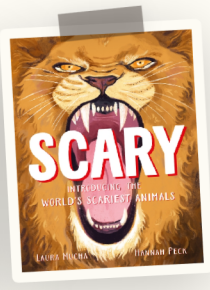
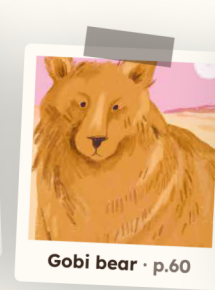
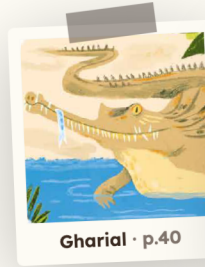
SUCCESS CRITERIA (child-friendly)

- I can rate how scared I feel and put words to the feeling.
- I can find facts that help me understand an animal.
- I can say what happened to my fear when I got curious (even if it stayed the same).
- I can tell the difference between fear that keeps me safe and fear that has grown too big.
- I can use five-finger breathing to help myself calm down.

More Endangered Than Dangerous

Your Misunderstood-Animal Case File

A science & English teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY**
by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Name

Class

Date

Lots of 'scary' animals aren't out to get you at all. In fact, WE are often far scarier to THEM. Your mission is to be a detective: pick a creature that everyone screams at, dig up the surprising truth and become its champion. (A few of these animals really can be dangerous — a king cobra or a komodo dragon, for instance. That's fine: your job is to show they're misunderstood and important, not to pretend they're harmless.)

CHOOSE YOUR CREATURE

whale shark · Asian lion · vulture · Komodo dragon · king cobra · poison dart frog · death stalker scorpion · gharial crocodile · goblin shark · giant golden-crowned flying fox (bat) · Gobi bear · house spider

My animal is... People find it scary because...

THE EVIDENCE — fill each box with facts from the book

What makes this animal seem scary?
(teeth, venom, size, looks, sounds)

Is this animal actually dangerous to humans? (what's the evidence?)

How is this animal in danger from US?
(hunting, habitat loss, dams, nets, a warming planet)

What good does this animal do for the planet? (cleans up, replants, pollinates, keeps nature in balance)

Does this animal help science or medicine? (venom that fights cancer, new painkillers, vaccines)

THE VERDICT — stamp your findings, just like the book does

SCARY-LOOKING? ☐ Yes ☐ No

DANGEROUS TO US? ☐ A lot ☐ A little ☐ Not really

IN DANGER FROM US? ☐ A lot ☐ A little ☐ Not really

WORTH PROTECTING? Yes, because

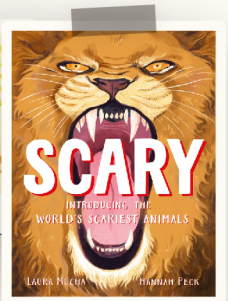
YOU'RE NOT ALONE

If a worry ever feels too big, talk to a trusted grown-up. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Some of these animals really can be dangerous – admire them from a safe distance and never approach a wild one.

Make the Case for your misunderstood animal

More Endangered Than Dangerous · Page 2 · Linked to SCARY

by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Name

Class

Date _____

A MODEL — the gharial speaks up for itself

I'm quick, I'm squat, I'm hard to spot,
I use my clay pot nose to POP!
I work long hours, try my best
to build, rebuild, rebuild my nests.
You crush, destroy, entangle, chop,
obliterate my home . . .

PLEASE STOP!

— Gharial crocodile, SCARY, p.40

Your turn. Write a poster, a speech or a short poem that makes people want to protect your animal. Use three facts from your case file. If your animal really can be dangerous, be honest — show it's misunderstood and important, and that we should still respect it from a safe distance.

SENTENCE STARTERS

"Don't be fooled by my..."

"You might think I'm... but actually..."

"Without me, the planet would..."

READ LIKE A WRITER — look closely at the gharial's poem before you write

- 1 What makes you believe it's really the gharial speaking to you?
- 2 Where does it turn from 'scary' to 'worth protecting'?
- 3 Which single fact does the most work to change your mind?

MY CASE FOR

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

If a worry ever feels too big, talk to a trusted grown-up. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Some of these animals really can be dangerous – admire them from a safe distance and never approach a wild one.

More Endangered Than Dangerous TEACHER NOTES

Misunderstood-Animal Case File · Science + English + PSHE/wellbeing + oracy · KS2, adaptable to KS3 ·
Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

AT A GLANCE

Age / stage: Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11; adaptable up to KS3).
Cross-curricular: Science + English + PSHE/wellbeing + oracy.
Time: one 45–60-min taster, or a short sequence.

WHAT IT IS

Children investigate a feared animal, discover it is more endangered by humans than dangerous to humans (and often ecologically essential or genuinely useful to science), then write to persuade others to protect it.

A note on the framing: 'misunderstood' covers three stories – (1) not really dangerous (whale shark, house spider, vulture); (2) genuinely dangerous but ecologically vital or medically useful (king cobra, Komodo dragon, death stalker scorpion); (3) endangered by us (Gobi bear, gharial, Asian lion, sharks). Only group (3) is strictly 'more endangered than dangerous'. Let children reach the honest verdict for their animal – including 'Yes, dangerous – and still worth protecting'.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England)

- **Science KS2** – Living things & habitats (Y4–6): classification; environments can change and pose dangers to living things. Food chains (producers, predators, prey) sit under Animals, including humans (Y4).
- **Science KS2** – Evolution & inheritance (Y6): animals adapted to their environment (camouflage, venom, super-senses); adaptation may lead to evolution.
- **English KS2** – Writing: write to persuade and to inform/explain; compose and perform poetry; oracy / discussion.
- **PSHE / Health Education** (statutory): facing feelings with curiosity; recognising when fear is proportionate to real danger. Maps to SCARF and Jigsaw.

HOW TO RUN IT

Hook (5–10 min) — Book talk: read the spread aloud and talk: what surprised you? Has anything changed your mind? Then read the book's refrain: 'GINORMOUS? Yes. DANGEROUS? No.' Which animals do we scream at... and are we right to?

Model (10 min) — work through one spread together (vulture, p.34–35, or Gobi bear, p.60–61), filling the evidence grid on the board.

Investigate (15–20 min) — pairs choose an animal and complete the case file from the book.

Drama (10 min, optional but recommended) — Hot-seat the animal: one pupil sits in role as their creature while the class asks questions such as 'Are you dangerous?' or 'Why do people fear you?' The pupil in role must answer using only facts from their case file. This rehearses the animal's voice before writing, and surfaces any gaps in their evidence.

