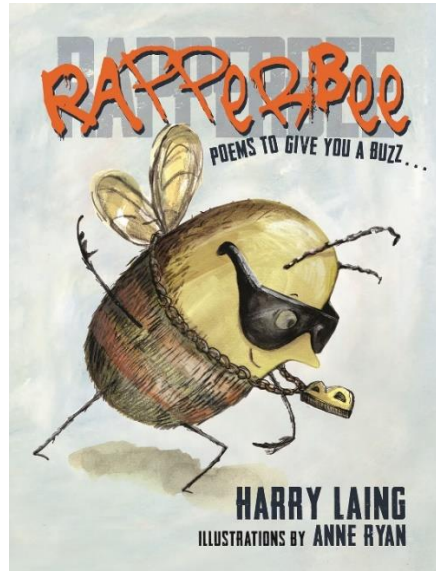


TEACHING NOTES

RapperBee – Poems to give you a buzz ...

Written by Harry Laing & Illustrated by Anne Ryan



Notes prepared by Kellie Nissen (Just Right Words)

with Visual Arts notes by Anne Ryan

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About the author and illustrator

Harry Laing

Harry Laing is a poet, comic performer, creative writing teacher and children's author who writes about ... everything. If you can see it sitting around, Harry's probably written a poem about it. He also likes talking to birds.



Anne Ryan

Anne Ryan is an artist who loves to buzz about with a brush, dab colour across a page and scribble curious pictures in sketchbooks. Her best work comes when she lets her imagination run away with her.



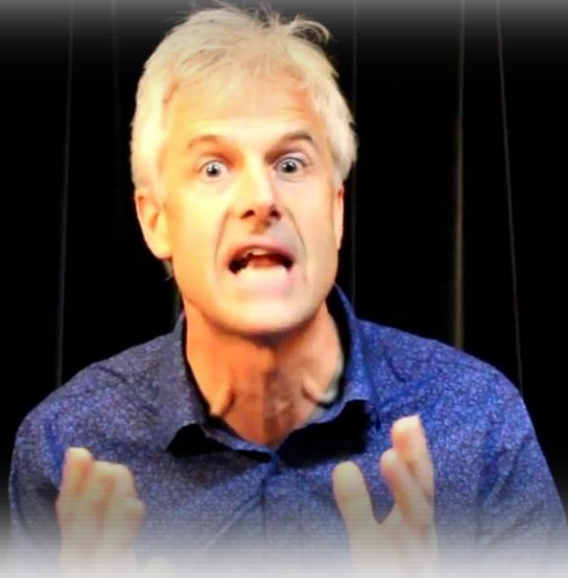
Book summary

Whether you're in the mood for fantastical and frivolous fun or let's-be-serious-for-a-moment ... *RapperBee (Poems to give you a buzz ...)* has something for everyone. Harry Laing gets into the heads of everything from the school carpet to Phar Lap's heart, sharing their perspective on life. These poems are itching to be read aloud, re-read and used as a jumping-off point for anyone who wants to get into the buzz of creative writing.

How to use this book

The beauty of poetry is that it offers so much in such a little packet. You can use the collection of poems in *RapperBee* in a number of ways:

- a complete unit on poetry – *RapperBee* contains limericks, riddles, rap, rhyming poetry, non-rhyming poetry, shape poems and more
- English study – grammar, punctuation, spelling, point of view
- an author study – find out more about Harry Laing and his other poetry collections.
- drama unit
- lead or hook into a unit of study in another subject (history, science, art etc.)
- *just read it – out loud – and enjoy the poems!*



Links to the Australian Curriculum

The poems in *RapperBee* can be used to inspire lessons and facilitate learning for primary school and early secondary school students in all grades. All activities are linked directly to the Australian Curriculum and include:

- General Capabilities (literacy, critical and creative thinking)
- Cross-curriculum Priorities (sustainability)
- Learning Areas (English; The Arts: Drama, Visual Art, Music; Science; HASS: History)

Specific outcomes are identified in square brackets after each activity and give the content description code, e.g. [ACELA1478].

