



Let Go, Let Fly! -The Pushkin Theme for 2014-15

**‘Let go, let fly, forget.
You’ve listened long enough. Now strike your note.’**

From ‘Station Island’ by Seamus Heaney

The Pushkin Theme for this year is **‘Let Go, Let Fly’** and is derived from the element of Air. It requires the *outer exploration* of the physical concept of flight and all things that fly and take to the air. It should also encompass the *inner exploration* and expression of those things which can also ‘fly’ or be airborne; our feelings and emotions, our dreams and our imagination.

Through the media of the Arts and Writing all those participating in the Pushkin programmes this year should have diverse and motivating opportunities to investigate, to explore and to make this theme real.

The suggested activities in these supporting materials are designed to act as starting points or as sparks to inspire the ideas and the imaginations of the teachers and children.

Experiencing the world on nature through the 5 senses is always an essential aspect of any Pushkin theme and this theme is no different. Children should explore the world of nature which is not rooted to the Earth but that fills the sky and the air.

This theme could easily be extended through use of the CCEA Thematic Unit Flight and this would incorporate aspects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths as well as History. This theme focuses rather on the creative and environmental aspects of the theme as this is the Pushkin approach.

Planning Activity

During this activity the teacher will introduce all the potential aspects of the theme to the class. The suggested planning activity is a Carousel type activity.

For this activity the class should be divided into groups and each group should have time to move around a set of stations which are set up in the classroom.

At each station the teacher should provide a variety of stimuli to introduce the concepts which the theme will cover and to inspire the children's thinking, ideas and questions about the theme.

The teacher could provide books, posters, film clips, images, printed information, websites and real objects, etc as the stimuli. These things focus the children's thinking as well as motivating them.

The stations could include:

Station 1: Manmade things that fly:

- Planes
- Hot air balloons
- Rockets
- Airships
- Helicopters
- Gliders
- Images from Google Earth of places the children know

Station 2: Natural things that fly:

- Birds
- Insects
- Bats

Station 3: Things that move in the air:

- Leaves
- Seeds
- Balloons
- Pollen
- Sails

- Bubbles
- Clothes on a line
- Kites
- Pictures of windy days
- Windy weather images

Station 4: Other things that can 'fly':

- Dreams
- Thoughts
- Imagination
- Emotions
- Smells
- Sounds
- Memories
- Dragons
- Phoenix

Once the children have had time to think about and discuss the materials at each station and to record their ideas or questions then the teacher should lead the class in a feedback and sharing session during which all the children's work can be collated.

Out of this work the teacher could guide the children to create key questions which will underpin the learning during the course of the theme. The children's thinking and some of the images they used could all be displayed as the Planning Board.

General Introductory Activity

As a general introductory activity it is expected that all children will have the chance to find out about the title of the theme. The title has been taken from 'Station Island' by Seamus Heaney. All children should have the opportunity to learn who Seamus was and to read and experience some of his poems, for example Blackberry picking or Digging, The Follower or similar accessible poems for children. They should explore how the message in this title is to let go and to let your imagination take flight. To be creative and to see there are no right or wrong answers in this work.

Section 1 Manmade Flight

Activity 1 - The Story of Daedalus and Icarus

As an introduction activity the teacher could read the story of Daedalus and Icarus to the class. The children could have opportunities to discuss the story and decide if it is a true story or fiction. They could decide what the moral of the story is and what we learn from the story. To extend the children could draw the story as a cartoon strip.

The children could use wax candles to test how it melts in the heat or to see how wax can be heated slightly to be made malleable and flexible.

Then the children could begin to think about all the ways that man has used to fly down through History.

They should have the opportunity to explore images of hot air balloons and airships and aeroplanes and helicopters. They could view the designs for helicopters created by Leonardo da Vinci. These designs could be compared and contrasted to the types of helicopter we have today.

Opportunity for Writing 1

The children could brainstorm all the words for flying that these air craft inspire. They could focus on one part of speech for this, verbs would be ideal. These could include words such as: soar, swoop, glide, flutter, float, wing, whoosh, whiz, climb, circle, swoosh, dart, rush, zoom, etc. The children could use dictionaries and a thesaurus or online search engines to build and extend their vocabulary. Then they could use the words to create list or shape poems they could write these in groups or as individuals.

