CAIRNS EISTEDDFOD

Cairns and District
Junior Eisteddfod Association

cairnseisteddfod.org

SET POETRY 2026

SPEECH & DRAMA

SET POETRY 2026

S1 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 4 to 6

ROLLERCOASTER Heide Bee Roemer

It looks like a train on a loop-de-loop track
But once you hop on it, there's no turning back.

Clickety clackety up up you rise
At the tippetty top all you can see are blue skies.

When all of a sudden the break is released
You drop like a rock as you ride the railed beast.

Your heart's in your throat as you plunge to the ground
A split second later you're turned upside down.

You're pressed in your seat, your face is contorted
You feel the power of centripetal forces.

You can't lose your nerve or your white knuckle grip
As you loop like a pretzel and pitch like a ship.

It's like riding a rocket, a G-force machine
The wind slaps your face and you hear yourself scream.

You're getting the hang of it, just about then
You're jerked to a stop and your wild ride ends.

That's when you yell – "LET'S DO IT AGAIN!"

SET POETRY 2026

S1 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 4 to 6

SKATEBOARD Max Fatchen

We twist
and we turn
and the pavement
we burn
as we rocket
downhill at a rate.
We whoop
and we swoop
as we crouch
and we stoop
on the board
where we ride
when we skate.
With a shove
and a run
it is furious fun
as we roll
with a sweep
and a swerve.
Then we reel
and we rip
in a breathtaking trip
while keeping
our balance
and nerve.
We swing
and we sway
in a dare-devil way
on a hair-raising,
zig-zagging track.
Our father
once tried.
You'll find him
inside
with a very
large bruise
on his back.

SET POETRY 2026

S2 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 1 to 3

WITCHES **A.Ruddich**

This is the night
When witches fly,
On their broomsticks,
Through the sky.

Each one has
A small black cat,
And each one wears
A pointed hat.

Into their cauldrons
They toss in all
The frogs and snails
And lizards small.

Mice and spiders
They use as well,
As each one weaves
A magic spell.

With tongue of bee,
And hiss of snake,
In coal-black cauldrons
Spells they make.

Bat's wings flutter,
Owls fly high,
When witches prowl
Across the sky.

SET POETRY 2026

S2 CHORIC SPEAKING – GRADES 1 to 3

Summer **Andrew Chant**

I wish ever day was a summer's day,
No time for school, just for play,
Soaked in rays on a busy beach,
With the cold, blue ocean just in reach.

As lazy hours dare to pass,
The smell of someone cutting grass,
Then the crickets take up their song.
Until silenced by a well-thrown thong.

An evening breeze shifts the warm,
To make way for a rolling storm.
On our roof the raindrops hum,
And rumbling thunder starts to drum.

Tomorrow it will start again,
The beach, a breeze, then pouring rain.
No time for school, just for play,
I wish every day was a summer's day.

SET POETRY 2026

S3 SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP – GRADES 7 to 12

People at the Bus Shelter; Raining - Stuart Cooke

Trapped under the bus shelter,
the rain rushes down
around us in the thick bars of a cage,
liquid shot pummelling the pavement
from endless silver sheaths.
Some sit on the bench; most stand, our hands
kept warm in our pockets.
We are all
obsessed with this natural demarcation,
this exact, powerful enclosure of
dry pavement by a violent downpour,
this luck we seem to have stumbled upon,
to be inhabiting the last habitat
in a world apparently drowning.

From the bench of the shelter
the outside world smudges
slightly,
smudges downwards with streaks of rain
so that it would be foolish - utterly
absurd - to venture out there
(who would walk
into a world that has run like ink down a page?).

Until the bus comes
we are an enforced community.

SET POETRY 2026

S4 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES 10 to 12

Don't Go Into the Library *Alberto Rios*

The library is dangerous—
Don't go in. If you do

You know what will happen.
It's like a pet store or a bakery—

Every single time you'll come out of there
Holding something in your arms.

Those novels with their big eyes.
And those no-nonsense, all muscle

Greyhounds and Dobermans,
All non-fiction and business,

Cuddly when they're young,
But then the first page is turned.

The doughnut scent of it all, *knowledge*,
The aroma of coffee being made

In all those books, something for everyone,
The deli offerings of civilization itself.

The library is the book of books,
Its concrete and wood and glass covers

Keeping within them the very big,
Very long story of everything.

