

# A Gust of Wind

by Sarah Penwarden

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Year 4



## Overview

This TSM contains a wide range of information and suggestions for teachers to pick and choose from, depending on the needs of their students and their purpose for using the text. The materials provide multiple opportunities for revisiting the text several times.

In this four-stanza, illustrated poem, Sarah Penwarden uses rich imagery to describe the four seasons. The first-person narrator is a child, and the poem also reflects his or her relationship with grandparents. Students who are familiar with gardens and gardening will relate to the poem; for others, you will need to support or build related prior knowledge of seasonal changes to deepen their understanding of the poem.

This poem:

- is told in unrhymed verse with line breaks for rhythm
- uses rich imagery, accompanied by very supportive illustrations
- has regular sentence structures and punctuation
- uses an unfamiliar layout
- demonstrates the theme of working together (helping in the grandparents' garden).

A PDF of the text is available at [www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz](http://www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz)

Texts related by theme

“The Best Team Ever” SJ L2 Aug 2017 | “Getting Closer” SJ L2 Nov 2016

## Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

garden with  
old tea kettle,  
water from the spout  
t pale roses;  
st leaves, which collect  
gumboots.

flowers,  
that sum  
as the da  
tulips blo  
flit throu

Grey clouds gather, and it rains  
in Grandma's cooling garden;  
plants become cups of water  
as the rain tinkles on leaves  
like a pianist tapping  
the ivory keys.

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

One, two, then a chorus of  
flowers, singing the same song:  
that summer is nearly here,  
as the daffodils, pansies, and  
tulips bloom and tū  
flit through branches.

When the hedges a  
are full of buzzing, winged things,  
Granddad puts on h  
and mows the law  
seeds on a gust of  
over the garden ar  
Sarah

some words and phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by illustrations, and/or written explanations

*A Gust of Wind*

he garden with  
a's old tea kettle,  
water from the spout  
last pale roses;  
rust leaves, which collect  
my gumboots.

Grey clouds gather, and it rains  
in Grandma's cooling garden;  
plants become cups of water  
as the rain tinkles on leaves  
like a pianist tapping  
the ivory keys.

One, tw  
flower  
that su  
as the  
tulips  
flit thro

figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification

*A Gust of Wind*

I water the garden with  
Grandma's old tea kettle,  
pouring water from the spout  
into the last pale roses;  
I crunch rust leaves, which collect  
around my gumboots.

Grey clouds gather, and it rains  
in Grandma's cooling garden;  
plants become cups of water  
as the rain tinkles on leaves  
like a pianist tapping

One, two, then a chorus of  
flowers, singing the same song:  
that summer is nearly here,  
as the daffodils, pansies, and  
tulips bloom and tū  
flit through branches.

When the hedges around us  
are full of buzzing, winged things,  
Granddad puts on his oldest clothes  
and mows the lawns, while dandelion  
seeds on a gust of wind sail  
over the garden and off.  
Sarah Penwarden

a straightforward text structure, such as a structure that follows a recognisable and clear text form

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

# Text and language challenges

(Some of the suggestions for possible supporting strategies may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.)

## VOCABULARY

### Possible supporting strategies

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “old tea kettle”, “spout”, “crunch rust leaves”, “tinkles”, “ivory keys”, “chorus”, “daffodils”, “pansies”, “tulips”, “bloom”, “tū”, “flit”, “hedges”, “buzzing, winged things”, “dandelion”
- Identify words or phrases that may be unfamiliar. Support students to use the context and illustrations as you discuss their meanings before, during, or after reading. If students have read the preceding play (“The Best Team Ever”), remind them of the flowers and leaves mentioned in that script.
- Remind the students of strategies they might use to work out the meaning of unknown words and phrases, such as forming images from the words and then using the illustrations to confirm guesses.
- Provide meanings or clues for words that are not supported by the context, such as “tea kettle” and “ivory keys”.
- Share and discuss the types of flowers and creatures that live in a garden. Use images from the Internet or books and magazines to support the discussion, as well as the students' own experience.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

## SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

### Possible supporting strategies

- Some understanding of the structure and language features of poems, in particular, sentence and verse structures and imagery
- Knowledge of seasonal changes, such as weather, autumn leaves, spring flowers
- Some knowledge of gardens and gardening, including watering, flowers, lawn mowing, wind-blown dandelion seeds
- Some experience of relationships between generations, such as those a child may have with a grandparent, auntie, uncle, or older family friend
- Support students to share their prior knowledge of the effects of the seasons on nature in general and, in particular, on home gardens or public gardens and parks. Talk about the kinds of gardening or other outside jobs that are done at different times of the year and the impact of seasonal weather patterns on gardens.
-  Make a mind map of gardening and have students suggest words and phrases that relate to gardens and gardening. You could use an online mind-mapping tool such as [Mindmap](#). If necessary, build prior knowledge by taking a walk around a school garden, sharing books or stories set in gardens, or by watching short videos about gardens (for example, a TV gardening show). Support students to relate what they already know to new information, such as the kinds of flowers mentioned in the poem.
- Remind the students of the “helping” relationships they have: at home, at school, in a sports team, or in their communities. *How does it feel to work with others on a project or task?*

## TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

### Possible supporting strategies

- An unrhymed poem in four stanzas
- Descriptions of activities over four seasons in a garden
- Rich descriptive language including metaphor (“plants become cups of water”), similes (“like a pianist”), personification (“singing the same song”)
- Use of illustrations that relate to the seasons described in the four stanzas
- Use of first-person voice and continuous present tense
- Layout that goes across rather than down the page
- Before reading, prompt the students to recall what they know about reading poems. Provide opportunities for them to talk with a partner to remind each other of the features of poems.
- Prompt prior knowledge of the structures we might expect to find in a poem, reminding students that poems don't always rhyme and that the line breaks are different from those found in running texts. Using one stanza as an example, show how one complete sentence has been broken up into lines. *Why do you think poems have line breaks? What do they make you do when you're reading?*
- Point out the form (four stanzas or verses) and discuss the way the matching illustrations support the words.
- Ask students to look at the way the poem is laid out and to discuss how this is different from other poems they may have read.
- Read the poem aloud to the students, using the tiny pauses required by the line breaks and punctuation to achieve the rhythm of the poem. Take care not to exaggerate these pauses.



Sounds and Words

# Possible curriculum contexts

## ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

## ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.

– Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

## Possible first reading purpose

- To enjoy the rich language and images of the poem and its illustrations
- To build a detailed picture of Grandma's garden.

## Possible subsequent reading purposes

- To explore and understand the use of imagery to describe the seasonal changes
- To make connections within and beyond the text to help deepen understanding.

## Possible writing purposes

- To write a poem that describes seasons or other changes in a similar way
- To write brief phrases to describe aspects of nature, using rich imagery.



The New Zealand Curriculum

# Instructional focus – Reading

**English** Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

## First reading

- Share the purpose for reading, and provide a brief introduction to the poem.
- Prompt prior knowledge about poems. *What will we find in a poem? How is a poem different from other kinds of writing?*
- Direct students to the title and the illustrations, then ask them to share what they already know about gardening and the seasons.
- Have the students read through the poem silently. Support them with vocabulary where necessary.
- Check that students have identified the season that relates to each stanza.

### If the students struggle with this text

- Read the poem aloud slowly, pointing to the illustrations as you read.
- Check that students have got the gist of the poem: a child is working in a garden, and each stanza shows a different time of the year. *Can you tell which season each stanza describes? What clues tell you this?* (“last pale roses”, “the hedges around us are full of buzzing, winged things”)
-  Project the PDF of the poem, zooming in on each section as you discuss it.

**Subsequent readings** How you approach subsequent readings will depend on your reading purpose.

### The teacher

Direct the students to work in pairs to discuss the image in the last two lines of the first stanza.

- *At what time of the year can you “crunch” leaves on the ground?*
- *What colour are those leaves?*

Confirm that the writer uses “crunch” as a verb to describe the sound made as the child walks in the fallen leaves and compares the colour of autumn leaves with the colour of rust.

Now ask the students to identify and discuss the descriptive language used in the second and subsequent stanzas to describe rain, the blooming flowers, and the movements of insects and seeds.

Provide support where necessary to ensure that the students are able to draw on their prior knowledge to understand the imagery used.

 You could arrange for the students to read the poem to an audience or create a video recording of themselves reading the poem, accompanied by visual graphics. These could be shared with their families.

Choral poetry readings will help English language learners to notice how English is chunked and to pronounce sounds and words, identify rhythm, and understand the use of intonation and punctuation. Provide explicit feedback and allow repeated readings to assist English language learners to perfect their use of spoken English.

### The teacher

Have the students work in pairs or as a small group to review and evaluate the ideas in the poem.

- *Was this a good way for the poet to express her ideas about the changing seasons?*
- *Were the images effective? Why do you think that?*
- *What ideas has this poem given you that you could use in your own poetry and descriptive writing?*

### The students:

- consider their prior knowledge of walking on autumn leaves to make connections with the imagery, including the onomatopoeia “crunch”
- identify that the word “crunch” is the verb in the last sentence and “rust” describes the colour of the fallen leaves
- identify the imagery used in the rest of poem and make connections with their prior knowledge (of rain, piano playing, choral singing, birds, insects) to understand why each image is used
- identify some of the descriptive language that they liked and explain why they liked it
- read the poem aloud together or in pairs, emphasising phrasing and fluency.

### The students:

- think critically about the impact of the poem and share their responses
- justify their evaluations, using evidence from the text and connections with their own experiences
- share their own ideas for descriptive writing.

