

Derby Arts Festival Speech & Drama Test Pieces 2025

Year 1 and under Verse Speaking

Roger Was A Razor Fish by Al Pittman

Roger was a Razor Fish

As sharp as he could be.

He said to Calvin Cuttlefish,

'I'll shave you for a fee.'

'No thanks,'

Said Calvin Cuttlefish,

'I like me like I be,'

And with his whiskers

On his face

He headed out to sea

Year 1 and under Verse Speaking

Where Are You Going Johnny? by John Foster

Where are you going Johnny, just for a lark?

I'm going to play football down at the park.

Where are you going Johnny, head in the air?

I'm off to ride the Merry-go-round at the fair.

Where are you going Johnny, rushing from school?

I'm going for a swim at the swimming pool.

Where are you going Johnny, licking your lips?

I'm off to the Fish Shop to buy fish and chips.

Where are you going Johnny, looking so glum?

I'm going into town to go shopping with Mum.

Year 2 Verse Speaking

Snow Lady by Mary Jeffries

Snow-lady, snow-lady,
Out there in the cold,
With your fat carrot-nose
And your buttons of gold.

The hat on your head
Has a snow-ribbon band,
And a robin has perched
On your ice-stiffened hand.

Snow-lady, snow-lady
Please don't go away!
We'll build a tall snowman
Beside you today.

Then you won't feel lonely,
Out there in the night,
With the moon shining down
And the frosty sunlight.

Year 2 Verse Speaking

Goodness Gracious by Margaret Mahy

Goodness gracious fiddle dee dee!
Somebody's Grandmother's out to sea.

Just where the breakers begin to bound,
Somebody's Grandmother's bobbing around.

Up on the shore the people shout,
'Give us a hand and we'll pull you out!'

'No,' says the Granny, 'I'm right as rain,
And I'm going to go on 'till I get to Spain.'

Year 3 Verse Speaking

Here Is The Nose by Clyde Watson

Here is the Nose that smelled something sweet
And led the search for a bite to eat.

Here are the Feet that followed the Nose
Around the kitchen on ten Tiptoes.

Here are the Eyes that looked high and low
Till they spotted six pans sitting all in a row.

Here are the Arms that reached up high
To bring down a fresh baked blueberry pie.

Here is the Mouth that opened up wide.
Here are the Hands that put pie inside.

Here is the Tongue that licked the tin
And lapped up the juice running down the chin.

Here is the Stomach that growled for more.
Here are the Legs that ran for the door.

Here are the Ears that heard a whack.
Here is the Bottom that felt a smack!

Year 3 Verse Speaking

Penguin Complaints by Jo Shapcott

The place
for a penguin
is clearly
the fridge.
It's just
a bit dark
that's all.

One other
complaint.
More fish,
obviously.
Your shopping
list needs
an overhaul.

Furthermore
there's a
crowd round
the ice
cube tray,
where polar bears
like to brawl.

But the place
for a penguin
has to be
the fridge,
though it's
too small
to sprawl,
if you're tall
you have to crawl
and there's
absolutely
nowhere
to lay
an egg.

Year 4 Verse Speaking

Us Two by AA Milne

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
'Where are you going today?' says Pooh:
'Well that's very odd 'cos I was too.
Let's go together,' says Pooh says he.
'Let's go together,' says Pooh.

'What's twice eleven?' I said to Pooh.
(*'Twice what?' said Pooh to me.*)
'I think it ought to be twenty-two.'
'Just what I thought myself,' said Pooh.
'It wasn't an easy sum to do,
But that's what it is,' said Pooh, said he.
'That's what it is,' said Pooh.

'Let's look for Dragons!' I said to Pooh.
'Yes let's,' said Pooh to me.
We crossed the river and found a few.
'Yes those are dragons alright,' said Pooh.
'As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.
That's what they are,' said Pooh, said he.
'That's what they are,' said Pooh.

'Let's frighten the Dragons,' I said to Pooh.
'That's right,' said Pooh to Me.
'I'm not afraid,' I said to Pooh,
And I held his paw and I shouted, 'Shoo!
Silly old Dragons!' and off they flew.
'I wasn't afraid,' said Pooh, said he.
'I'm never afraid with you.'

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and me.
'What would I do?' I said to Pooh,
'If it wasn't for you,' and Pooh said, 'True,
It isn't much fun for One, but Two,
Can stick together,' says Pooh, say he.
'That's how it is,' says Pooh.

