

Voices 2025

The Creative Writing Competition
for Children in Care and Care Leavers

Your voice, your story

Voices 2025 Creative Writing Competition Resource Pack



coramVoice)))
getting young voices heard

How To Use This Resource Pack

Welcome to the Voices 2025 Creative Writing Competition Resource Pack. This is designed to support you in leading engaging and inspiring sessions for children and young people with care experience aged 4-25, helping them explore the competition's theme, 'My Voice'.

Through these activities, you'll guide participants in reflecting on this theme, sharing their unique perspectives, and developing creative ideas that they may build on in future to enter the competition.

We encourage you to approach this guide as a flexible framework that you can adapt to your own style and skills, and the interests of the young people you work with. The competition celebrates all forms of expression—from poems and stories to songs and raps—so feel free to explore a range of media and approaches that resonate with your group.

Our aim is to empower you to create a space where children and young people feel inspired, confident, and excited to share their voice with the world. Use it as a flexible starting point and adapt it to suit the needs of the young people you work with.

A Note on Age Groups:

The competition accepts entries from anyone with care experience between the ages of 4 and 25. This resource pack is pitched towards participants from Key Stages 2 and 3, but can be adapted to younger or older audiences. Many activities will be appropriate for any age, or adaptable based on the specific needs of the individuals or group you are working with.

- Using simpler prompts and interpretations of the theme in order to make the workshop grounded and accessible.
- Incorporating a range of visual aids, templates, or guided writing formats
- Including visual, interactive and sensory activities to offer a range of engaging experiences.
- Setting correct expectations for the outcome of activities such as Automatic Writing. Offer flexibility in output and encourage them to be creative without needing to produce a whole short story!
- Leveraging group dynamics to do more activities collaboratively.

For older participants, you may wish to consider:

- Encouraging older participants to engage with more complex and individual interpretations of the theme, relating them to their own lives.
- Allowing more time for self-reflection and personal explorations of the theme. Older individuals may enjoy the opportunity for individual working.
- Supporting them to consider their own writing style, finding an individual voice and experimenting with it
- Actively incorporating more complex elements of creative writing such as metaphor, structure, and symbolism.
- Ensuring there is sufficient opportunity for autonomy and creativity, potentially adapting the pace and structure of the session to facilitate choice and ownership.
- Incorporating technology into the sessions, such as digital storytelling and multimedia creativity.
- Giving practical advice on how to edit and develop their creative writing outside the session itself. See the Creative Editing Guide for more detail.

A Note on format:

These sessions can be run in groups or 1:1. The activities are designed to support a variety of creative outputs, helping children and young people explore the theme and develop ideas for their competition entries.

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable input of Coram Shakespeare Schools Foundation in the development of this resource pack. Since 2000, they have transformed the lives of over 350,000 young people through the unique power of Shakespeare. 2025 marks their 25th Anniversary.



Competition Criteria

When guiding children and young people, remind them of the judging criteria. These can be used to shape the structure and aims of your session:

1. **Theme:** How well does the piece reflect 'My Voice'?
2. **Voice:** Is it strong, original, and unique?
3. **Emotive:** Does it engage the audience's emotions?

Session Structure

Below is a suggested structure to help you plan and run your sessions effectively. You can adapt the structure to suit the energy, interests, and needs of your group, ensuring each session is engaging and productive.

1. **Warm-Up Activity:** Assess the group's energy level and get everyone engaged and ready to create. It may be helpful to raise the energy levels in the room and get participants involved, or to support them to release nervous energy and enter a more comfortable frame of mind.
2. **Brainstorming Activity (see the resource pack)**
 - Following the warmup with this activity will enable the young people participating to begin thinking about the theme and their personal reflections on it. By doing this early in the session, the young people will be able to spark some initial ideas that they can develop through the session.
3. **Main Activities:** Use the structure and sessions suggested in the Activity pack, adapting them to the interests and skills of the young people you work with if applicable. You could run the workshop exactly as we have laid out, or use it as a jumping-off point to incorporate other activities or skills.
4. **Cooldown and outcome:** Please do also share the details of the Voices Competition with the participants so they know how to submit their creative work if they want to.
 - Sometimes it is helpful to close creative groups with a group ritual. For example, the group has to clap at the same time as the facilitator.

Next steps

Also included in this pack is **'Making Your Voice Shine: A Creative Editing Guide'**. Feel free to print this out and share it with older children and young people, and/or any other adults who may support individuals with their entries.

This guide is designed to help young people and workshop leaders refine their creative pieces and create entries for Voices 2025 that are authentic, impactful, and aligned with the theme, 'My Voice'.



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