



PETERBOROUGH DRAMA FESTIVAL 2026



CHORAL SPEAKING SYLLABUS

The Peterborough Drama Festival is a registered charity: 1032610

Affiliated to the British and International Federation of Festivals



 www.peterboroughdramafestival.org.uk



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SYLLABUS 2026

Choral Speaking (select one of the two choices):

Years 1 & 2:

Getting carried away by Colin McNaughton
Crocodile by Jan Dean

Years 3 & 4:

Storm Dragon by Witter Bynner
I hate greens by David King

Years 5 & 6:

A Smuggler's song by Rudyard Kipling
Be glad your nose is on your face by Jack Prelutsky

Key Stage 3:

The Chimney Sweeper by William Blake
The Charge of the light brigade by
Alfred Lord Tennyson



Key Stage 4:

The road not taken by Robert Frost
Mirror by Sylvia Plath

CATEGORY RULES

Choral Speaking

Groups are required to perform a poem, or an extract from a poem, in a lively and imaginative style. This may include vocal sound effects, occasional solo voices, small groups speaking separately, juxtaposition, echoes and many other effects to create the atmosphere of the poem. The group must work as a disciplined choir, speaking and moving together. Some groups even set the tone of the poem in the way they move onto the stage. The use of props and costume is not allowed. The piece must have a title. A copy of the poem must be given to the adjudicator's clerk before the performance. Choirs must be no fewer than eight and no more than thirty. The time limit is ten minutes and poems must be taken from themes listed in the year's festival syllabus. With the exception of Key Stage One classes, all performances must be unaided.

Time limit: 10 minutes

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www.peterboroughdramafestival.org.uk

Email contact list



YEARS 1 & 2

Getting Carried Away by Colin McNaughton

I was sitting out back in my rocking-chair,
Just passing the time of day.
When a terrible wind done picked me up
And I got carried away.

It carried me over the mountains
And dropped me in the bay.
A humpbacked whale came sailing by
And I got carried away.

It carried me over the ocean
With its billowy salty spray.
It flipped me into the eye of a storm
And I got carried away.

The storm blew high and mighty,
A swirl of leaden grey.
It dumped me into the back of a truck
And I got carried away.

The truck went over the prairies
Where the dear old anchovies play.
It flicked me on to the back of a horse
And I got carried away.

Well, I rode home and told my mum
Where I had been all day.
She shook her head and then she said:
“Oh, you do get carried away,
Sometimes,
You do get carried away.”

YEARS 1 & 2

Crocodile by Jan Dean

Leathery and scaly with gold eye slits,
This old green monster grins and sits in the steamy swamp,
In the hot muddy pits -
One step nearer and I'll tear you into bits.

Got teeth. Got teeth. Got a man-trap smile
Get away. Get away. Run a long-leg mile.

The dinosaurs they came and went
They couldn't stand the pace,
But I was here before them
And I'm still around the place.
Better run - and make it snappy
Before Snappy makes it you
This is one wild crocodile who really likes to chew

Got teeth. Got teeth. Got a man-trap smile Get away.
Get away. Run a long-leg smile.

I got teeth. I got teeth. Make a shark look shy
Get away. Get away. Be a bird - just fly.
Got teeth in my heart
Got teeth in my soul
Drag you down in the water
For a dead-man roll.

Got teeth. Got teeth. Got a man-trap smile
Older than the dinosaurs - m...e... a... n
CROCODILE!

YEARS 3 & 4

The Storm Dragon by Witter Bynner

A water-snake, trailing the lily-bulbs,
Or a rattler slowly scaling Tunapec....
But where was the winged serpent all this while?—
Had he coiled his spirit away on pyramids?
With the oxen and burrows, we hid our frightened eyes
We had seen him coming through a gap of hills,
Throwing a horseman down, overturning a boat,
His horizontal plumage stiff with rain.

He huddled us aside out of his way,
He breathed on us, he drowned us with his breath,
He burned our eyes with his, he clapped his wings
Over our heads. Longer than a mountain,
He passed and passed, miles of him in the wind.
And afterwards the dragging of his tail
Had slashed the roadway to a yellow froth
And spun the meadows whirling at their trees.

YEARS 3 & 4

I hate greens by David King

I hate greens!

'They're good for you,' my mother said,
'They'll make the hair curl on your head,
They'll make you grow up big and strong,
That's what your father says.' He's wrong!!

I hate greens.

Peas like bullets, beans like string,
Spinach - not like anything,
Sprouts as hard as bricks and mortar,
Slimy cabbage, slopped in water,

I hate greens.

