



Video 6:

Editing a Poem

Editing a poem or a piece of writing is important. If turning your raw material into a poem is like building a house out of bricks, then editing it is like putting all the furniture in the rooms. You're finding new ways of making the poem work.

So what do we mean by editing?

Sometimes, we say 'editing' when we mean 'checking' – things like making sure spellings are ok, and that we've put all our commas and full stops in the right places.

But real editing is a bit more than that. It's about making sure the poem is as good as it can be. It's worth thinking of it as 'rewriting' – because you might want to make some big changes.

For example, there might be bits of your poem which you don't think are working as well as other bits, and you'll have to decide whether you can improve it so that it is working, or whether you just need to cut a sentence or two. You might also find places where you can add bits in, to make your description more detailed.

If you used a repeated phrase or sentence (such as 'I come from a land...'), then you might decide that, now you've written your poem, you want to take this repeated phrase out. This is what we call a 'scaffold': we use it to help write the poem, but once the poem's written, we can take it away. (Though make sure all your sentences still make sense once you've removed it!) Of course, you might want to leave your repeated phrase in – it's completely up to you.

As you edit your poem, it's probably going to start looking a bit messy. You'll probably have lots of crossings out, and bits added in, and arrows moving sections around. That's ok – you don't need to worry about it being too neat at this stage. We'll be writing it up properly once we've finished editing.