

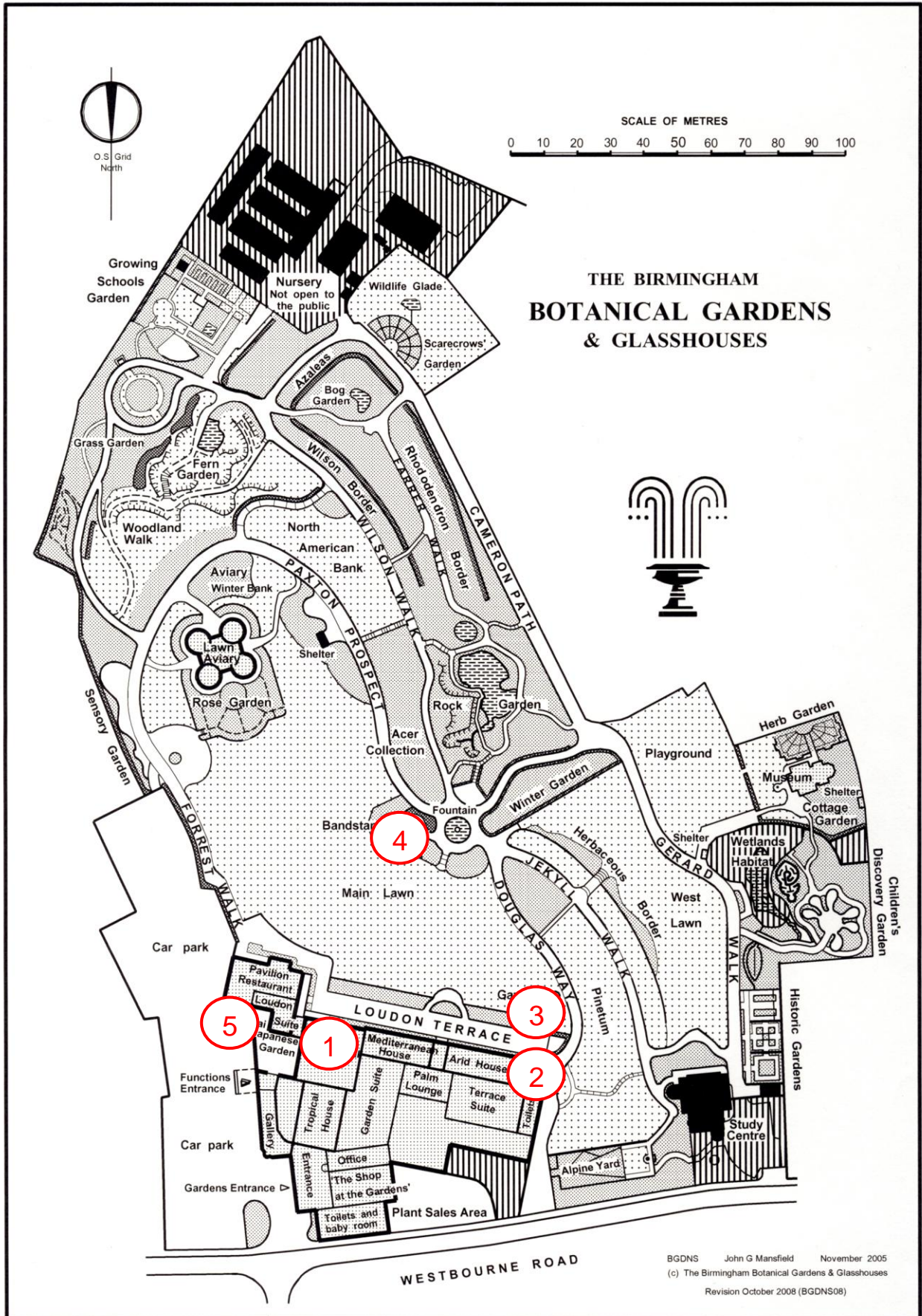


KEY STAGE 3

POETRY TRAIL

THE BIRMINGHAM
BOTANICAL
GARDENS
TURN OVER A NEW LEAF

Key Stage 3 Poetry Trail



Key Stage 3 Poetry Trail

WITHIN THE GLASSHOUSES

1. Subtropical House

While you are in the Subtropical House, look at the **Spanish Moss** and choose the best rhyme words from the list to fit this poem:

The Spanish Moss just won't behave –

it makes the trees look old and hairy.

You'd think that this tree needs a _____

because it looks so rough and _____.

This type of poem is called a quatrain. This means each verse has four lines and they usually rhyme as follows:

- The first and third lines rhyme with each other.
- The second and fourth lines rhyme with each other.

Does your poem above rhyme like that? If it doesn't, you have probably picked the wrong words to complete it.

Here is another quatrain:

I wish I was a little grub

with whiskers round my tummy.

I'd climb into a honey pot

and make my tummy gummy.

(Anon)

That is a bit like the poem below about the pitcher plants that can be found in the Subtropical House:

A Pitcher Plant's one long green tummy
and thinks that bugs and flies are yummy.
To stop it's tummy getting thinner
it tells them all, 'Drop in for dinner!'

It is really two rhyming couplets, rather than a quatrain. Can you see the difference in the way it rhymes?

