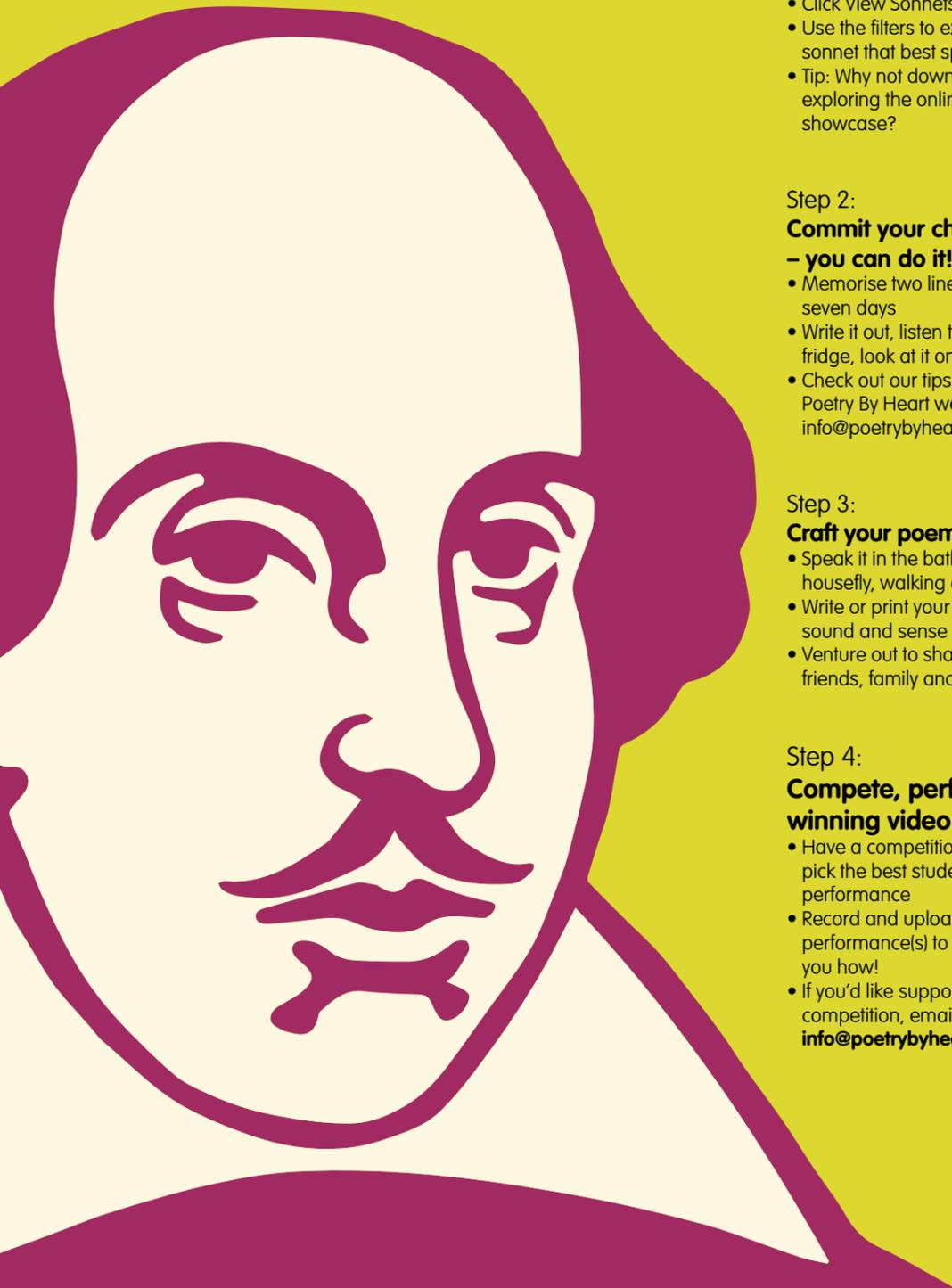


# On it like a sonnet

A one poem one month challenge

Register and upload your video at [poetrybyheart.org.uk](http://poetrybyheart.org.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017



- Step 1:  
**Choose the sonnet you want to learn by exploring some of the poems**
- Go to [www.poetrybyheart.org.uk](http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk)
  - Click View Sonnets
  - Use the filters to explore the poems and find the sonnet that best speaks to you
  - Tip: Why not download our pdf guide to exploring the online Shakespeare sonnet showcase?