Each content description code is marked according to year level

- Year 2 ... 2: [ACELA1234]
- Year 5/6 ... 5-6: [ACELA1234]

This code can be entered into the search bar on the Australian Curriculum website for more information: <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

Teaching and learning activities that BUZZ

The absolute beauty of a poetry collection is the unlimited opportunity it presents for use in the classroom. Search for poems on a particular theme. Investigate different poetic forms. Choose one to develop into a performance, a musical piece or a work of art. Read them aloud to experience, learn and, above all, enjoy. Get your students simply buzzing about poetry with a selection of the following activities.

Before reading

Regardless of what approach you are taking with *RapperBee*, the following 'before reading' activities will be useful to orient students to the book and the style of writing.

Check out the cover

- Identify the title, author, illustrator, publisher, blurb and any other relevant information.
- Predict what sort of poems will be in this book. Are they serious? Fun? Long? Short? Use the title, cover illustration and perhaps what is known about the author to help with the predictions and to justify any responses.

Prior knowledge and experience

- Brainstorm all the different types of poems students have read, heard about, written or studied.
- What do students know about poetry? This may be facts, rules, names of poems, poets or students' personal feelings about, or reactions to, the word 'poem'.

Research

- Find out more about Harry Laing and his other books. Does he only write poetry? Does he only write for children? What themes does he write about and why?
- Watch some of Harry Laing's YouTube clips of him performing his poems. What do students notice about his performance? What sort of poems are they?
- Who is Anne Ryan? What else does she draw? What techniques does she use in her artwork?



English

Responding to poems

Read and discuss a selection of poems from *RapperBee* as a class or in small cooperative groups. Use some of the following prompts:

- [Poem] makes me feel ...
- I like [poem] because ... (or: I don't like [poem] because ...)
- My favourite character/part of [poem] is ...
- [Poem] reminds me of ...
- I think [poem] is similar to [movie/book/song/poem] because ...
- When I read/hear [poem], I want to ...
- I think [poem] is about ...

Accept all responses (even the negative ones) and encourage justification of opinions and deeper exploration of ideas with the use of relevant metalanguage.

2: [ACELT1589]; 3: [ACELT1596]; 4: [ACELT1603]; 5: [ACELT1609]; 6: [ACELT1614]

Respond to one of the poems through another medium. The poem and/or the medium may be chosen for the students or by each student or group. For example:

- Writing – write an article, report, narrative etc. to continue the story or idea represented in the chosen poem.
- Draw the setting or the central character.
- Dramatise the selected poem.
- Create a percussion piece to set the mood.

On completion, students should discuss or write a brief analysis of the reasons for their choices, or an explanation of their response.

2: [ACELT1590]; 3: [ACELT1598]; 4: [ACELT1604]; 5: [ACELT1795]



Examining poems

Examine the illustrations created by Anne Ryan. What inspired her for each one? Do her illustrations tell part of the story, or do they add extra information?

2: [ACELY1670]; 4: [ACELY1686]; 5: [ACELA1511]; 6: [ACELA1524]

Analyse poetic and language devices in selected poems.

- Word play and nonsense: *Fried Lies*, *What Kind of Ologist Are You?*, *Abracadoodling*
- Onomatopoeia: *Chant of the Bunyip Bird*
- Imagery (including simile and metaphor): *Mushrooms*, *Wild River*, *Glass Lady*
- Personification: *Song of a Thumb*, *Clock Shock Personification*
- Repetition and refrain: *The Greatest Heart in History*, *I Wanna Be a Wombat* Repetition and Refrain
- Parts of speech: *Haast's Eagle Attacks Moa*, *Giant Kelp*



2: [ACELT1592]; 3: [ACELT1600]; 4: [ACELT1606]; 5: [ACELT1611]; 6: [ACELT1617]

The following language devices can also be explored in conjunction with spelling and word study.

- Alliteration: *The Flattering Sound of Fl*, *Sausagepoem*
- Assonance: *A Bee Poem in the Sound of Ee*, *A True Story in the Sound of Oo*, *Wa the Crow*

2: [ACELA1824]; 3: [ACELA1826]; 4: [ACELA1779]; 5: [ACELA1513]; 6: [ACELA1526]

Read and explore the different rhyme patterns and rhythms in Harry Laing's poetry.