Alternatively the children could use the words to describe a journey in one of the aircraft they have been discussing. They might decide to pick a hot air balloon and then they could use the words to write a poem about a journey in one, for example:

Hot Air Balloon

Take off

Swoosh

Sail

Sweep

Glide

Drift

Control

Lower

Land

To extend the initial poem the children could then add adverbs to another draft. Then they could use google Earth to explore a place that they would like to make their journey over. They could download images of this place or paint it for themselves using the Google earth pictures as a stimuli.

To extend this activity the children could write short descriptive pieces of the place they land their aircraft.

Opportunity for Writing 2

As an activity that could be shared with a partner school the children could imagine that they are flying over their own school, home or locality. Again they could view Google Earth to help them picture this experience. They could decide all the places or things that they would like to describe for their partners and then they could write short descriptive pieces to help their partners imagine the scene.

Opportunity for Writing 3

For this activity the children could 'zoom in' and take an up close look at a tree or a pond or a stream or park from the Google Earth or bird's eye view point. They could describe what they see of the object or how it looks from this view, flying over it. Then the children could read their descriptions to a partner who has to try to decide what is being described.

Opportunity for Writing 4

The children could create a poem by writing one idea for each of the types of air craft they have been discussing. They could organise their ideas into one

poem called 'Let's Fly'. For example they might use the words from the list created and compose a poem like this example verse:

Let's Fly

Aeroplanes rush and soar

Hot air balloons float and glide

Rockets zoom and whiz

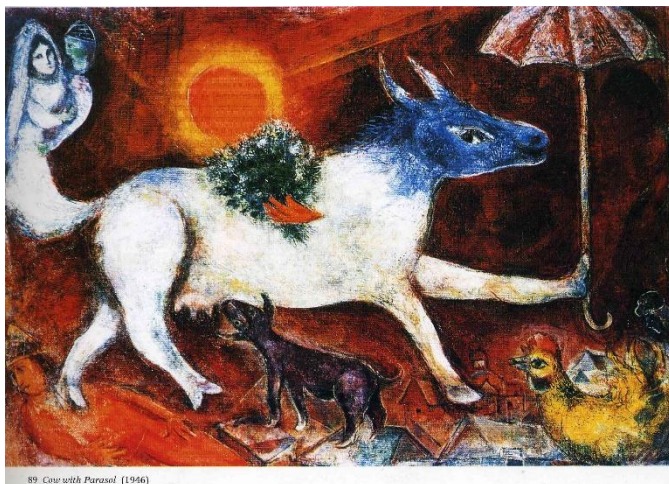
Helicopters rise and circle

To extend and develop this work the children should have time to explore their feelings and emotions connected with flying. They should think of the feelings that they have around the chance to fly. These feelings could be brainstormed and written up for the children to make poems or for them to create pictures with.

Whilst exploring all the ways these aircraft move the teacher may also be able to engage the children in thinking about all the places they fly to like holiday destinations and special occasions.

For some creative thinking the teacher could ask the children to design a flying machine of their own which they could label and describe. The children could also imagine taking flights in these air craft or on a magic carpet. They could write about where they go and what they find there.

This work could be connected to the exploration of an artist who let their imagination fly. For example the work of artist Paul Klee:



89 Cow with Parasol (1946)

The children could use pictures they have printed or cut from magazines to create images like this which are simply expressions of the imagination.

Section 2 Birds, Bugs and Bats

There are many things which can be done to explore the diversity of creatures that fly in connection with this theme. The teacher could choose to look at all the features of flying creatures and birds. They could do some basic classifying to identify the range of flying animals from other species such as different mammals which fly including the bat.

The class could keep records of all the birds they see and create non-fiction books on birds to help them identify the birds they spot. They can make bird feeders and hang these at home and at school to encourage birds to the grounds.