2. Arid House

While you are in the Arid House, find the plant called the Century Plant. Here is a poem about it:

The Century Plant
is not a very adventury plant.
It takes a hundred years to flower,
so please don't ask it to grow any slower
because it can't.

Which of the words in the poem is made-up? Put a ring round it.

Try making up a word that would suit the plants in the Arid House. 'Shlurjy' would be a bad word, because it sounds too wet and soft. Think of a better one. Use letters that sound sharp and dry, like t, c, or k.

"The cacti looked very _____."

There is a famous poem by Lewis Carroll called 'The Jabberwock' that uses lots of made-up words. Here is part of it. You can understand more or less what it is about, even though the words are strange.

Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!
He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought-
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.
And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!
One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

You could read this poem aloud, taking a line each. If you like it a lot, try to find Lewis Carroll's books, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking Glass*. Your school or local library may have them.

WITHIN THE GARDENS

3. Redwoods

Now you are moving away from the jungles and the deserts to the forests of the American North-West. Find the Giant Redwood tree and read the poem:

Giant Redwood

We are the red, who share our land
with the Yurok and the Karok,
with the Hupa and Tolowa,
more tribes than a man can know.
From the mountains to the sea, we stand
thick as the fur on a beaver's back.

We grow taller than the sky,
bigger than a bull elk, older
than the white man, older
than the red man, older
than the eagle or the bear, older.
When one of us falls, a thousand years die.

We are the red.
We eat our dead.

Giant Redwoods can grow to become the tallest trees in the world, taller than the clock tower at the University, which you may be able to see from here.

When the poem says, “We eat our dead”, this is because when a redwood tree falls and rots away, it provides the food for all the younger trees around it.

What is someone called, who eats their own kind? Ring the answer.

a hannibal

a cannibal

a cannonball

greedy

An animal that only eats plants is called an herbivore. What is a person called who only eats plants (because they believe it is wrong or unhealthy to eat meat)?

Most plants on Earth have at least one creature that will eat them. Even trees have insects and animals that eat the leaves and fruit, and some insects like nothing better than chewing up the wood of the trunks and branches. Some of the worst of these are the termites, which can make a tree hollow while leaving the outside looking untouched.

Australian Aborigines found hollow branches after the termites had eaten them and blew down them to make music. These instruments were called didgeridoos.

4. The Bandstand

While you are at the Bandstand, read this poem:

I'm Listening To The Band

The band-stand is unmanned –
they're off to have their teas,
no trumpets, drums, euphoniums,
no oom-pah melodies –
so I'm standing where the band stands
and listening to the trees,
listening to the woodwind
whispering in the breeze.

Alliteration is using the same letter to start several words in a poem. In this poem which letter gives some alliteration?

Clue: it is near the end of the poem. Answer: _____

What sort of word do you think 'oom-pah' is? What is special about it?

It sounds like what it means (the sort of music played by brass bands, with a big drum thumping and tubas going oom-pah, oom-pah). When you use a word like this it is called onomatopoeia.

Which of these words do you think are onomatopoeic? Put a ring round them...

cuckoo grumble splash engine redwood whisper

Here is another poem that has lots of onomatopoeia:

Sounds Dangerous

Who am I? You guess.
No, I'm not a question mark.
No, I'm not an S.
I don't coo or mew or bark.
Who am I? You guess.
Yes!
I'm a snake
and no mistake
and this
 Sssssss
 is my hiss.

What sort of snake? You say.
No, I'm not an adder,
still less an asp, no way!
No, I'm much badder!
What sort of snake? You say.
Okay!
 A rattlesnake
 and no mistake
 and this
 Sssssss
 is my hiss
 and that'll
 Trrrrrr
 be my rattle.

There is a lots of alliteration with all those S's and it is a concrete poem as well. Had you spotted that?

5. Bonsai and Japanese Gardens

Bonsai are trees that have been grown to remain very small, by trimming them and keeping them in small pots. This is a skill that developed in Japan. So, if we are going to have a poem about a Bonsai, it should be a small one.

Find one of the poems displayed in the Japanese Garden. These are all examples of a Japanese form of poetry called *haiku*.

A haiku doesn't have to rhyme at all, but you have to count the syllables carefully, so that there are five in the first line, seven in the second and five again in the third.

This is another haiku:

Johnny was silent,
not because he had no tongue –
just nothing to say.

Count the syllables to make sure it is right. Can you hear how the words 'Johnny', 'silent', 'because' and 'nothing' all have two parts; two syllables? All the other words are one syllable each. How many syllables does 'syllable' have?

Answer: _____

Perhaps you can write a haiku about the wind chimes hanging in the tree in the Japanese Garden, or a funny one about what you like to eat?

Remember to count the syllables and start a new line when you need to. If you find that this would come in the middle of a word, try taking a word out of the line or adding one in so that the break comes at the end of a word. Remember too, it doesn't have to rhyme.

Haiku, by _____ (your name)

(Line 1, five syllables)

(Line 2, seven syllables)

(Line 3, five syllables)

So you now have been on a Word World Exploration using poems in the Botanical Gardens. Perhaps when you leave school, you will become a botanist (a botanical job!). Or a poet (a versatile job)!