- Rhyming couplets: *Dreams of a School Carpet*, *The Teacher from the Past*
- ABCB rhyming pattern: *Fried Lies*, *Pencil Man vs Rubber Man*
- Occasional or mixed rhyme: *The Laugh That Escaped*, *Chair Rodeo*
- Free verse: *Marshmallow Man*, *Plastic Is Coming*, *Old Skin*
- Rap: *RapperBee*, *Cockie-Rap*

Read selected poems aloud to further explore the rhythm and the effect of rhyme.

2: [ACELY1669]; 3: [ACELY1679]; 4: [ACELY1691]

Classify poems in *RapperBee* in different ways. For example:

- form – shape, limerick, riddle, Kenning, rap, free verse, rhyming
- theme – food, animals, nonsense, science, environment
- audience – year level, general, interests
- purpose – entertainment, persuasion, information

What would students say Harry Laing's 'style' is, and why?

What are some common features of poems written in, for example, a particular style, for a specific audience or on a certain theme. Compare these with poems and stories from other authors.

2: [ACELY1668]; 3: [ACELY1678]; 5: [ACELT1610]; 6: [ACELT1616]

Creating poems

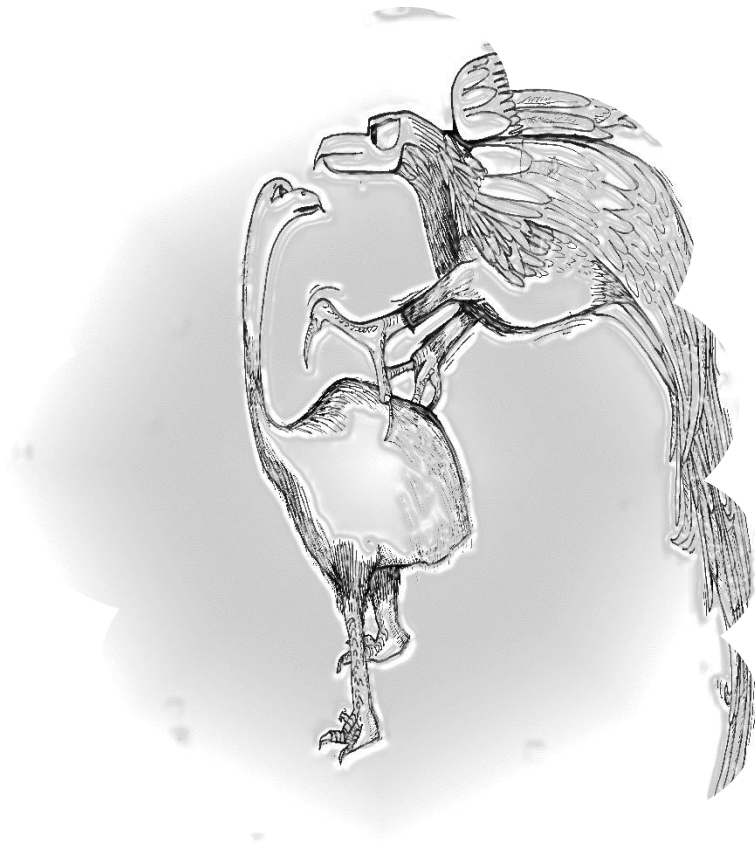
Examine poems that are written from the perspective (point of view) of the main character.

- *That's Fly-Bizz*
- *Life of a Dollar Coin*
- *The Lord Howe Island Stick Insect*

Select a character (an odd sock, the smartboard, a forgotten drink bottle etc.) Brainstorm a list of things the character might think, see, do, wonder and feel. Using one of Harry Laing's poems as a template, write a poem from the chosen character's point-of-view.

