

This lesson plan will support you to deliver lesson/s about 'I Come From', a poem from Dean Atta's *The Black Flamingo*. This poem will engage learners in discussions about poetic techniques, themes of identity and pride, and will encourage them to think critically about the poem's significance for people of colour and LGBT people in the UK today.

This lesson plan accompanies the 'I Come From' Second/Third PowerPoint Slides.

Opportunities for assessment are built into this resource.

Curriculum for Excellence Links

Experiences and Outcomes	Benchmarks
I can: - Discuss structure, characterisation and/or setting; - Recognise the relevance of the writer's theme and how this relates to my own and others' experiences; and - Discuss the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre. ENG 2-19a	Makes relevant comments about structure, characterisation and/or setting with reference to the text. Relates the writer's theme to own and/or others' experiences. Makes relevant comments about aspects of the writer's style, use of language and other features appropriate to genre, with reference to the text.
As I write for different purposes and readers, I can describe and share my experiences, expressing what they made me think about and how they made me feel. ENG 2-30a	When writing to describe and share experiences: • Describes personal experiences, making context and events clear. • Describes thoughts and feelings about the experience. • Attempts to engage and/or influence the reader through vocabulary and/or use of language.
Having explored the elements which writers use in different genres, I can use what I learn to create stories, poems and plays with an interesting and appropriate structure, interesting characters and/or settings which come to life. ENG 2-31a	When writing imaginatively and creatively: • Applies a few features of the chosen genre. • Creates interesting characters through, for example, their feelings and actions, physical description and/or dialogue. • Creates setting/context with some descriptive detail. • Attempts to use figurative language (imagery) to engage the reader, for example, simile, metaphor, alliteration and onomatopoeia. • Creates plots with clear structures, for example, suitable opening, turning point, climax and/or satisfactory ending.
I can: - Discuss and evaluate the structure, characterisation and/or setting using some supporting evidence; - Identify the main theme of the text and recognise the relevance this has to my own and others' experiences; and - Identify and comment on aspects of the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre using some relevant evidence. ENG 3-19a	Makes evaluative comments about structure, characterisation and/or setting with relevant reference to the text. Shows understanding of the writer's theme and can link it to own or others' experiences. Identifies and makes evaluative comments about aspects of the writer's style, use of language and other features appropriate to genre with supporting evidence.

Experiences and Outcomes	Benchmarks
I can recreate a convincing impression of a personal experience for my reader, sharing my feelings and reactions to the changing circumstances with some attempt at reflection. ENG 3-30a	When writing to convey personal experiences: • Establishes a clear context and setting for events. • Describes events, making feelings and reactions clear. • Makes some attempt to reflect on experiences and/or feelings. • Engages and/or influences the reader through use of language, style and/or tone.
Having explored the elements which writers use, I can create texts in different genres by: - Integrating the conventions of my chosen genre successfully; - Using convincing and appropriate structures; creating interesting and convincing characters; and building convincing settings which come to life. ENG 3-31a	When writing imaginatively or creatively: • Applies key features of the chosen genre. • Creates interesting and convincing characters. • Creates a clear sense of setting with descriptive detail. • Makes some attempt to engage the reader and achieve effects through, for example, narrative structure, mood/ atmosphere and language.

LGBT Inclusive Education Learning Themes
Identifying prejudice, discrimination, and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia)
Celebrating diversity and difference
History of LGBT equality movements
LGBT past and present figures and role models

Equality Act Characteristics Covered
Sexual Orientation
Sex
Race

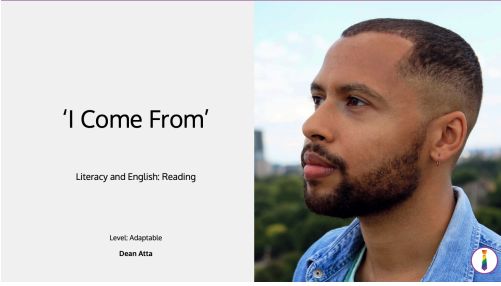
Learning Intentions
• I am learning to identify the main theme(s) of Dean Atta's poem, 'I Come From'.
• I am learning to analyse and evaluate the poetic techniques used by the poet and refer to the text to justify my opinions.
• I am learning about the poem's significance for people of colour and LGBT people in the UK today.