Make the case (15–20 min) — pupils draft a poster, speech or persona-poem using three facts; share aloud. Outcome: display the finished posters, speeches or persona-poems as a class 'Misunderstood Animals' gallery, or perform them to another class.

EXPLORE THESE ANIMALS

Gobi bear (p.60) – fewer than 40 left; threatened by mining and a warming desert; almost entirely vegetarian.

Gharial crocodile (p.40) – critically endangered; only three breeding sites left; its narrow snout can't harm a human.

Asian lion (p.9) – just under 900 alive; humans have killed far more lions than lions have killed humans.

Poison dart frog (p.18) – toxins are informing new painkillers; the splendid poison frog went extinct in 2020.

Death stalker scorpion (p.38) – its venom attaches to cancer cells so surgeons can find them – a 'death stopper' as well as a death stalker.

Vulture (p.34) & bat (p.54) – clean up disease / replant forests; bats' disease-resistance is studied for future human treatments.

Sharks (goblin, p.56) – humans kill 100+ million a year; sharks keep the whole ocean in balance.

Whale shark (p.6) – the biggest fish in the ocean, but it feeds on tiny plankton and is harmless to people.

Komodo dragon (p.16) – genuinely dangerous, with a venomous bite – and endangered, surviving on only a handful of islands.

King cobra (p.22) – the world's longest venomous snake, and it can kill – but it would far rather flee than fight.

House spider (p.50) – can't hurt you at all; it quietly eats the flies and other pests in your home.

DIFFERENTIATION & EXTENSION

Support: fewer boxes; sentence-starters; a word bank; work as a 'fact hunt' with the spread open.

Stretch: add a food-web diagram (e.g. sharks → dugongs → seagrass), or debate: 'Which should we fear more – the animal, or a world without it?' (p.57).

Maths link: turn the numbers into scale drawings or charts (100 million sharks; fewer than 40 Gobi bears; a whale shark ≈ a bowling lane).

SUCCESS CRITERIA (child-friendly)

- I can name what makes my animal seem scary and say whether it is really dangerous.
- I can give evidence that humans are a bigger threat to it than it is to us (where true for my animal).
- I can explain one way it helps the planet or helps science.
- I can write to persuade someone to protect it, using at least three facts.

A NOTE ON WELLBEING & THE POEMS

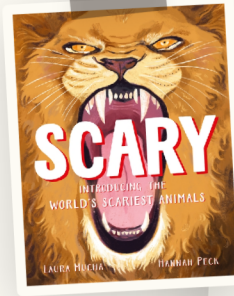
Keep the tone the book's tone – curiosity, not fear. If any child seems genuinely anxious about an animal, let them pick a gentler one (a whale shark, a honeybee) and signpost a trusted adult.

From Fear to Wonder

Writing a persona poem · Read like a writer

An English & poetry teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY**

by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Rüppell's griffon
vulture · p.35

Name

Class

Date

Before you write your own poem, let's read like a writer. Look closely at two poems from **SCARY** and work out how they do their magic — the tricks you spot here are yours to borrow.

RÜPPELL'S GRIFFON VULTURE — p.35

*I stick my neck beneath stretched skin
to gobble up the meat within.
The sight might give you wobbly knees –
but as I clean, I stop disease.*

KING COBRA — p.23

*I don't want a fight. I'd much rather flee.
But I'll bite if I have to, so don't bother me
or my hatchlings or eggs. Else I'll hiss and I'll growl
and I'll ready my venom and lower my jowl
and sink in my fangs and inject you with thick
golden venom that weakens and kills you –
and quick.*

THINK LIKE A WRITER — JOT A QUICK ANSWER

- 1 Which line makes you stop and read it again — and what pulls you back to it?

.....

.....

- 2 Find the moment a poem turns (e.g. from scary to something else). Which words do the turning?

.....

.....

- 3 There's a real fact hiding in each poem. What did the animal just teach you?

.....

.....

- 4 Pick the ONE word doing the most work in either poem. Why that word?

.....

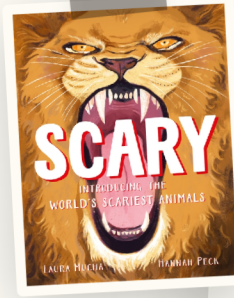
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From Fear to Wonder

Writing a persona poem • Meet your animal

An English & poetry teaching resource • KS2 • Linked to **SCARY**

by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Death stalker
scorpion • p.38

Name

Class

Date

You're about to **BECOME** a 'scary' animal and write a poem in its voice. But first, you need to get to know your creature. What do people think about it? What's the **TRUTH**? Fill in the grid below.

My animal is:

MEET YOUR ANIMAL

What am I? (your name + one line about you)

.....
.....

Why do people find me 'scary'?
(teeth? size? the way I lurk?)

.....
.....

The TRUTH about me (3 facts)

- 1 (p.)
- 2 (p.)
- 3 (p.)

Am I actually dangerous to humans?

- ☐ not really
☐ a little
☐ a lot

Why?

Words for how I move, sound & feel (glide, snap, shimmer, rumble, prowl...)

.....
.....

My message to YOU, the reader

.....
.....

Interesting words used to describe me

.....
.....

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

If a worry ever feels too big, talk to a trusted grown-up. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Some of these animals really can be dangerous – admire them from a safe distance and never approach a wild one.

From Fear to Wonder

Writing a persona poem · Write your wonder poem

An English & poetry teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY**

by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Name _____

Class

Date _____

First, listen to your teacher read a model poem or two.

Now write your poem as if you ARE the animal — speaking straight to the reader. Slip in a real fact (or three), and don't forget the twist: the moment you show them you're not the monster they thought. (Or, if your animal really IS fierce, lean right into it and make them shiver...) Try a sentence starter if it's helpful, or go your own way.

MY POEM

SENTENCE STARTERS

They call me _____, but _____.

I might LOOK _____, but _____.

I don't really want to _____ — I'd much rather _____.

Deep in the _____, I _____.

So next time you see me, _____.

My twist / reframe idea:

CHECK YOUR POEM

- ☐ Written in the first person (I / my)?
- ☐ At least one true fact?
- ☐ A surprise / reframe — or a bold, fierce voice?
- ☐ Read aloud — anything you could make better?
- ☐ Any words to cut or swap?
- ☐ Anything to add or move around?
- ☐ Read again — any obvious words that could work harder? (big → GINORMOUS!)