2: [ACELY1668]; 3: [ACELY1678]; 5: [ACELT1610]; 6: [ACELT1616]





Innovate on a selection of poems from *RapperBee* to experiment with structure, style, voice, imagery, word choice and purpose. For example:

- Write a shape poem in the style of *Moon Poem* or *Jimi Hendrix and His Guitar* – remind students the shape is the thing they’re writing about. Use words that fit with the shape and the subject – they don’t need to rhyme but they still need to be poetic.
- Write a poem focusing on specific parts of speech in the style of *Haast’s Eagle Attacks Moa, Trucks* or *Giant Kelp*.
- Use onomatopoeia to write a poem about an animal or a place, similar to *Chant of the Bunyip Bird*
- Have fun with nonsense and rhyming couplets using *My Favourite Food* or *Fried Lies* as a model.

2: [ACELT1833]; 3: [ACELT1791]; 4: [ACELT1794] 5: [ACELT1798]; 6:

[ACELT1800]

Create original poems on a central theme or in a specific style. For example:

- Write a poem in any style to explain a mathematical, scientific concept or historical event being studied.
- Explore spelling patterns, parts of speech or grammar through using these in poetry.
- Experiment with specific language devices in original poetry.

2: [ACELY1671]; 3: [ACELY1682]; 4: [ACELY1694] 5: [ACELY1704]; 6: [ACELY1714]

Drama

Watch Harry Laing's YouTube performances – analyse his use of voice, gesture, emphasis, expression and props.

1-2: [ACADRM030]; 3-4: [ACADRR034]
5-6: [ACADRR038]

Experiment with selected poems from *RapperBee*, playing with different voices, expressions, tones, facial expressions and movements.

1-2: [ACADRM028]; 3-4: [ACADRM032], 5-6: [ACADRM036];

Discuss how the poems in *RapperBee* could be adapted into a longer performance. What would need to be modified? How many character parts would be needed? What about costuming, props, set and musical accompaniment.

1-2: [ACADRM027]; 3-4: [ACADRM031]; 5-6: [ACADRM035]

Rehearse and perform selected poems – compare and evaluate in terms of audience engagement, interpretation

1-2: [ACADRM029]; 3-4: [ACADRM033]; 5-6: [ACADRM037]



Visual Arts

Compare the illustration style in *RapperBee* to the styles used in *Moon Fish*. Ask students which style they prefer and why. Anne Ryan illustrated one of the poems in *Moon Fish* – can students work out which one?

Choose one poem to illustrate – explain why a specific technique or media was chosen, and how the illustration adds to or emphasises the poem's message

Respond to text: Students listen to a reading of a poem (without seeing the accompanying illustration) then draw what they think the illustration should be. In cooperative groups, students discuss their drawings, comparing and contrasting their responses. Identify similarities and differences and possible reasons for these.

Substitute text: Read *The Teacher from the Past* and ask students to change the word 'past' to 'future' then rewrite or add three verses to the poem which consider teacher appearance, school and details to suggest future education. Illustrate the new verses.

Perspective: Select another poem and change one word, then illustrate the poem. What changes the look of the poem. What visual alternatives could you add or change?

Interpreting text: Read the first verse of *Fried Lies*. Draw the main character of the poem. Rewrite the second verse. Students then create an artwork interpreting their perspective of the whole poem.



Visualisation: Read *My Name Is Cheese* (without showing the illustration). Discuss the character – what is it doing? What words could describe its personality? What sort of cheese (or cheeses) could it be? Draw the character.

Descriptive: Read *Pencil Man vs Rubber Man*. Brainstorm words to describe each of these characters, including words from the poem. Create a new character using these words. Brainstorm actions for these characters, including ones used in the poem. Draw a scene with the new character.

Identifying time and place: Choose any poem that has a strong sense of time and place (*Wild River, Going Back in Time 100 Years to 1920*). Identify the time and place of the poem. Create a drawing of what might change if the year and/or the location changed.

Predicting: Draw what is going to happen next in any of the poems, such as *Don't Mention It; Take Care in the Top End, Yawn Alert* etc.

Movement: Read *The Laugh That Escaped*. After discussing what a laugh looks like and feels like, and how a laugh moves, draw a 'laugh' character. Make the 'laugh' character dance, dab and hip-hop. Brainstorm five words that are antonyms of laugh then redraw the 'laugh' character as one of these antonyms.