Year 4 Verse Speaking

Max by John Hegley

Max is a dog with a problem
the sort of a problem it's a job to ignore
the first time they all thought it was funny
but not anymore
Picture this scene this home-loving hound
sleeping by the fire with the family round
he wakes up and makes a little sound
little Albert gets it first
he's nearest to the ground
Albert's Mum gets wind of it
and she says open the door
and whatever we've been feeding him
I don't think we should give him no more
Max does another one like old kippers
wakes up Daddy in his fireside slippers
Daddy wakes up and says open the door
Albert says it's open Dad I did it when he did it before
then Mum says it's hard to relax with Max about
yesterday it happened while we were out in the car
and it's a small car
and Granny she was sick
she's not used to it like we are
maybe we should swap him for a budgerigar
Max is smelly
he can spoil your telly
but luckily
he's not an elephant.

Year 5 Verse Speaking

An Alphabet Of Horrid Habits by Colin West

A is for Albert who makes lots of noise.

B is for Bertha who bullies the boys.

C is for Cuthbert who teases the cat.

D is for Dilys whose singing is flat.

E is for Enid who's never on time.

F is for Freddy who's covered in slime.

G is for Gilbert who never says thanks.

H is for Hannah who plans to rob banks.

I is for Ivy who slams the front door.

J is for Jacob whose jokes are a bore.

K is for Kenneth who won't wash his face.

L is for Lucy who cheats in a race.

M is for Maurice who gobbles his food.

N is for Nora who runs about nude.

O is for Olive who treads on your toes.

P is for Percy who will pick his nose.

Q is for Queenie who won't tell the truth,

R is for Rupert who's rather uncouth.

S is for Sibyl who bellows and bawls.

T is for Thomas who scribbles on walls.

U is for Una who fidgets too much.

V is for Victor who talks double Dutch.

W is for Wilma who won't wipe her feet.

X is for Xerxes who never is neat.

Y is for Yorick who's vain as can be.

And Z is for Zoe who doesn't love me.

Year 5 Verse Speaking

Ozymandias by Percy Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that Colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Year 6 Verse Speaking

The Rum Tum Tugger by TS Eliot

The Rum Tum Tugger is a Curious Cat:
If you offer him pheasant he would rather have grouse.
If you put him in a house he would much prefer a flat,
If you put him in a flat then he'd rather have a house.
If you set him on a mouse then he only wants a rat,
If you set him on a rat then he'd rather chase a mouse.
Yes the Rum Tum Tugger is a Curious Cat--
And there isn't any call for me to shout it:
For he will do
As he do do
And there's no doing anything about it!

The Rum Tum Tugger is a terrible bore:
When you let him in, then he wants to be out;
He's always on the wrong side of every door,
And as soon as he's at home, then he'd like to get about.
He likes to lie in the bureau drawer,
But he makes such a fuss if he can't get out.

Yes the Rum Tum Tugger is a Curious Cat--
And there isn't any use for you to doubt it:
For he will do
As he do do
And there's no doing anything about it!

The Rum Tum Tugger is a curious beast:
His disobliging ways are a matter of habit.
If you offer him fish then he always wants a feast;
When there isn't any fish then he won't eat rabbit.
If you offer him cream then he sniffs and sneers,
For he only likes what he finds for himself;

So you'll catch him in it right up to the ears,
If you put it away on the larder shelf.
The Rum Tum Tugger is artful and knowing,
The Rum Tum Tugger doesn't care for a cuddle;
But he'll leap on your lap in the middle of your sewing,
For there's nothing he enjoys like a horrible muddle.
Yes the Rum Tum Tugger is a Curious Cat--
And there isn't any need for me to spout it:
For he will do
As he do do
And there's no doing anything about it!

Year 6 Verse Speaking

The Visitor by Ian Serraillier

A crumbling churchyard, the sea and the moon;
The waves had gouged out grave and bone;
A man was walking, late and alone...

He saw a skeleton on the ground;
A ring on a bony finger he found.

He ran home to his wife and gave her the ring.
"Oh, where did you get it?" He said not a thing.

"It's the loveliest ring in the world," she said,
As it glowed on her finger. They slipped off to bed.

At midnight they woke. In the dark outside,
"Give me my ring!" a chill voice cried.

"What was that, William? What did it say?"
"Don't worry, my dear. It'll soon go away."

"I'm coming!" A skeleton opened the door.
"Give me my ring!" It was crossing the floor.

"What was that, William? What did it say?"
"Don't worry, my dear. It'll soon go away."

"I'm reaching you now! I'm climbing the bed."
The wife pulled the sheet right over her head.

It was torn from her grasp and tossed in the air:
"I'll drag you out of bed by the hair!"

"What was that, William? What did it say?"
"Throw the ring through the window! THROW IT AWAY!"

She threw it. The skeleton leapt from the sill,
Scooped up the ring and clattered downhill,
Fainter... and fainter... Then all was still.