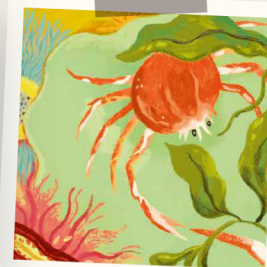
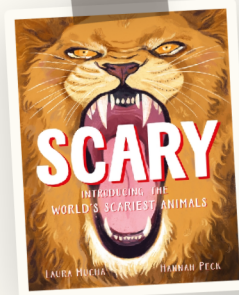
YOU'RE NOT ALONE

If a worry ever feels too big, talk to a trusted grown-up. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Some of these animals really can be dangerous – admire them from a safe distance and never approach a wild one.

From Fear to Wonder

Writing a persona poem · Perform it!

An English & poetry teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Japanese spider crab · p.21

Name

Class

Date

A poem really comes **ALIVE** when you say it out loud. Mark yours up, then practise until it roars, hisses, whispers or rumbles... whatever your animal would do.

WRITE OR STICK YOUR POEM HERE TO MARK IT UP

HOW TO MARK IT UP

Underline = say LOUDLY. **Circle** = say quietly. **//** = pause for a beat. **Arrow up / down** = faster / slower.

Show how your animal **FEELS** (proud? sly? gentle? grumpy?).

CHECK YOUR PERFORMANCE

- ☐ My poem is in the animal's voice and includes a fact. ☐ I show the twist — or a bold, fierce voice.
- ☐ I performed it with tone, volume and expression.

SHARE & LISTEN

My partner's poem:

The animal's voice came through: ☐ a little ☐ a lot

My favourite bit was... ..

One idea to make the performance even better... ..

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

If a worry ever feels too big, talk to a trusted grown-up. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Some of these animals really can be dangerous – admire them from a safe distance and never approach a wild one.

From Fear to Wonder

TEACHER NOTES

Writing a persona poem · English & poetry · KS2 ·

Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

MODEL POEMS FROM THE BOOK

RÜPPELL'S GRIFFON VULTURE — p.35

*I stick my neck beneath stretched skin
to gobble up the meat within.
The sight might give you wobbly knees –
but as I clean, I stop disease.*

DEATH STALKER SCORPION — p.38

*I'm the
Death-stalker,
Desert-walker,
Heart-stopper,
Lung-blocker,
Pain-producer,
Mind-confuser,
Tired-maker,
Agitator,
Venom-zinger,
Lethal-stinger –
ANTIVENOM,
QUICK!*

JAPANESE SPIDER CRAB — p.21

*I was once just one millimetre tall,
the sea isn't safe when you're so small.
I slowly grew, I hid like a rock,
I cloaked myself in anemone frocks.
I was safe if I looked like others in the sea,
there were countless predators after me.
But now I've lived for a century,
I'm HUGE and everyone's scared of ME!
I don't know why. I can't help but be
the daddy-long-legs of the sea.*

KING COBRA — p.23

*I don't want a fight. I'd much rather flee.
But I'll bite if I have to, so don't bother me
or my hatchlings or eggs. Else I'll hiss and I'll growl
and I'll ready my venom and lower my jowl
and sink in my fangs and inject you with thick
golden venom that weakens and kills you –
and quick.*

PROGRESSION

Before this lesson, pupils can read a poem aloud and recognise first-person voice.

This feeds into extended poetry writing and performance / a class anthology.

AT A GLANCE

Subject: English – poetry (reading, writing & performing).

Age: KS2 (Years 3–6); adaptable to KS3.

Time: two lessons (write, then edit & perform), or one lesson plus homework.

You'll need: copies of Scary; a model poem above; a reading warm-up plus three pupil sheets.

The pages: Read-like-a-writer (warm-up) → Sheet 1 = Meet your animal (planning grid) → Sheet 2 = Write your wonder poem → Sheet 3 = Perform it.

HOW IT LINKS TO THE BOOK

In Scary, every animal speaks up for itself in a short poem, each written in the animal's own voice (a 'persona'). Most admit they look scary... then turn that fear around to show what they're really like — though not every poem does (the scorpion leans right into the menace). Some poems were co-written with children from four schools, so pupils are doing just what other children did in this book.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE & SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can write a persona poem for a 'scary' animal that includes a real fact and either turns the reader's fear around or brings the animal vividly to life.
- My poem is first person ('I...', 'my...'), includes ≥1 true fact, and includes a reframe or a bold, fierce voice.
- I can perform my poem using tone, volume and expression.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England)

English KS2 (statutory): write poetry; recognise different forms; learn poems by heart; perform poems 'showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume'. Fits National Poetry Day and Poetry By Heart. **PSHE** (statutory): the 'reframe' practises judging whether a feeling is proportionate. Pairs with Fear or Worry? and The Fear-o-meter.

POETIC TECHNIQUES MODELLED

persona / first-person voice · rhyme & rhythm (optional — free verse is fine) · direct address to 'you' · the reframe / twist · sound effects (alliteration, assonance, repetition) · the kenning poem (a string of vivid names, as in the scorpion)

Persona – writing as if you are the animal, in its voice. **Kenning** – A kenning is a compound word (i.e. a word made up of two words with a hyphen between) that is used in place of a noun. For example, "death-stopper" for the death stalker scorpion. **Reframe** – the twist that flips the reader's fear into understanding or wonder.

LESSON SHAPE

Lesson 1 – Write: read the model aloud twice (meaning, then performance) → quick response: what did you notice, feel or wonder?

Drama (10 min, optional but recommended) — Hot-seat one of the model poems' animals: a volunteer answers the class in role, speaking only in facts drawn from the poem and the book. This rehearses becoming the animal in voice and body before pupils plan and draft their own poem.

Then: Sheet 1 (planning grid) → draft on Sheet 2 → share a favourite line.

Lesson 2 – Edit & perform: model improving one line together, pupils redraft → mark up & perform using Sheet 3 → peer feedback on voice and the reframe.

Tip: before pupils draft on Sheet 2, model writing a line or two together as a class.

DIFFERENTIATION

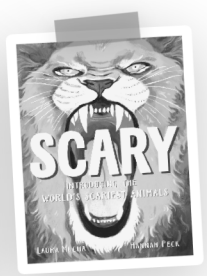
Support: sentence starters; shorter target (4–6 lines); a fact bank; allow a paired poem.

Challenge: a set form (rhyming couplets / list poem); sustained rhythm; extended metaphor; a 'reply' poem from predator or prey.

SEND / EAL: facts as pictures/key words; scribe or speech-to-text; focus on one or two strong images. Let an anxious child choose a gentler animal.

Fear or Worry?