1-2: [ACAVAM108]; 3-4: [ACAVAM112]; 5-6: [ACAVAM116]

Exploring materials, techniques and technologies

Experiment with pencil, paint, clay, animation, printmaking, found objects etc. to create the following scenes:

- Examine the illustration for *Clock Shock*. Imagine and draw what it might look like inside the clock – what creatures would live there; what would the view look like from inside?

Students can draw their own clock character, or ask them to draw what it looks like to ‘run out of time’.

- Consider the title of the poem, *Step Back Ten Million Years* and imagine how tall a person would need to be to actually step back that far. Draw that person and the creatures that might be around them. Ask students to draw what they would bring back from ten million years ago – would it be huge or tiny? Would it fit in their bedroom?
- After reading *Shoctopus, the Underwater Boss* discuss what Shoctopus’ underwater world would look like. Who would visit? What would Shoctopus do for fun? What does an octopus doing martial arts look like? Draw Shoctopus’ home, or create a mixed media image of his home. Remember the camouflage.

1-2: [ACAVAM107]; 3-4: [ACAVAM111]; 5-6: [ACAVAM115]

Using Design and Technologies in Visual Art

Read *See Ya, Smoke* and design a ‘smoke eating machine’.

Explore drawings of sea and shell fish creatures. Read *Crabby Yabbie*. Discuss what a giant ‘crabby yabbie’ might look like and what features it might have. Design and construct a giant crabby yabbie for the classroom, making sure it has moving parts.

Brainstorm the ultimate sausage burger after reading *Sausagepoem*. Design and make a pop-up artwork of a sausage burger. Use paper engineering to add some crazy toppings to the burger.

Design a foot town or a foot spa for the foot in *The Adventures of a Foot*. Create a 3D replica of the town or spa.

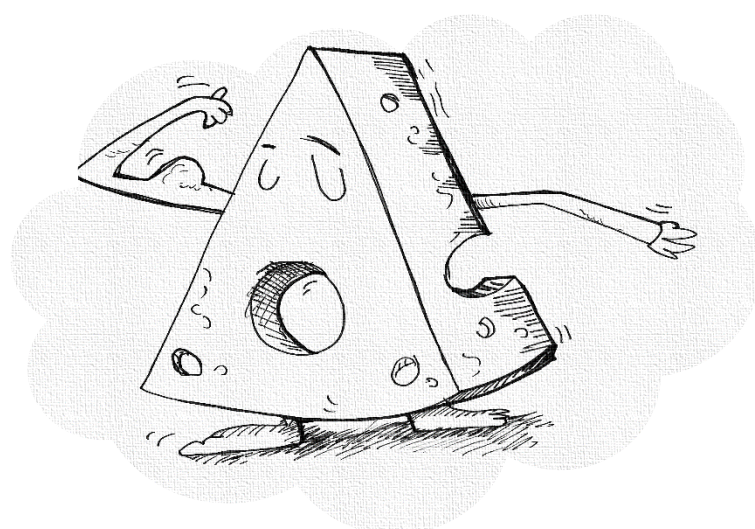
1-2: [ACTDEP007]; 3-4: [ACTDEP016]; 5-6: [ACTDEP026]



Explore the emergence of rap. Discuss its cultural background, purpose, meaning and performers.

Create and perform musical pieces, using percussion and tuned instruments, to respond to poems and accompany readings and performances.

1-2: [ACAMUM082], 3-4: [ACAMUM086]; 5-6: [ACAMUM090]



Science

Use a selection of the listed poems as a stimulus or hook to start a science unit or introduce a topic or concept.

Science Understanding: Biological Sciences

Choose from the following poems:

- Rapper Bee
- Mushrooms
- That's Fly-Bizz
- Haast's Eagle Attacks Moa
- Old Skin
- Monkey Business
- The Lord Howe Island Stick Insect
- Chant of the Bunyip Bird
- Shoctopus, the Underwater Boss
- Regent Honeyeater
- Bat Talk
- Moon Fish Chant
- Cockie Rap
- Giant Kelp
- Take Care in the Top End
- I Wanna Be a Wombat
- Big Black Bulls
- Stingrays

Read a selection of the listed poems and discuss the information in each one regarding characteristics, behaviours, habitats etc.