They can explore how the features of birds, such as their feet and beaks, have adapted to the environments where they live and find food. They can explore and investigate migratory birds and their journeys. They could use Google Earth to trace some of these journeys.

Similarly they can classify insects to identify those which fly and have wings and compare these to other insects. They can make small model insects.

The children could also explore the diversity of birds found in different eco systems, for example the birds of the rainforests could be investigated.

The seasonal pattern of birds in the locality or perhaps in a local woodland could be the focus of the work undertaken.

Whatever the focus the teacher and class take there needs to be a strong emphasis on the environment in the theme and there should be many learning opportunities provided for this in this aspect or context.

To extend the learning into the realm of the creative world the teacher may like to focus on the works of the Russian artist Natalia Goncharova, herself the direct descendant of Alexander Pushkin through her paternal grandmother.

During her long career Goncharova painted in many styles and artistic forms and had many subjects. This painting of a peacock is one which fits this theme but is also very accessible to children.



Peacock Under Bright Sun, Natalya Goncharova

The children could have a little time to find out about Goncharova and her works. Then they could use images of real peacocks and compare and contrast them to this one as painted by Goncharova.

They could create palettes of colours for the artist to use. For this activity the teacher should provide the children with a blank paint palette template made of card or similar material.

The children could observe the painting and then use their observations to create the colour palette for the artist. They could also create a palette for a picture of a peacock or for their own version of a painting like that of Goncharova. They could then pick a different bird to paint and do so in the style of Goncharova.

They could extend this work into the exploration of flying insects, such as moths and butterflies and use a style and colour palette like that of Goncharova to paint these winged creatures.

The children could explore other flying insects and make models of these, for example these dragonflies are made with pipe cleaners and beads and florist wire:



Opportunity for Writing 5

The children could read some poems about butterflies, examples provided:

Butterflies

Butterflies go fluttering by
On coloured wings that catch the eye.
On wings of orange, and silvery blue,
On wings of golden yellow, too.
Butterflies float in the air,
Making their homes most anywhere:
The rainforest, field, and prairie land,
On mountaintops, and desert sand.
If winter brings the cold and snow,
To warmer climates, off they go!
Returning home the following spring,
Beautiful butterflies on the wing!

Author Unknown

A Butterfly Lights Beside Us

A butterfly lights beside us, like a sunbeam...
and for a brief moment it's glory
and beauty belong to our world...
but then it flies on again, and although
we wish it could have stayed,
we are so thankful to have seen it at all.

Author Unknown

Butterfly

Flutter by,
Butterfly,

Floating flower
in the sky.
Kiss me with your
Petal wings—
Whisper secrets,
Tell of spring.
Author Unknown

These short poems could be used to inspire personal writing of poems in the same style as the poets have used. The children could use one of the poems as a guide or template for example:

Butterfly

Flutter by,
Butterfly, _____ **The first two lines could be used**
Floating flower _____ **The children could make a different metaphor**
in the sky. _____ **They could place the butterfly somewhere else**
Kiss me with your
Petal wings—
Whisper secrets,
Tell of spring. __ **They could think of two things for the butterfly to do**

Then the children could use these poems to create images of butterflies. They could create a butterfly garden or a butterfly tree to display their creations on and display their poems on this as well.

Opportunity for Writing 6

The music of Rimsky Korsakov, *The Flight of the Bumble Bee* could be used as an inspirational piece. The children could listen to it and be encouraged to draw what they hear or make marks and shapes to describe the sounds, rhythms and patterns they hear in the music. They could draw all the things they think are flying in the piece. They could use the piece to inspire short descriptions of a garden on a summer day. They should be encouraged to describe all that the bees are doing such as fertilising and pollinating the flowers and plants.

Alternatively the children could write poems relating to the music. They should write about what they hear and visualise in the music.