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- *I heard how you used the punctuation to get your phrasing right as you read the poem. That helped you to understand the images that the writer was describing. Make sure you keep using punctuation when you read other texts to yourself.*
- *You haven’t done any gardening, but you thought about the park you walk past every day and that helped you to understand some of the ideas in the poem.*

### METACOGNITION

- *How is this poem different from a factual description of a garden? How did knowing about the features of poems help you to understand how to read this text?*



Reading standard: by the end of year 4



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

# Instructional focus – Writing

**English** Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics; Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects

Text excerpts from “A Gust of Wind”	Examples of text characteristics	Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)
A Gust of Wind	<p><b>IDEAS</b></p> <p><i>Writing starts with an idea. The ideas can come from many places, for example, from nature, from personal experiences, or from reading.</i></p>	<p>Prompt the students to consider ideas they have for writing about nature or the seasons.</p> <p>Explain that writing ideas can come from reading: it’s OK to get ideas from someone else’s writing (but that you can’t use their actual words; you must express the ideas in your own way).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>In the poem, you read about the things the narrator did in a garden during each season. How could you make this idea of the changing seasons your own? What would be the same? What would be different?</i></li> <li><i>If the gardening idea interests you, what experiences could you use for your own writing?</i></li> </ul>
<p>Pages 18–19</p> <p>plants become cups of water like a pianist tapping the ivory keys</p> <p>I <u>crunch</u> rust leaves</p> <p>rain <u>tinkles</u> on leaves</p> <p>tūi <u>flit</u> through branches</p> <p><u>buzzing</u>, winged things</p>	<p><b>FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE</b></p> <p><i>Figurative language uses images to build meaning. These are some examples:</i></p> <p><i>Metaphor</i> <i>A metaphor describes something by saying it is something else.</i></p> <p><i>Simile</i> <i>A simile compares two items by saying one is like the other.</i></p> <p><i>Onomatopoeia</i> <i>Words that sound like the things they describe help readers form a mental picture.</i></p>	<p>Explain that writers often use figurative language to help us better understand their ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Instead of a straightforward factual description, writers can use words in ways that give us a mental picture. Metaphor, simile, and onomatopoeia are three ways writers can do this. Let’s try them.</i></li> </ul> <p>Direct the students to think of metaphors for familiar items, such as a book, a tree, or a car. Model this using “book” as an example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I think a good book has a lot of interesting information. My metaphor is “A book is a world of information”. This is a metaphor because we know a book isn’t really a world, but my metaphor compares it with a world.</i></li> <li><i>Now you try: write your metaphor and share it with your partner. Is it a good metaphor? Why?</i></li> </ul>
		<p><b>DIGITAL TOOLS</b>  Get the students to add their examples to a Google Doc that is shared with the whole class. This way they can learn from each other and discuss what they like about the examples.</p> <p>English language learners may need to practise brainstorming metaphors as a group before being expected to write their own. They could play a game where they suggest two different items, such as “a bird” and “an aeroplane”, and brainstorm how the two items might be connected. List all their ideas. They then select one idea and use it to develop a metaphor.</p> <p>Repeat the exercise, this time using a simile to describe a different item and then asking the students to write their own similes.</p> <p>Finally, discuss the examples of onomatopoeia in the poem and then share an example of your own. For example, “The hiss of the kettle tells me that the water is boiling and it’s time for a cup of tea.”</p> <p>Direct the students to use a sound word in a sentence or phrase, for example, to describe the sound of bike tyres on a wet road or the sound of waves on the beach.</p> <p>Create class lists of sound words (which can be added to). Display the lists for students to refer to when writing.</p>

**Text excerpts from  
“A Gust of Wind”**

**Examples of text  
characteristics**

**Teacher  
(possible deliberate acts of teaching)**

When the hedges around us  
are full of buzzing, winged  
things,  
Grandad puts on his oldest  
clothes  
and mows the lawns, while  
dandelion  
seeds on a gust of wind sail  
over the garden and off.

**COMPLEX SENTENCES**

*A complex sentence is formed when a subordinate clause is added to a simple sentence. When the subordinate clause comes first, it is separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.*

For students who are ready for more challenge, spend time analysing then writing complex sentences.

Model analysing the way this complex sentence was formed by highlighting the main clause (“Grandad puts on his oldest clothes and mows the lawns”), then the two subordinate clauses that start “When ...” and “while ...”.

Invite students to share their writing and select some examples where subordinate clauses could be added to simple or compound sentences to form more interesting, complex sentences.

Encourage students to add clauses that add more information (time, place, reason). Remind the students that sometimes a series of short sentences can be more effective than a long, complex sentence.

- *Remember to read your writing aloud to find out what sounds best for your purpose.*

For some English language learners, writing complex sentences will be difficult. Ensure that they can write a simple sentence and a compound sentence first. The following tasks will help English language learners who need additional practice at writing sentences.

- Sentence reconstruction task: Write a sentence onto a strip of paper and then cut it up into individual words. Muddle up the words. Ask the students to put them into the correct order.
- Sentence combination task: Give the students two simple sentences and ask them to combine them into one.

**METACOGNITION**

- *Tell me where your idea came from and how you developed it. If the poem inspired you, what have you done to make it your own?*

**GIVE FEEDBACK**

- *By adding these metaphors and similes, you’re giving your readers a way to imagine just how the wet puppy looked and sounded.*



**Writing standard: by the end of year 4**

**The Literacy Learning Progressions**