Success Criteria
• I can identify the main theme(s) of Dean Atta's poem, 'I Come From'.
• I can analyse and evaluate the poetic techniques used by the poet and refer to the text to justify my opinions.
• I can contribute to a discussion about the poem's significance for people of colour and LGBT people in the UK today.

Resources accompanying this lesson

- I Come From - PowerPoint (Literacy and English)
- I Come From - Poem Printout (PDF)
- Learner Planning Handout (PDF)
- Dean Atta YouTube video of the poem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqK4U47JvWI>

Lesson Plan

PowerPoint Slide	Teaching Notes
	Introduce the lesson, explaining to learners that they will be learning about the contemporary poet, Dean Atta. Highlight that he is an award-winning British poet renowned for his work that is a unique celebration of heritage and the LGBT community.
Learning Intentions • I am learning to identify the main theme(s) of Dean Atta's poem, 'I Come From'. • I am learning to analyse and evaluate the poetic techniques used by the poet and refer to the text to justify my opinions. • I am learning about the poem's significance for people of colour and LGBT people in the UK today.	Discuss the Learning Intentions with learners. • I am learning to identify the main theme(s) of Dean Atta's poem, 'I Come From'. • I am learning to analyse and evaluate the poetic techniques used by the poet and refer to the text to justify my opinions. • I am learning about the poem's significance for people of colour and LGBT people in the UK today.
Success Criteria • I can identify the main theme(s) of Dean Atta's poem, 'I Come From'. • I can analyse and evaluate the poetic techniques used by the poet and refer to the text to justify my opinions. • I can contribute to a discussion about the poem's significance for people of colour and LGBT people in the UK today.	Discuss the Success Criteria with learners. • I can identify the main theme(s) of Dean Atta's poem, I Come From. • I can analyse and evaluate the poetic techniques used by the poet and refer to the text to justify my opinions. • I can contribute to a discussion about the poem's significance for people of colour and LGBT people in the UK today. Ask learners to keep the Success Criteria in mind as the lesson progresses.
What is poetry? Discuss: • What makes a poem different to other texts? • What do poems look like? • Are there any famous poems or poets you know? 	Start with a short discussion task; this will allow the learners to start thinking about the structure of a poem. Possible answers might include: • Poems are shorter than books. • Poems look small on the page. • Poems often rhyme. • 'To a Mouse' by Robert Burns. • 'A Dug, A Dug!' By Billy Key. Some learners may mention types of poems like haikus, limericks or elegies.
Why write poetry? • Poems are written to tell stories. • They were created to entertain. • Poetry is written to express feelings (similar to songs). • They can be used in adverts/cards/speeches. 	Explain some of the purposes of poetry by reading the slide aloud. • Poems are written to tell stories. • They were created to entertain. • Poetry is written to express feelings (similar to songs). • They can be used in adverts/cards/speeches. This could be used to start a discussion about which one they think is the most important.

What makes it a poem?

- Poems have line breaks, this makes them look shorter than a novel.
- Line breaks in poems are crucial for shaping rhythm, pace, and meaning. It means the poet can deliberately pause or emphasise something.
- They allow poets to control how the reader experiences the poem, influencing the flow and highlighting specific words or phrases.

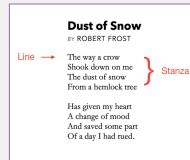


Provide learners with reasons why poems have line breaks by reading the slide aloud.

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What makes it a poem?

- Poems also have stanzas or verses.
- This is like a paragraph but for poetry.
- It allows the poet to group lines together and these lines might be linked in some way.



Explain that poems often have stanzas/verses.

‘Dust of Snow’ by Robert Frost is a small eight-line poem with only two stanzas.

In stanza one, the speaker describes a crow shaking snow onto them.

In stanza two, the speaker describes a shift in mood from despair to hope.