- Step 2:  
**Commit your chosen poem to memory – you can do it!**
- Memorise two lines of your sonnet each day for seven days
  - Write it out, listen to readings, stick it up on the fridge, look at it on your phone...
  - Check out our tips for memorisation on the Poetry By Heart website or email us for advice [info@poetrybyheart.org.uk](mailto:info@poetrybyheart.org.uk)

- Step 3:  
**Craft your poem for speaking it out loud**
- Speak it in the bathroom, to the cat, dog, fish or housefly, walking on the way to the shops
  - Write or print your poem, and annotate it for its sound and sense
  - Venture out to sharing your crafted sonnet with friends, family and schoolmates

- Step 4:  
**Compete, perform and upload the winning video by 31st March 2017**
- Have a competition in school or college to pick the best student and/or best teacher performance
  - Record and upload a video of the best performance(s) to Poetry By Heart – we'll show you how!
  - If you'd like support with any part of your competition, email Kath on [info@poetrybyheart.org.uk](mailto:info@poetrybyheart.org.uk)

## Why commit to learning a poem?

A competition designed in response to feedback from teachers and students over the previous four Poetry By Heart competitions

### An option for younger students and those with less time

You told us that you wanted a recitation competition for students in years 7 to 9, and one that allows everyone to try out poetry memorisation and performance without committing to the full Poetry By Heart competition. A sonnet can be learnt over a week or two, and performed well within 3-4 weeks. Our new competition makes it easier for more people to engage with a single poem in a serious fun way, leading to an experience which may well stay in memory for life. Participation gives a method participants can apply to their engagement with all poetry.

### It's a challenge and everyone can join in

No-one can learn a poem for you and being clever or having good notes won't be deciding factors in doing well. As you perform a poem you will face the thrill of feeling the fear and doing it anyway. The poet Alice Oswald, who memorises all her poems, has spoken about the sense of risk she feels when she speaks a memorised poem, even when she knows it well. It requires a courage which commands the respect and attention of all audiences; in a poetry recitation you can hear a pin drop, applause is heartfelt.

### A new way of engaging with Shakespeare

Every student at school in England learns about some of Shakespeare's plays but few experience more than one or two of his sonnets. Yet 'the sonnets' have always been seen by poets and poetry lovers as a very special collection. These poems have a special kind of kind of eloquence, patterning and compactness which aids their memorability.

### An opportunity for learning new methods and sharing enjoyment of poetry

Since the beginning of Poetry By Heart in 2012, we have known that the single biggest incentive for students joining in our competition is seeing their teachers and family members modelling learning poems by heart and speaking them. This new competition offers an opportunity to learn or improve on a relatively uncommon but powerful method for appreciating the pleasure of poetry.

### Poetry is for life and not just for set text public examinations

Few poets write poems so they can become set texts in examinations and yet many students experience poetry mainly through study. Poetry by Heart gives a way of approaching poetry which is enriching personally and socially: poetry for pleasure for all and for life.

### A key method for 'closed-book' exams

The new English exams require students to be able to quote from their texts. So poetry memorisation is now helpful for exams. You don't need to worry that you will be committing time to something that won't count in terms of targets and 'Key Performance Indicators', although that is not the point of what we do.

### We'll be celebrating his 401st birthday on 23rd April at the British Library

The very best student and staff winners in the Shakespeare sonnets competition will be invited to perform their recitation before leading poets at the Poetry By Heart finals day at The British Library on Shakespeare's 401st birthday.