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Name Class Date

FEAR

FEAR is that fizz you feel when something is happening RIGHT NOW that could hurt you. Your heart races, your tummy flips, and your body gets ready to freeze, fight or flee. (Very handy if there's a lion about.)

WORRY (a.k.a. Anxiety)

WORRY (the feeling that grown-ups often call anxiety) – is different. It's what you feel when your MIND starts fretting about something that MIGHT happen, usually in the future, and usually before you even know if it will.

Sometimes it's a bit of **BOTH**. And sometimes a feeling gets switched on by something that can't actually hurt you at all – like a rock that just happens to be shaped like a scorpion. Eeek! (It's fine. It's a rock.)

WHAT TO DO

Read each 'aagh!' moment below. Is it FEAR, WORRY – or a bit of both? Tick your answer (if it's a mix, tick both!), then scribble down in **Why?** what makes you think so.

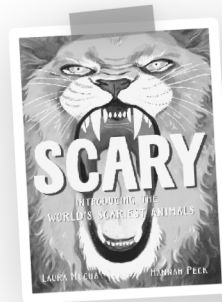
The 'aagh!' moment	Fear?	Worry?	WHY?
① A dog you've never met comes bounding over, growling.	☐	☐	
② You keep thinking about a test that's still two weeks away.	☐	☐	
③ A shadow shifts on your bedroom wall and your heart leaps.	☐	☐	
④ You lie awake wondering if your friend is cross with you.	☐	☐	
⑤ A spider drops down on its thread, right in front of your nose.	☐	☐	
⑥ You feel sick the night before a swimming race.	☐	☐	
⑦ A car horn BLARES as you step near the road.	☐	☐	
⑧ You picture the whole class laughing if you put your hand up.	☐	☐	
⑨ A stick on the path looks exactly like a snake.	☐	☐	
⑩ You keep thinking, 'What if I forget my lines in the play?'	☐	☐	

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Remember: you can always talk to a trusted adult. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Asking for help is a brave thing to do.

Is the feeling the right size?

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Cassowary chick · p.14-15

Name Class Date

IS IT THE RIGHT SIZE?

Feelings come in all sizes. A GIANT feeling about a GIANT danger? Makes total sense — that's your body doing its job. But sometimes a feeling puffs itself up much BIGGER than it needs to. When the size of the feeling matches the size of the danger, we say it's **proportionate**. A feeling that grows bigger than the danger isn't 'wrong' — it's your careful brain trying extra hard to keep you safe.

WHAT TO DO

For each one, circle how big the feeling might be (0 = calm, 5 = ENORMOUS). Then decide: does it match the real danger, or has it puffed up bigger than needed? Jot down one thing that might help.

The moment	How big?	The right size?	What might help?
① A wasp lands on your arm and you leap up and run.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
② You have to read aloud in assembly tomorrow.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
③ A car horn beeps right behind you at the kerb.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
④ There's a small, harmless house spider in the bath.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....
⑤ You're starting at a brand-new school next week.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ calm → ENORMOUS	☐ It matches ☐ Bigger than needed	..... .....

When a feeling gets bigger than it needs to be, one thing that helps me is...

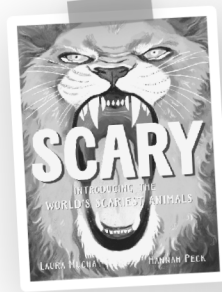
.....

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Remember: you can always talk to a trusted adult. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Asking for help is a brave thing to do.

My calm-down toolkit

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Sharing a worry · p.62–63

Name Class Date

SETTLE BACK DOWN

When a feeling gets TOO big, you can help your body settle back down. Here's one trick to try — you can do it anytime, anywhere.

FIVE-FINGER BREATHING

- 1 Spread one hand out like a star.
- 2 Start at the bottom of your thumb. Breathe **IN** slooowly as you trace **UP** one side of a finger.
- 3 Breathe **OUT** slooowly as you trace **DOWN** the other side.
- 4 Keep going, up and down, finger by finger. That's five slow breaths — and a calmer you.

TRACE YOUR HAND HERE

Spread your hand flat and draw around it. Then follow your finger up one side as you breathe in, and down the other as you breathe out.

OTHER THINGS THAT HELP ME FEEL CALM

.....
.....

PEOPLE I CAN TALK TO WHEN A WORRY GETS TOO BIG

.....
.....

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Remember: you can always talk to a trusted adult. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Asking for help is a brave thing to do.

Fear or Worry?

TEACHER NOTES

PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing) & Science · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

AT A GLANCE

Subject: PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing) & Science (the body's 'freeze, fight or flight' response).

Age: KS2 (Years 3–6); easily stretched to KS3.

Time: one lesson (45–60 min) or two shorter sessions.

You'll need: copies of *Scary*; this sheet; ideally the spreads 'Freeze, Fight or Flight' (pp.14–15), 'A Scorpion-Shaped Rock' (pp.42–43) and 'The Benefits of Breathing' (pp.62–63).

HOW IT LINKS TO THE BOOK

Scary draws a clear line between fear (the fizz you feel when something could hurt you right now) and worry / anxiety (what you feel when your mind is busy with something that might happen). It captures the difference with an image: a scorpion-shaped rock — it can't hurt you, so why does it still make your heart jump? The book also shows the body's automatic 'freeze, fight or flight' reaction, and a simple breathing trick for calming down. This resource turns those ideas into a discussion and two quick sorting activities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- I can explain the difference between fear and worry.
- I can judge whether a feeling is the right size for the situation (proportionate), and name something that helps when a feeling grows too big.

SUCCESS CRITERIA (pupil-friendly)

- I can say what fear is and what worry is and give an example of each.
- I can sort situations into fear and worry and spot when it's a mix of both.
- I can rate how big a feeling is and decide whether it matches the real danger.
- I can name at least one thing that helps me feel calmer, and one person I could talk to.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England)

Health Education – mental wellbeing (statutory): a normal range of emotions (incl. fear/nervousness) and a scale of emotions; recognising and talking about emotions with a varied vocabulary; judging whether a feeling and behaviour is appropriate and proportionate; simple self-care techniques; where and how to seek support. Supports SCARF, Jigsaw and similar PSHE schemes.

Science (optional) – KS2 'animals, including humans': how the body responds, incl. heart rate; explored further at KS3.

KEY VOCABULARY

fear · worry · anxiety · proportionate · trigger · fight / flight / freeze · self-regulation · calm

TEACHING THIS SENSITIVELY — PLEASE READ

Keep the focus on normalising feelings and strategies, not any individual child's worries. Don't ask pupils to share personal fears publicly. Signpost a trusted adult in school and, for home, Childline (0800 1111), YoungMinds and Place2Be. If a child discloses something worrying, follow your school's safeguarding procedures. Avoid self-harm or eating-disorder content, which needs specialist handling.