By separating the poem into two stanzas, the poet is able to emphasise the shift in mood.

Line Breaks and Stanzas

Paragraph:

The forest was quiet, and the only sound was the whisper of the wind through the trees. Birds flitted between branches, and the sun shone gently, casting soft shadows on the ground. It was peaceful, a place where time seemed to slow down, and everything felt calm.

Poetry:

The forest was quiet,
The only sound was

This task gives the learners the opportunity to turn a paragraph into poetry through line breaks and stanzas.

Explain that everyone’s will be slightly different but they should think carefully about what they want to emphasise.

The example has been started but could be continued as a class. The end result might look like:

The forest was quiet,
The only sound was
The whisper of the wind
Through the trees.

Birds flittered between branches
And the sun shone gently,
Casting shadows
On the ground.

It was peaceful,
A place where time
Seemed to slow down,
And everything felt calm.

Imagery

Look at the picture and try to create your own imagery.

Simile:
The city lights shine like jewels in a treasure chest.

Metaphor:
Glasgow's a carnival, bright and fun.

Personification:
The buildings smile and the streets sing as people pass by.



Imagery

Look at the picture and try to create your own imagery.

You can choose your challenge:

3 similes 🌶️

2 similes and 1 metaphor 🌶️🌶️

1 simile, 1 metaphor and 1 personification 🌶️🌶️🌶️



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Techniques

1. Poetry is a powerful process.
2. Poetry is like a whisper, soft yet powerful.
3. Poetry is influential.
4. Poetry is a mirror that reflects our soul.
5. Poetry is clever and cool.
6. Poetry is exquisite.

Is the example:

Interesting word choice
Or
Alliteration
Or
Imagery?

These tasks are designed to encourage learners to create their own imagery using a visual stimulus.

Talk learners through the first example before leading them into the activity.

Activity

Three slides are provided with different scenic pictures. Learners should refer to these pictures to develop their own imagery.

Learners can choose their own challenge level when creating their own imagery: e.g. 3 similes is the least difficult, while 1 simile, 1 metaphor and 1 personification is the most challenging.

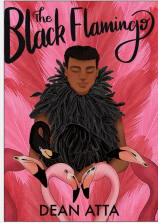
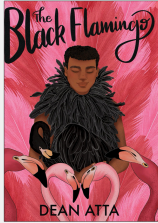
You can use one of these slides, or all three if you have time.

If more than one image/slide is used, encourage learners to try a harder challenge level each time.

For example, if a learner has chosen 3 similes for the first image, then they should try 2 similes and 1 metaphor for the second image.

This slide will help learners to identify techniques by deciding whether each of the six examples provided is either 'Interesting word choice', 'Alliteration', or 'Imagery'.

Facilitate a class discussion to identify the techniques. Point out that some examples might have more than one.