The library is dangerous, full
Of answers. If you go inside,

You may not come out
The same person who went in.

SET POETRY 2026

S4 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES 10 to 12

The Caged Bird in Springtime **James Kirkup**

What can it be,
This curious anxiety?
It is as if I wanted
To fly away from here.
But how absurd!
I have never flown in my life,
And I do not know
What flying means, though I have heard,
Of course, something about it.
Why do I peck the wires of this little cage?
It is the only nest I have ever known.
But I want to build my own,
High in the secret branches of the air.
I cannot quite remember how
It is done, but I know
That what I want to do
Cannot be done here.
I have all I need –
Seed and water, air and light.
Why then, do I weep with anguish,
And beat my head and my wings
Against those sharp wires, while the children
Smile at each other, saying: “Hark how he sings”?

SET POETRY 2026

S5 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES 7 to 9

Wave Rider Andrew Chant

The cold sand swallows my toes
As I walk towards the shore.
The first break of dawn slices its way
Through the cloud; the ocean roars,
And the waves call to me.

I listen to their surging song.
Against the pointed rocks they crash
And fall apart. I paddle through
The break; white horses splash
As they gallop through the sea.

For a few moments, everything is still,
Everything is quiet, and I wait....
Here comes the perfect wave
And it's all mine; no doubt fate
Has brought us together.

It's here!
I quickly stand.
My board dips under my weight.
The wave pushes me forward.
I twist and turn across the face.
I race towards the beach.
I slice my fin through the lip.
Foam sprays from the cut.
The wave is curling.
It's about to break....
Smash! A perfect ten!
I paddle out to ride again....

SET POETRY 2026

S5 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES 7 to 9

Where the Sidewalk Ends — Shel Silverstein

There is a place where the sidewalk ends
And before the street begins,
And there the grass grows soft and white,
And there the sun burns crimson bright,
And there the moon-bird rests from his flight
To cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black
And the dark street winds and bends.
Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow
We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And watch where the chalk-white arrows go
To the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,
For the children, they mark, and the children, they know
The place where the sidewalk ends.

SET POETRY 2026

S6 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES 4 to 6

ZEBRA QUESTION **Shel Silverstein**

I asked the zebra,

Are you black with white stripes?

Or white with black stripes?

And the zebra asked me.

Are you good with bad habits?

Or are you bad with good habits?

Are you noisy with quiet times?

Or quiet with noisy times?

Are you happy with some sad days?

Or sad with some happy days?

Are you neat with some sloppy ways?

Or are you sloppy with some neat ways?

And on and on and on and on

And on and on he went.

I'll never ask a zebra

About stripes

Again.

SET POETRY 2026

S6 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES 4 to 6

The Shark **John Ciardi**

My sweet, let me tell you about the Shark.

Though his eyes are bright, his thought is dark.

He's quiet – that speaks well of him.

So does the fact that he can swim.

But though he swims without a sound,

wherever he swims he looks around

with those two bright eyes and that one dark thought.

He has only one but he thinks it a lot.

And the thought he thinks but can never complete

is his long dark thought of something to eat.

Most anything does. And I have to add

that when he eats, his manners are bad.

He's a gulper, a ripper, a snatcher, a grabber.

Yes, his manners are drab. But his thought is drabber.

That one dark thought he can never complete

of something – anything – somehow to eat.

Be careful where you swim, my sweet.

FROM – "Enjoying Poetry" R.K.Sadler, T.A.S.Haylarr, C.J.Powell 1981

First published The Macmillan Company of Australia,Melbourne 1981

SET POETRY 2026

S7 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES Prep to 3

THERE ARE BIG WAVES **ELEANOR FARJEON**

There are big waves and little waves,

Green waves and blue,

Waves you can jump over,

Waves you dive thro',

Waves that rise up

Like a great water wall,

Waves that swell softly

And don't break at all,

Waves that can whisper,

Waves that can roar,

And tiny waves that run at you

Running on the shore.

SET POETRY 2026

S7 AGE GROUP SET POEM – GRADES Prep to 3

The Honey Maker Andrew Chant

Upon a bloom of lavender
Works a busy little bee.
I spied his stripes of black and gold,
But he didn't notice me.

All day he works without a rest
To bring nectar to his hive.
My fuzzy, buzzy friend toils hard
To keep his queen alive.

But my bumble bee is a humble bee,
He doesn't like to boast
About his most important job—
Making honey for my toast!