Be clear in your own mind (pp.32–33): everyday fear and worry are normal and useful, but when anxiety flares 'too much... or lasts too long' — an anxiety disorder — that's the signal to involve a trusted adult, gently and without labelling any child.

LESSON SHAPE

1. Starter (10–15 min) — Book talk: read the spread aloud and talk: what surprised you? Has anything changed your mind? Then recap fear vs worry (pp.42–43): share the scorpion-shaped rock — it can't hurt you, so why might it still make your heart jump?

2. Main (25–35 min) — Pupils complete Sheet 1, then Sheet 2. Discuss as a class — there are no 'silly' feelings.

3. Plenary (10 min) — Sheet 3: teach five-finger breathing; agree who pupils can talk to if a worry gets too big. Outcome: collect the class's own calm-down strategies onto a shared 'Calm-Down Toolkit' wall or class book, so children can borrow each other's ideas.

DIFFERENTIATION

Support: fewer scenarios; definitions as a sentence bank; work in pairs; use 'both' freely.

Challenge: pupils write their own scenarios; discuss whether a feeling can be both fear and worry; when is worry helpful?

SEND / EAL: pre-teach vocabulary with pictures; allow oral responses; use thumbs / traffic-light cards for the size scale.

ASSESSMENT / EVIDENCE

Completed sheets; contributions to discussion; pupils' own examples on Sheet 3.

GUIDANCE FOR SHEET 1

No single 'right' answers — the aim is the reasoning. Rule of thumb: fear = body reacting to something happening now; worry = mind thinking about something that might happen. Many situations are a mix — welcome that. Suggested sort: dog bounding over – fear; test in two weeks – worry; shadow on the wall – fear from a harmless trigger; friend maybe cross – worry; spider by your nose – fear, often oversized; night before a race – worry; car horn at the road – fear, proportionate; class laughing – worry; stick like a snake – fear from a harmless trigger; forgetting lines – worry.

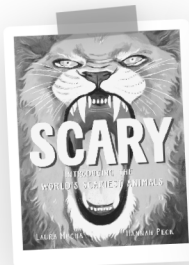
GUIDANCE FOR SHEET 2

Again, no fixed answers — the point is matching feeling to real danger, kindly. Rough steer: wasp on your arm – a jump is natural, but running can be bigger than needed; reading aloud tomorrow – some nerves are proportionate and can help focus; car horn at the kerb – a big jump matches real danger; harmless bath spider – usually oversized; new school next week – understandable and proportionate, and it eases with time. 'Bigger than needed' never means 'wrong' or 'silly'.

The Fear-o-meter

How scared are you... really?

A PSHE & wellbeing teaching resource · KS2 ·
Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck,
published by Hachette Children's Group



Poison dart
frog · p.18



Death stalker
scorpion · p.38

Name Class Date

Everyone feels fear — even grown-ups, even lions! Fear is your body's clever way of trying to keep you safe. But sometimes our fear grows **BIGGER** than the danger really is. Let's do a little experiment... on your own brain.

STEP 1 · BEFORE

Pick an animal from **SCARY** that gives you a little shiver — not your biggest fear. Draw it or write its name:

Colour the fear-o-meter to how scared you feel right now:

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

0 = totally calm · 3 = a fizz of fear · 5 = as scared as I get (AAGH!)

Circle the words that match — or write your own:

a fizz of fear · a bubbling of panic · wobbly knees · a shudder ·
heart racing · "eek!" · "aagh!" ·

STEP 2 · GET CURIOUS

Find three surprising facts about your animal, using the book.

①

.....

②

.....

③

.....

STEP 3 · AFTER

Now you know the facts... colour the fear-o-meter again. Be honest!

0	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

My 'before' number was _____ and my 'after' number is _____.

STEP 4 · THINK ABOUT IT

a) Did your fear change when you learned the facts? (It's fine if it stayed the same.)

.....

.....

b) When is it good to feel a bit of fear? (Think of an animal that really could hurt you.)

.....

.....

c) When might fear grow bigger than it needs to be?

.....

.....

STEP 5 · A TOOL TO KEEP — FIVE-FINGER BREATHING

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| ① Spread one hand out like a star. | ② Start at the bottom of your thumb. Breathe IN slooowly, tracing UP one side. | ③ Breathe OUT slooowly, tracing DOWN the other side. | ④ Keep going, finger by finger — five slow breaths, a calmer you. |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

All feelings are normal — even the big, wobbly ones. If a fear or worry feels too big, or won't go away, that's not your fault — talk to a trusted grown-up. They can help. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time).

The Fear-o-meter

TEACHER NOTES

PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing), with a Science link · KS2, adaptable to KS3 ·
Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

AT A GLANCE

Age / stage: Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11).

Subject: PSHE / Health Education (mental wellbeing), with a Science link.

Time: one 40–50 min lesson.

THE BIG IDEA

Children rate how scared they feel of an animal, then learn the facts, then rate it again – and notice what happens. It turns one of the book's messages into a two-minute, repeatable demonstration: fear is normal and often helpful, but curiosity and knowledge help us tell real danger from fear that has simply grown too big.

Important: for some children – especially anyone with a real phobia – the number won't drop, and it may rise. That is a normal, valid outcome to validate, not a failure. Steer those children gently to the breathing tool and a trusted adult, and make sure nobody feels their fear 'should' have gone away.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England – statutory Health Education)

- 'A normal range of emotions... and a scale of emotions' incl. fear – the meter makes the 'scale' literal.
- 'Recognise and talk about their emotions... using a varied vocabulary' – the fear-words bank.
- 'Judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate' – Step 4.
- Self-care and simple self-regulation strategies – the five-finger breathing tool.
- 'Where and how to seek support' – the closing signpost to a trusted adult.
- Science link: what makes your heart race? – the automatic freeze/fight/flight response. Maps to SCARF ('Me and My Feelings') and Jigsaw ('Healthy Me').

WELLBEING & SAFEGUARDING

Keep it normalising and supportive: all feelings are normal; here are ways to manage them; here's how to get help. Avoid singling children out. Run it with your PSHE / safeguarding lead and in line with your school's RSHE policy.

Let children choose a gentler animal (a whale shark, a honeybee) if a particular creature genuinely distresses them – never push a child up their own fear-o-meter. A real phobia or high anxiety needs sensitive, individual handling, not a whole-class spotlight.