Who is Dean Atta? •Dean Atta was born in London. •His mother is Greek and his dad is Jamaican. •His poetry explores themes of identity and social justice. •He earned a BA degree in Philosophy and English from the University of Sussex, where he was president of the African Caribbean Society. •He has been listed by The Independent newspaper as one of the 100 most influential LGBT people in the United Kingdom. 	Provide learners with some background information about Dean Atta by reading the slide aloud. Some additional information (this doesn't have to be read aloud): • Atta writes poetry, fiction and non-fiction for all ages and has received professional recognition and awards for his work. • He is also a screenwriter and executive producer of the animated short film <i>Two Black Boys in Paradise</i>, which was selected for the BFI Flare: London LGBTIQ+ Film Festival (and numerous others worldwide), as well as being awarded Best Animation at the 2025 Ealing Film Festival. In February 2026, the film took home Best Short Animation at the BAFTAs. • His adult debut novel, <i>Big Man</i>, was released in September 2026. This slide could lead to a discussion: • What do you think social justice means? • Why do you think Dean Atta would join the African Caribbean Society at his university? • What do you think being 'influential' means?
What is <i>The Black Flamingo</i>? • This is Dean Atta's collection of poetry, it was published in 2019. • <i>The Black Flamingo</i> is a story about the power of embracing your uniqueness. • It is a fictional book of poetry about a boy who comes to terms with being a mixed-race gay teen. • Our class poem that we will study is part of this collection. 	Introduce the collection of poetry: <i>The Black Flamingo</i>. • This is Dean Atta's collection of poetry, it was published in 2019. • <i>The Black Flamingo</i> is a story about the power of embracing your uniqueness. • It is a fictional book of poetry about a boy who comes to terms with being a mixed-race gay teen. • Our class poem that we will study is part of this collection. Note: It is sometimes referred to as a verse novel, which combines the narrative structure of a novel but uses poetry instead of prose.
'Embracing your uniqueness...' • Think about the society we live in. Is everyone the same? What differences do we have? • Do you think it is better that we are all different? Why or why not? • Are there any challenges that come with being different? What are they? • Why is it important that we embrace our differences/our uniqueness? 	This task will allow learners to unpack the phrase, 'embracing your uniqueness'. It is important for helping learners analyse <i>I Come From</i>. Encourage learners not to identify individual differences between each other but, instead, to focus on broader differences within our society. This task could be an individual task in their jotters, and then they could share their answers in a group discussion.
'I Come From' What do you think this poem will be about? What do you think the key message will be?	Facilitate a short discussion before reading the poem. Encourage learners to use their prior knowledge to make their predictions. Possible answers: • The poem might be about where someone lives. • It might be about moving from one place to another/immigration. • The key message might be about how everyone is different and how we should be accepting of this. • The key message could be about how people come from many different places and feel they belong to more than one.
Discussion If someone were to ask you, "Where do you come from?", what would your answer be? Think about: • where you were born • where you grew up • where you live now • where you consider 'home' What else, other than geographical location, might you consider a part of 'where you come from'?	This task can be used to encourage learners to think more deeply about where they come from. This will help with planning their own poems later. This task could be moved to after the reading of the poem. Where you come from can be a complex question to answer and it is not always a fixed concept. Some people might live somewhere new but it may not feel like 'home'. Also, the people we live with might feel more like 'home' than the house or area/country we live in.



This is Dean Atta's performance of 'I Come From'.

Print and distribute the I Come From Poem.pdf so learners can read along.

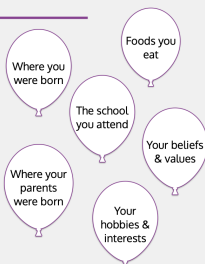
It can also be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqK4U47JvWI>

What is 'I Come From' about?

'I Come From' explores the speaker's identity by listing different things that have shaped him.

Look at the balloons and rank them in the order you believe are the most important when considering **what has shaped who you are**.

Are there any we could add?



This task allows learners to consider the factors that have been most important in shaping who they are, which will help them when interpreting Dean Atta's poem.

Give learners time to consider these and order them in their jotters.

Afterwards, facilitate a discussion about why learners all have a different order.

To avoid putting learners into a position where they feel they have to disclose things about themselves which they may not be comfortable with, ensure that learners are encouraged to only share what they are comfortable with.

Some explanations

Jerk chicken is a spicy grilled-meat dish mostly associated with Jamaica but common throughout the Caribbean.



Stuffed vine leaves are a traditional Greek dish made of leaves rolled around a filling of rice, herbs and minced meat.



A white flag represents a truce or ceasefire during conflicts. It is also used to symbolise surrender.



A griot is a West African oral historian, storyteller, and musician who preserves and shares cultural traditions.



Provide explanations for some of the references in the poem which the learners may not know.

Ask if there are any other references/words that they are not sure about. Learners could work in groups to look them up in the dictionary.

Understanding the poem

1. Why do you think the speaker talks about food? What does it show about him?
2. The speaker says, 'I come from a home that some would call broken.' What do you think he means by that?
3. How do you think the speaker feels when he says he waited for someone to call?
4. Why do you think the speaker repeats the words 'I come from' so many times? What effect does it have?
5. He mentions both the 'rainbow flag' and the 'union jack'. What do these flags represent, and why are they important to him?
6. What do you think the message of the poem is? What is important?
7. Why do you think this poem has been written?
8. What do you like about the poem? Has it taught you anything, made you realise something?