Swamp them in tomato sauce,
Hide them in your second course,
Thought they make you nearly sick,
Close your eyes and gulp them quick,

I hate greens.

Limp lettuce on a lukewarm plate,
Grit in watercress I hate,
Can't bear leeks with dirt inside,
Cauliflower with slugs that died,

I hate greens.

When we go on shopping trips,
Couldn't we have eggs and chips?
Couldn't we have chips and beans?
Don't you know what hunger means?

I HATE GREENS!!!

YEARS 5 & 6

A Smuggler's song by Rudyard Kipling

IF you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in the street,
Them that ask no questions isn't told a lie.
Watch the wall my darling while the Gentlemen go by.

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark -
Brandy for the Parson, 'Baccy for the Clerk.
Laces for a lady; letters for a spy,
Watch the wall my darling while the Gentlemen go by!

Running round the woodlump if you chance to find
Little barrels, roped and tarred, all full of brandy-wine,
Don't you shout to come and look, nor use 'em for your play.
Put the brishwood back again - and they'll be gone next day !

If you see the stable-door setting open wide;
If you see a tired horse lying down inside;
If your mother mends a coat cut about and tore;
If the lining's wet and warm - don't you ask no more!

If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue and red,
You be careful what you say, and mindful what is said.
If they call you " pretty maid," and chuck you 'neath the chin,
Don't you tell where no one is, nor yet where no one's been!

Knocks and footsteps round the house - whistles after dark -
You've no call for running out till the house-dogs bark.
Trusty's here, and Pincher's here, and see how dumb they lie
They don't fret to follow when the Gentlemen go by!

'If You do as you've been told, 'likely there's a chance,
You'll be give a dainty doll, all the way from France,
With a cap of Valenciennes, and a velvet hood -
A present from the Gentlemen, along 'o being good!

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark -
Brandy for the Parson, 'Baccy for the Clerk.
Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie -
Watch the wall my darling while the Gentlemen go by!

YEARS 5 & 6

Be glad your nose is on your face by Jack Prelutsky

Be glad your nose is on your face,
not pasted on some other place,
for if it were where it is not,
you might dislike your nose a lot.

Imagine if your precious nose
were sandwiched in between your toes,
that clearly would not be a treat,
for you'd be forced to smell your feet.

Your nose would be a source of dread
were it attached atop your head,
it soon would drive you to despair,
forever tickled by your hair.

Within your ear, your nose would be
an absolute catastrophe,
for when you were obliged to sneeze,
your brain would rattle from the breeze.

Your nose, instead, through thick and thin,
remains between your eyes and chin,
not pasted on some other place—
be glad your nose is on your face!

KEY STAGE 3

The Chimney Sweeper by William Blake

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry " 'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved, so I said,
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

KEY STAGE 3

The charge of the light brigade by Alfred Lord Tennyson

I

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.
“Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!” he said.
Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

II

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
 Someone had blundered.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
 Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
 Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
 All the world wondered.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right through the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reeled from the sabre stroke
 Shattered and sundered.
Then they rode back, but not
 Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
 Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell.
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
 Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
 All the world wondered.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred!

KEY STAGE 4

The road not taken by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

KEY STAGE 4

Mirror by Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful,
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Festival rules:

Competitors work hard preparing for the Festival. Please make their experience enjoyable by following the rules of all festivals:



No mobile phones

Please switch off all mobile phones.



No photography

To comply with Safeguarding regulations photography is strictly forbidden.



No videography

To comply with Safeguarding regulations videography is strictly forbidden.



Quiet please

Please show consideration by being as quiet as possible at the festival.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Copyright rules and conditions of entry:

The Peterborough Drama Festival has entered into an agreement with the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society which means that entrants do not have to seek copyright permission for any poetry, prose or solo dramatic items performed to a time limit of 10 minutes.

Solo and dramatic items must be announced with title and author at the time of performance to qualify for copyright indemnity and the performers must not change the words or gender of the character.

Duologues and group dramatic performances are not covered by this agreement and copyright for these should be sought by the performers at the time of entry.

Performers and teachers should know that authors are directly reimbursed as a result of their works being performed.

All time limits must be strictly adhered to, otherwise penalty points will be imposed.

Adjudicators' decisions are final.

Ages must be reckoned as at the first day of the Festival. In duologue and group classes the class is determined by the oldest competitor.

Competitors should give a copy of their script/readings to adjudicators at the time of performance.

Further information about entries will be requested in February 2026 to enable the committee to submit relevant copyright performance information.

Trophies:

A trophy agreement must be signed.

Responsibility for engraving trophies rests with the winning competitor.

Trophies won at the Festival must be returned. Arrangements to return can be made via email to the festival secretary.