Signpost support: a trusted adult at home or school, plus reputable organisations such as Place2Be, YoungMinds and the Anna Freud Centre's resources.

Keep well away from self-harm and eating-disorder content, which needs specialist handling.

HOW TO RUN IT

Hook (5 min) – 'What makes YOUR heart race?' Even the fiercest animals have a fear response – it's a body thing, not a weakness.

Before (5 min) – choose an animal; colour the meter; pick fear-words. Keep it quick and private.

Get curious (15 min) – Book talk: read your animal's spread aloud together and talk: what surprised you? Has anything changed your mind? Then three surprising facts from the book.

After + reflect (10–15 min) – colour the meter again; discuss Step 4 – some fear is wise (hippos, saltwater crocodiles), some is over-sized (a house spider, a scorpion-shaped rock). Take a quick tally of who went down / same / up, and treat 'stayed the same' as completely normal.

Tool to keep (5 min) – practise five-finger breathing together; make breathing bookmarks. Outcome: display the class's before/after fear-o-meter numbers on a wall alongside the Stretch bar chart, and talk about what curiosity changed.

DIFFERENTIATION

Younger / SEND: use a row of faces (calm → really scared) instead of numbers; pre-select two or three low-threat animals; provide facts as picture cards.

Stretch: plot the whole class's before/after numbers as a bar chart (maths link) and describe what the data shows about curiosity and fear.

SUCCESS CRITERIA (child-friendly)

- I can rate how scared I feel and put words to the feeling.
- I can find facts that help me understand an animal.
- I can say what happened to my fear when I got curious (even if it stayed the same).
- I can tell the difference between fear that keeps me safe and fear that has grown too big.
- I can use five-finger breathing to help myself calm down.

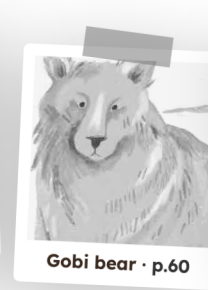
More Endangered Than Dangerous

Your Misunderstood-Animal Case File

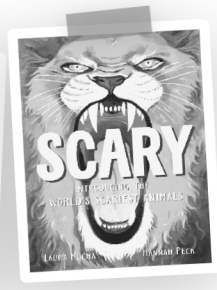
A science & English teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY**
by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Gharial · p.40



Gobi bear · p.60



Name Class Date

Lots of 'scary' animals aren't out to get you at all. In fact, WE are often far scarier to THEM. Your mission is to be a detective: pick a creature that everyone screams at, dig up the surprising truth and become its champion. (A few of these animals really can be dangerous — a king cobra or a komodo dragon, for instance. That's fine: your job is to show they're misunderstood and important, not to pretend they're harmless.)

CHOOSE YOUR CREATURE

whale shark · Asian lion · vulture · Komodo dragon · king cobra · poison dart frog · death stalker scorpion · gharial crocodile · goblin shark · giant golden-crowned flying fox (bat) · Gobi bear · house spider

My animal is... People find it scary because... ..

THE EVIDENCE — fill each box with facts from the book

What makes this animal seem scary?
(teeth, venom, size, looks, sounds)

.....

.....

Is this animal actually dangerous to humans? (what's the evidence?)

.....

.....

How is this animal in danger from US?
(hunting, habitat loss, dams, nets, a warming planet)

.....

.....

What good does this animal do for the planet? (cleans up, replants, pollinates, keeps nature in balance)

.....

.....

Does this animal help science or medicine? (venom that fights cancer, new painkillers, vaccines)

.....

.....

THE VERDICT — stamp your findings, just like the book does

SCARY-LOOKING?

☐ Yes ☐ No

DANGEROUS TO US?

☐ A lot ☐ A little ☐ Not really

IN DANGER FROM US?

☐ A lot ☐ A little ☐ Not really

WORTH PROTECTING?

Yes, because

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

If a worry ever feels too big, talk to a trusted grown-up. Childline: **0800 1111** (free, any time). Some of these animals really can be dangerous – admire them from a safe distance and never approach a wild one.

Make the Case for your misunderstood animal

More Endangered Than Dangerous · Page 2 · Linked to **SCARY**
by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Name

Class

Date _____

A MODEL — the gharial speaks up for itself

I'm quick, I'm squat, I'm hard to spot,
I use my clay pot nose to POP!
I work long hours, try my best
to build, rebuild, rebuild my nests.
You crush, destroy, entangle, chop,
obliterate my home . . .

PLEASE STOP!

— Gharial crocodile, SCARY, p.40

Your turn. Write a poster, a speech or a short poem that makes people want to protect your animal. Use three facts from your case file. If your animal really can be dangerous, be honest — show it's misunderstood and important, and that we should still respect it from a safe distance.

SENTENCE STARTERS

"Don't be fooled by my..."

"You might think I'm... but actually..."

"Without me, the planet would..."

READ LIKE A WRITER — look closely at the gharial’s poem before you write

- ① What makes you believe it's really the gharial speaking to you?
- ② Where does it turn from 'scary' to 'worth protecting'?
- ③ Which single fact does the most work to change your mind?

MY CASE FOR

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

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More Endangered Than Dangerous TEACHER NOTES

Misunderstood-Animal Case File · Science + English + PSHE/wellbeing + oracy · KS2, adaptable to KS3 ·

Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

AT A GLANCE

Age / stage: Key Stage 2 (ages 7–11; adaptable up to KS3).

Cross-curricular: Science + English + PSHE/wellbeing + oracy.

Time: one 45–60-min taster, or a short sequence.

WHAT IT IS

Children investigate a feared animal, discover it is more endangered by humans than dangerous to humans (and often ecologically essential or genuinely useful to science), then write to persuade others to protect it.

A note on the framing: 'misunderstood' covers three stories – (1) not really dangerous (whale shark, house spider, vulture); (2) genuinely dangerous but ecologically vital or medically useful (king cobra, Komodo dragon, death stalker scorpion); (3) endangered by us (Gobi bear, gharial, Asian lion, sharks). Only group (3) is strictly 'more endangered than dangerous'. Let children reach the honest verdict for their animal – including 'Yes, dangerous – and still worth protecting'.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England)

- Science KS2** – Living things & habitats (Y4–6): classification; environments can change and pose dangers to living things. Food chains (producers, predators, prey) sit under Animals, including humans (Y4).
- Science KS2** – Evolution & inheritance (Y6): animals adapted to their environment (camouflage, venom, super-senses); adaptation may lead to evolution.
- English KS2** – Writing: write to persuade and to inform/explain; compose and perform poetry; oracy / discussion.
- PSHE / Health Education** (statutory): facing feelings with curiosity; recognising when fear is proportionate to real danger. Maps to SCARF and Jigsaw.