Create retrieval charts or lists of information under categories (appearance, diet, habitat etc.) and include a common for information that is not factual.

Classify living things featured in the poems according to their families, features, habitat etc.

Research to find missing information about a specific animal or group of animals.

Present collected information (e.g. a media presentation, diorama, artwork, story, report etc.)

2: [ACSSU030]; 3: [ACSSU044]; 4: [ACSSU072];

5: [ACSSU043]; 6: [ACSSU094]

Science as a Human Endeavour: Use and Influence of Science

Choose from the following poems:

- What Kind of Ologist Are You?
- Wild River (Saved For Ever)
- Glass Lady
- Plastic Is Coming
- Step Back Ten Million Years
- The Lord Howe Island Stick Insect
- See Ya Smoke

Identify the key message in selected poems about the influence and impact of science, either positive or negative.

Analyse the effects of human actions as described in selected poems and brainstorm or research other effects.

Consider methods and actions to alleviate the issues raised.

2: [ACSHE035]; 3: [ACSHE051]; 4: [ACSHE062]; 5: [ACSHE083]; 6: [ACSHE100]



Science Inquiry Skills: Planning and Conducting; Communicating

Share a specific poem and **use it as a springboard** into inquiry, questioning, predicting and investigative activities. A few examples include:

Poem	Inquiry Focus
<i>Wild River (Saved For Ever)</i>	Discuss imagery and emotion. What senses are evoked? What is suggested about the landscape, living species (invasive and native) and conservation?
<i>What Are You Made Of</i>	What is the poem saying about the composition of the world? What does it predict? What does it suggest about life cycles?
<i>See Ya Smoke</i>	What is the message behind this poem? What possibilities does it explore?
<i>The Big Sneeze</i> <i>Yawn Alert</i>	What questions do these poems make you want to ask about the body's natural and reflexive responses? What makes us sneeze or yawn?

2: [AC SIS037]; 3: [AC SIS053]; 4: [AC SIS064]; 5: [AC SIS231]; 6: [AC SIS232]

Use the poems listed above, or others from *RapperBee*, as models or templates, for students to communicate the results of their investigations and their scientific understandings through poetry.

5: [AC SIS093]; 6: [AC SIS110]

Sustainability

Explore the poems related to sustainability and environment (e.g. *Wild River*; *Plastic Is Coming*, *The Lord Howe Island Stick Insect*, *See Ya Smoke*).

Identify the issues touched on in the poems

Design a poster, dramatic presentation, podcast etc. to accompany one of the poems

Write a poem, modelled on one of Harry Laing's, to raise awareness of an issue.

Code: OI.3; OI.6; OI.7; OI.8; OI.9

History

How has our community/world changed?

Read selected poems as an opening, hook, discussion point or stimulus for further exploration and research (e.g. *The Teacher from the Past*, *Step Back*



Ten Million Years, The Greatest Heart in History, Going Back in Time 100 Years to 1920).

Discuss changes and potential reasons for these.

Share opinions on the positive and negative effects of identified changes.

Predict, based on prior knowledge, what further changes there may be.

Analyse differing viewpoints and perspectives.

Ask and answer 'what if?' questions to guide further exploration.

Develop an inquiry question for further investigation.

2: [ACHASSK044]; 3: [ACHASSK063]; 4: [ACHASSK084]; 5: [ACHASSK108]; 6: [ACHASSI123]

Additional Resources

Other books by Harry:

Shoctopus: Poems to Grip You (2015)

MoonFish (2019)

Online resources:

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKPxeFOccS0oV5Q4FIZRi9Q>

Harry Laing's website: www.harrylaing.com.au

Poetry resource: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poetic-forms-and-devices>

School visits

Harry Laing is available for school visits and offers poetry performances and workshops to students of all ages.

Contact Harry via his speakers' agent, Creative Net Speakers Agency:

terrie@creativenetspeakers.com
or paul@creativenetspeakers.com

