



18th National Poetry Competition

Poetry Competition Guide

This short guide is aimed at teachers and writers looking for ideas on how to enter the competition.

This year's theme:

Where does the chocolate journey begin?

Here are some ideas to tackle the theme:

Cocoa grows on trees

The key ingredient in chocolate is cocoa. Most of the cocoa you eat comes from the rainforests of West Africa, where farmers tend their cocoa trees on small family farms. This is where the chocolate journey begins.

The journey through history

Among the Mayans and Aztecs of Central America where cocoa originated, cocoa beans were so important they were used as money. Cocoa was grown by commoners for nobles to drink at royal feasts. In modern times, chocolate has come to symbolise romantic love and luxury, though it is largely grown by farmers living on very low incomes across West Africa.

From bean to bar

Cocoa comes from the seeds of cocoa pods, which grow on the cocoa tree. Farmers harvest the cocoa, ferment it and dry it out in the sun, and then send it to factories to be made into delicious chocolate.

Into the future

Changing weather patterns make it harder to grow cocoa, driving cocoa farmers to move and cut down the rainforest for new farms, which makes climate change worse. Through Fairtrade, we can support cocoa farmers to farm in a better way and protect the forest.

Top tips

- Make sure your poem is *focused* on the theme of the competition: **Where does the chocolate journey begin?**
- When writing about people in developing countries, we have an ethical responsibility to present them in a dignified way. Steer away from evoking pity or charity. People living in poverty are just as intelligent and resourceful as anyone else.
- Remember this is the *Divine* Poetry Competition – if you write about chocolate products, don't write about other chocolate companies!
- Artwork and design are not judged, but please ensure your poem is legible so the judges can read it.

What kind of poem shall I write?

You can choose any type of poem you like!

Consider using:

- Alliteration
- Rhythm, assonance and rhyme
- Similes and metaphors
- Onomatopoeia
- Poetic language and imagery

Once you have written your poem, try sharing it with family and friends, to get a bit of friendly feedback, before you submit it to the competition. Poetry is meant to be listened to as well as read.

Want some more inspiration?

Watch *Guardians of the Rainforest*, our short film about the cocoa farmers of the Gola Rainforest in Sierra Leone: golarainforest.film