HOW TO RUN IT

Hook (5–10 min) — Book talk: read the spread aloud and talk: what surprised you? Has anything changed your mind? Then read the book's refrain: 'GINORMOUS? Yes. DANGEROUS? No.' Which animals do we scream at... and are we right to?

Model (10 min) — work through one spread together (vulture, p.34–35, or Gobi bear, p.60–61), filling the evidence grid on the board.

Investigate (15–20 min) — pairs choose an animal and complete the case file from the book.

Drama (10 min, optional but recommended) — Hot-seat the animal: one pupil sits in role as their creature while the class asks questions such as 'Are you dangerous?' or 'Why do people fear you?' The pupil in role must answer using only facts from their case file. This rehearses the animal's voice before writing, and surfaces any gaps in their evidence.

Make the case (15–20 min) — pupils draft a poster, speech or persona-poem using three facts; share aloud. Outcome: display the finished posters, speeches or persona-poems as a class 'Misunderstood Animals' gallery, or perform them to another class.

EXPLORE THESE ANIMALS

Gobi bear (p.60) – fewer than 40 left; threatened by mining and a warming desert; almost entirely vegetarian.

Gharial crocodile (p.40) – critically endangered; only three breeding sites left; its narrow snout can't harm a human.

Asian lion (p.9) – just under 900 alive; humans have killed far more lions than lions have killed humans.

Poison dart frog (p.18) – toxins are informing new painkillers; the splendid poison frog went extinct in 2020.

Death stalker scorpion (p.38) – its venom attaches to cancer cells so surgeons can find them – a 'death stopper' as well as a death stalker.

Vulture (p.34) & bat (p.54) – clean up disease / replant forests; bats' disease-resistance is studied for future human treatments.

Sharks (goblin, p.56) – humans kill 100+ million a year; sharks keep the whole ocean in balance.

Whale shark (p.6) – the biggest fish in the ocean, but it feeds on tiny plankton and is harmless to people.

Komodo dragon (p.16) – genuinely dangerous, with a venomous bite – and endangered, surviving on only a handful of islands.

King cobra (p.22) – the world's longest venomous snake, and it can kill – but it would far rather flee than fight.

House spider (p.50) – can't hurt you at all; it quietly eats the flies and other pests in your home.

DIFFERENTIATION & EXTENSION

Support: fewer boxes; sentence-starters; a word bank; work as a 'fact hunt' with the spread open.

Stretch: add a food-web diagram (e.g. sharks → dugongs → seagrass), or debate: 'Which should we fear more – the animal, or a world without it?' (p.57).

Maths link: turn the numbers into scale drawings or charts (100 million sharks; fewer than 40 Gobi bears; a whale shark ≈ a bowling lane).

SUCCESS CRITERIA (child-friendly)

- I can name what makes my animal seem scary and say whether it is really dangerous.
- I can give evidence that humans are a bigger threat to it than it is to us (where true for my animal).
- I can explain one way it helps the planet or helps science.
- I can write to persuade someone to protect it, using at least three facts.

► A NOTE ON WELLBEING & THE POEMS

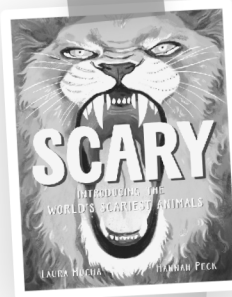
Keep the tone the book's tone – curiosity, not fear. If any child seems genuinely anxious about an animal, let them pick a gentler one (a whale shark, a honeybee) and signpost a trusted adult.

From Fear to Wonder

Writing a persona poem · Read like a writer

An English & poetry teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY**

by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Rüppell's griffon
vulture · p.35

Name Class Date

Before you write your own poem, let's read like a writer. Look closely at two poems from **SCARY** and work out how they do their magic — the tricks you spot here are yours to borrow.

RÜPPELL'S GRIFFON VULTURE — p.35

*I stick my neck beneath stretched skin
to gobble up the meat within.
The sight might give you wobbly knees –
but as I clean, I stop disease.*

KING COBRA — p.23

*I don't want a fight. I'd much rather flee.
But I'll bite if I have to, so don't bother me
or my hatchlings or eggs. Else I'll hiss and I'll growl
and I'll ready my venom and lower my jowl
and sink in my fangs and inject you with thick
golden venom that weakens and kills you –
and quick.*

THINK LIKE A WRITER — JOT A QUICK ANSWER

- ① Which line makes you stop and read it again — and what pulls you back to it?

.....

.....

- ② Find the moment a poem turns (e.g. from scary to something else). Which words do the turning?

.....

.....

- ③ There's a real fact hiding in each poem. What did the animal just teach you?

.....

.....

- ④ Pick the ONE word doing the most work in either poem. Why that word?

.....

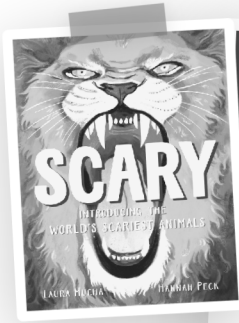
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From Fear to Wonder

Writing a persona poem • Meet your animal

An English & poetry teaching resource • KS2 • Linked to **SCARY**

by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Death stalker
scorpion • p.38

Name Class Date

You're about to **BECOME** a 'scary' animal and write a poem in its voice. But first, you need to get to know your creature. What do people think about it? What's the **TRUTH**? Fill in the grid below.

My animal is:

MEET YOUR ANIMAL

What am I? (your name + one line about you)	..... .....
Why do people find me 'scary'? (teeth? size? the way I lurk?)	..... .....
The TRUTH about me (3 facts)	① (p.) ② (p.) ③ (p.)
Am I actually dangerous to humans?	☐ not really Why? ☐ a little ☐ a lot
Words for how I move, sound & feel (glide, snap, shimmer, rumble, prowl...)	..... .....
My message to YOU, the reader	
Interesting words used to describe me	

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

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An English & poetry teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY**
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Now write your poem as if you ARE the animal — speaking straight to the reader. Slip in a real fact (or three), and don't forget the twist: the moment you show them you're not the monster they thought. (Or, if your animal really IS fierce, lean right into it and make them shiver...) Try a sentence starter if it's helpful, or go your own way.