Section 3: Things that move in the air

To begin this activity the children could spend some time lying on the ground in a quiet place or staring out the window in the school hall or similar open space. They are going to record all the things that they see 'flying' in the air during this time. They should record anything that moves in the air or the sky. The teacher may wish to add a few things to the scene to introduce some diversity and some other ideas beyond the birds and insects already used. The things viewed could therefore include:

- The sun
- The clouds
- Leaves
- Paper
- Aircraft
- Balloons
- Bubbles
- Kites
- Feathers
- Umbrellas
- Hats
- Clothes on a clothes line

The first thing the children could would be to look at this picture by Natalia Goncharova and they are going to use this to create a similar scene to display all the things they saw in the air/ sky. They will create a wash to paint the backdrop of the sky, let this dry and then they will draw on the shapes to fill the foreground with the pictures of the things they saw.



When the painting is complete the work could be used to stimulate writing. The children could also explain what Goncharova put in her painting and what they put in theirs. Alternatively they could use ICT to create a modern or updated version of the work of the artist by sourcing images of the things they see in the air/sky.

Opportunity for Writing 7

The children could create lovely poems by considering each of the items they saw and by describing how they move or what they looked like in the air/ sky. For example:

Feathers soar like angel's wings

Leaves float like lost sailing boats

Umbrellas tumble like dancing acrobats

Bubbles bounce like tears or raindrops

To help the children to do this the teacher could work with them as they brainstorm words for all the parts of the lines of the poem. The children could then put together their own selections. They could have a simple template to help them to plan the poems.

Object	Movement	Simile/ comparison
Leaves	Float	Sailing boat
Umbrella	Tumbles	Dancing acrobats

Opportunity for Writing 8

Using the stimulus of Seamus Heaney's poem 'A Kite for Aibhin'. The teacher could read the poem with the class and explain it as necessary. Then the children could make a kite and have a go at flying them. Some simple instructions can be found online on sites such as www.instructables.com

They could record what happens as they try to fly the kite and think about their emotions as well as the actual activity itself. They could write a short description or a poem about their attempt and how their feelings matched.

A Kite for Aibhin

Air from another life and time and place,
Pale blue heavenly air is supporting
A white wing beating high against the breeze,

And yes, it is a kite! As when one afternoon
All of us there trooped out
Among the briar hedges and stripped thorn,

I take my stand again, halt opposite
Anahorish Hill to scan the blue,
Back in that field to launch our long-tailed comet.

And now it hovers, tugs, veers, dives askew,
Lifts itself, goes with the wind until
It rises to loud cheers from us below.

Rises, and my hand is like a spindle
Unspooling, the kite a thin-stemmed flower
Climbing and carrying, carrying farther, higher

The longing in the breast and planted feet
And gazing face and heart of the kite flier
Until string breaks and—separate, elate—

The kite takes off, itself alone, a windfall.

Natural environment and 'flying'

In this section the teacher could help the children think about and discuss other things which move in the air such as seeds during the process of seed dispersal which is a crucial part of the process of the reproduction of flowering plants.

The class could look at and learn about the whole process as they may have already explored pollination and fertilisation. They could create pictures of the different types of seeds or collect the seeds to make displays. They could go into the environment and take photographs of all the seeds they can find. They could use these to stimulate writing and art work. For example the children could write about conkers. They could explore metaphors for the different seeds and create poems from the metaphors they create.





The children could research matching seeds to the trees they come from. To do this they could use sites such as The Woodland Trust, Nature Detectives which has related resources for children.

Section 4: Other things that can ‘fly’ or take off

In this section the children are going to be allowed to let their thoughts, dreams and imaginings to take wings and to fly. They can begin by exploring some of the stimuli that inspire and spark our brains in this way. They could consider how music and dance, as portrayed in these paintings, are ways for us to ‘fly’. The paintings are by an artist called Leonid Afremov. They are very vivid and rich in colour. The children could consider what pieces of music are

inspiring these paintings and they could think about, discuss and record how the subjects of the paintings feel.