Use learners' answers to facilitate a discussion about the poem.

Point out that the Pride flag is a symbol recognised all over the world to represent the LGBT communities. It was first used in 1978 at the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade, and was designed by Gilbert Baker.

Point out that in England, homosexuality was decriminalised in 1967, with Scotland following in 1980, and Northern Ireland by 1982.

Identifying Techniques

You are now going to highlight the poetic techniques in the poem.

You will need three different colours, and you should make a key in the corner to remind you which colour represents each technique.

Example:

Interesting word choice – **yellow**
Alliteration – **green**
Imagery – **pink**



This task requires learners to highlight the poetic techniques in I Come From.

Use the accompanying poem handout for this task.

Thoughts and opinions

Quote	Technique	My thoughts and opinions
"marvellous mother"	Alliteration	I like this quote because I think the alliteration makes it stand out. It is effective because it shows the loving relationship he has with his mum and how he thinks highly of her.

This task is designed to encourage learners to evaluate the effect of the poetic technique.

Learners can create their own style for recording in their jotters - e.g. a drawn table, or bullet point headings.

Theme Discussion Which themes do we see in this poem? Can you find evidence in the poem to justify your opinion? 	Facilitate a class discussion about the themes in I Come From and encourage learners to find evidence in the poem. Possible themes to discuss are: identity, belonging, pride, family, culture, as well as any others that the learners discuss. • The poem explores how our identity is shaped by our heritage and our personal experiences. • The speaker reflects on the people and places that give them a sense of belonging. • The poem celebrates the speaker's background and encourages pride in who we are. • Family is shown as an important influence on the speaker's identity and values. • The poem celebrates cultural heritage and the traditions that shape identity.
Planning You need to choose at least four out of the six headings for your poem. These will be your stanzas. You can create your own if you wish. • Family & Culture • Food & Traditions • Language & Sounds • Places • Objects & Memories • Beliefs & Values You will have three lines of poetry in each stanza.	Now, learners will begin to plan their own poem. This stage of the planning allows for differentiation. Encourage highly able learners to create their own headings.
Planning Sheet Under each heading, you are going to write three sentences. These sentences will then turn into poetry. Right now, you just need brief sentences.	Use the accompanying Learner Planning Handout here. Point out that it can be difficult to write poetry straight away, so writing sentences first will help them get started with their ideas.
Planning Sheet Example Family & Culture 1. My mum is my best friend, and I am very close with my sister. 2. My dad's family are originally from Ireland, but I've never met them. 3.	Point out that these are examples of what their sentences might look like. The example has been started but could be continued as a class. The slide could be removed and replaced with a learner or teacher's own sentences.
Creating Poetry We are now going to use our sentences and turn them into lines of poetry. To do this well, we need to remember everything we have learned about poetry so far. Think of our poem as a big cauldron where we will add everything we have learned. Our poems are cauldrons - does anyone know this technique? 	Point out that the things we have learned so far will contribute to our Success Criteria: • Line breaks and stanzas • Interesting word choice • Alliteration • Imagery • Theme Our poems are cauldrons - this is a metaphor.

Success Criteria • Line breaks and stanzas • Techniques: word choice, alliteration and imagery • A theme of identity (about you) • Correct punctuation • Most lines should start with the phrase, 'I come from'	Read through the Success Criteria for creating our own poems.
Creating Poetry Example First sentence is: My mum is my best friend, and I am very close with my sister. Turns into: I come from a magnificent mum, and my sister is the sun in the sky. Can you spot any of the Success Criteria? Success Criteria: • Line breaks and stanzas • Techniques: word choice, alliteration and imagery • A theme of identity (about you) • Correct punctuation • Most lines should start with the phrase, 'I come from'	Model turning sentences into poetry using the success criteria. Facilitate a discussion to see if learners can identify the success criteria. At this point learners can now create their own poetry.

Further LGBT Inclusive Education teaching resources:

- tie.scot/resources
- lgbteducation.scot/resources