SENTENCE STARTERS

CHECK YOUR POEM

- ☐ Written in the first person (I / my)?
- ☐ At least one true fact?
- ☐ A surprise / reframe — or a bold, fierce voice?
- ☐ Read aloud — anything you could make better?
- ☐ Any words to cut or swap?
- ☐ Anything to add or move around?
- ☐ Read again — any obvious words that could work harder? (big → GINORMOUS!)

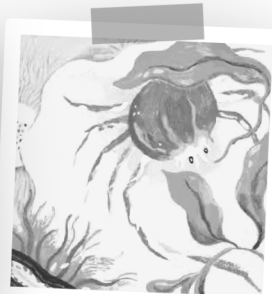
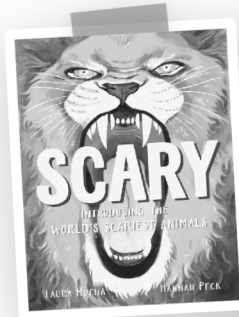
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From Fear to Wonder

Writing a persona poem · Perform it!

An English & poetry teaching resource · KS2 · Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group



Japanese spider crab · p.21

Name Class Date

A poem really comes ALIVE when you say it out loud. Mark yours up, then practise until it roars, hisses, whispers or rumbles... whatever your animal would do.

WRITE OR STICK YOUR POEM HERE TO MARK IT UP

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

HOW TO MARK IT UP

Underline = say LOUDLY. **Circle** = say quietly. **//** = pause for a beat. **Arrow up / down** = faster / slower.

Show how your animal **FEELS** (proud? sly? gentle? grumpy?).

CHECK YOUR PERFORMANCE

- ☐ My poem is in the animal's voice and includes a fact. ☐ I show the twist — or a bold, fierce voice.
- ☐ I performed it with tone, volume and expression.

SHARE & LISTEN

My partner's poem:

The animal's voice came through: ☐ a little ☐ a lot

My favourite bit was... ..

One idea to make the performance even better... ..

From Fear to Wonder

TEACHER NOTES

Writing a persona poem · English & poetry · KS2 ·

Linked to **SCARY** by Laura Mucha & Hannah Peck, published by Hachette Children's Group

MODEL POEMS FROM THE BOOK

RÜPPELL'S GRIFFON VULTURE — p.35

*I stick my neck beneath stretched skin
to gobble up the meat within.
The sight might give you wobbly knees –
but as I clean, I stop disease.*

DEATH STALKER SCORPION — p.38

*I'm the
Death-stalker,
Desert-walker,
Heart-stopper,
Lung-blocker,
Pain-producer,
Mind-confuser,
Tired-maker,
Agitator,
Venom-zinger,
Lethal-stinger –
ANTIVENOM,
QUICK!*

JAPANESE SPIDER CRAB — p.21

*I was once just one millimetre tall,
the sea isn't safe when you're so small.
I slowly grew, I hid like a rock,
I cloaked myself in anemone frocks.
I was safe if I looked like others in the sea,
there were countless predators after me.
But now I've lived for a century,
I'm HUGE and everyone's scared of ME!
I don't know why. I can't help but be
the daddy-long-legs of the sea.*

KING COBRA — p.23

*I don't want a fight. I'd much rather flee.
But I'll bite if I have to, so don't bother me
or my hatchlings or eggs. Else I'll hiss and I'll growl
and I'll ready my venom and lower my jowl
and sink in my fangs and inject you with thick
golden venom that weakens and kills you –
and quick.*

PROGRESSION

Before this lesson, pupils can read a poem aloud and recognise first-person voice.

This feeds into extended poetry writing and performance / a class anthology.

AT A GLANCE

Subject: English – poetry (reading, writing & performing).

Age: KS2 (Years 3–6); adaptable to KS3.

Time: two lessons (write, then edit & perform), or one lesson plus homework.

You'll need: copies of Scary; a model poem above; a reading warm-up plus three pupil sheets.

The pages: Read-like-a-writer (warm-up) → Sheet 1 = Meet your animal (planning grid) → Sheet 2 = Write your wonder poem → Sheet 3 = Perform it.

HOW IT LINKS TO THE BOOK

In Scary, every animal speaks up for itself in a short poem, each written in the animal's own voice (a 'persona'). Most admit they look scary... then turn that fear around to show what they're really like – though not every poem does (the scorpion leans right into the menace). Some poems were co-written with children from four schools, so pupils are doing just what other children did in this book.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE & SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can write a persona poem for a 'scary' animal that includes a real fact and either turns the reader's fear around or brings the animal vividly to life.
- My poem is first person ('I...', 'my...'), includes ≥1 true fact, and includes a reframe or a bold, fierce voice.
- I can perform my poem using tone, volume and expression.

CURRICULUM LINKS (England)

English KS2 (statutory): write poetry; recognise different forms; learn poems by heart; perform poems 'showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume'. Fits National Poetry Day and Poetry By Heart. **PSHE** (statutory): the 'reframe' practises judging whether a feeling is proportionate. Pairs with Fear or Worry? and The Fear-o-meter.

POETIC TECHNIQUES MODELLED

persona / first-person voice · rhyme & rhythm (optional – free verse is fine) · direct address to 'you' · the reframe / twist · sound effects (alliteration, assonance, repetition) · the kenning poem (a string of vivid names, as in the scorpion)

Persona – writing as if you are the animal, in its voice. **Kenning** – A kenning is a compound word (i.e. a word made up of two words with a hyphen between) that is used in place of a noun. For example, "death-stopper" for the death stalker scorpion. **Reframe** – the twist that flips the reader's fear into understanding or wonder.

LESSON SHAPE

Lesson 1 – Write: read the model aloud twice (meaning, then performance) → quick response: what did you notice, feel or wonder?

Drama (10 min, optional but recommended) – Hot-seat one of the model poems' animals: a volunteer answers the class in role, speaking only in facts drawn from the poem and the book. This rehearses becoming the animal in voice and body before pupils plan and draft their own poem.

Then: Sheet 1 (planning grid) → draft on Sheet 2 → share a favourite line.

Lesson 2 – Edit & perform: model improving one line together, pupils redraft → mark up & perform using Sheet 3 → peer feedback on voice and the reframe.

Tip: before pupils draft on Sheet 2, model writing a line or two together as a class.

DIFFERENTIATION

Support: sentence starters; shorter target (4–6 lines); a fact bank; allow a paired poem.

Challenge: a set form (rhyming couplets / list poem); sustained rhythm; extended metaphor; a 'reply' poem from predator or prey.

SEND / EAL: facts as pictures/key words; scribe or speech-to-text; focus on one or two strong images. Let an anxious child choose a gentler animal.