Elation by L A



The Sky Dance by L A



Endless Tune by Leonid Afremov



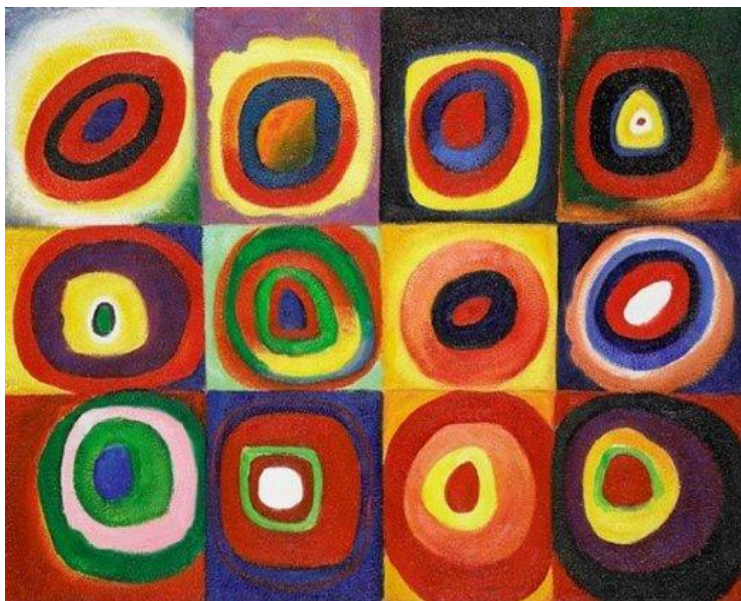
Morning mood LA

Using this painting as a stimuli the children could consider what kind of mood the artist or the person in the painting are feeling or experiencing, the clues for this may be in the painting and in the colours and tones used.

The children could paint their own 'morning mood' paintings or create a palette of colour to express their 'morning mood'. The teacher could then help the children explore issues which put them in good moods or things that put them in bad moods. They could create palettes or paintings to depict these moods and the accompanying emotions. The children could paint a good mood rainbow and a bad mood rainbow. They could list all the emotions that they have on each of the rainbows.

Alternatively the children could look at this image by Kandinsky called Farbstudie Quadrate. They could identify which circles depict good emotions and which depict bad emotions. Then they could create a similar pieces which displays a mixture of emotions and moods. To this they could paint the circles or cut them from coloured card and paper and arrange like Kandinsky's work.

The children could think about, discuss and write about times when they let their emotions 'fly'. They could consider the different consequences of these actions; both positive and negative.



Farbstudie Quadrate Kandinsky



Extension Activity



In an appropriate environment such as circle time or RE class the children could make a personal list of the things that annoy or frustrate them.

They should then consider what they do about these things. They should think firstly about how they respond negatively to situations when they feel like this.

They could complete a simple table such as the one below:

Things that bug me:

I feel	When	What do I do?
 <p>angry</p>		
 <p>sad</p>		

 anxious		
 jealous		
<p>Pick two of the responses and consider how you could deal with your feelings better or in a more positive way.</p>	<p>I would feel better if I:</p>	<p>I would feel better if I:</p>

Children can complete this activity alone or in pairs.

They should have the chance to feed back to the class. They should then make a catalogue of positive responses and reconsider conflict situations and issues by thinking about their new ways of coping with them.

Dreams and **daydreams** are real opportunities for our imagination to fly. An image from a dream to do with air or flight or indeed a day dream might inspire a short story or poem.

This theme could be the perfect chance to let the children daydream. In fact to encourage it. The children could keep a daydream notebook. In this note book they could jot down all the little daydreams they find themselves going on during the day. This could be totally free writing or it could be explored in group sessions when the children could find out about each other's daydreams. Each child could pick one daydream to share. They could write a few brief statements about their daydream and use the statements to create a

poem or a group poem. Alternatively the children could illustrate their daydreams.

The wind causes so many things to take flight. Many of the earlier poetry or writing activities could be repeated to express how and what the wind lifts these items and how they 'fly'. The exploration of how the wind makes things take flight could also be explored through dance by creating movements to match how the things move.

Mythical Creatures which fly could provide more stimuli for art or writing. The children could also create their own flying mythical creature using clay or junk art materials. The children could find out about:

- Pegasus – the Winged Horse
- Griffin
- The Phoenix/Firebird
- Fire flies
- Dragons

They could share stories about these creatures and see how they used their ability to fly.