

TEXT	'THIS IS THE KEY OF THE KINGDOM' (a traditional song/nursery rhyme)
THEMES	Home (unit 3), out and about (unit 14), different places (unit 17)
VOCABULARY	Towns and countries, rooms and houses
WRITING	Students describe a room.
SPEAKING	Students perform the song, reading as a group.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is a traditional rhyme, probably about two hundred years old, though possibly much older. It was published in Walter de la Mare's: *Come Hither; a collection of rhymes and poems for the young of all ages* (1923), one of the most influential collections of poetry for children published in the UK. It is still in print today and retains its popularity. 'This is the Key of the Kingdom' appears at the beginning and end of the book and seems to symbolise the beginning and end of a creative journey through poetry to discover new landscapes of the imagination.

WARMER

Find some pictures of places that look a bit magical or imaginary – the settings of a fairytale, for example: a medieval castle or an old village. With the whole class, ask students to say which of these places they like the look of. What do they think happens in them? Who do they think lives there? What kind of stories do the places suggest? Write up some of their ideas on the board under each question. You will probably have to help with vocabulary as students try to use ideas like mystery, ghosts, dragons, knights, etc. (but they may well be familiar with some of this lexis through video games and TV series).

ABOUT YOU

Use the questions to get students thinking about why and how we use keys. It could be a good idea to find some different pictures of keys – some very old, some very modern (like automatic car keys) and ask students to describe the keys they use (are they big, small, easy to use?). Extend the idea of keys to other kinds of 'keys' like passwords and personal identification numbers (or *pins*). Establish that the numbers we use to open a computer, phone or take money from an ATM are also keys.

Ask students to suggest traditional rhymes in their own language that are used for games or dances.

1 Check that students are looking at the song as a shape. (*What does it look like?*) The song is shaped like a key on the page. You could tell students that 'shape songs or poems' sometimes arrange the words so they look like the things the poem or song talks about. For example, a song or poem with the word *rain* written many times so it looks like rain on the page.

2 **Suggested answers**

- 1 *house, room* and *bed, town* and *city* could also be included
- 2 *town, city, street, lane, yard*
- 3 the room or the yard
- 4 Ask for suggestions – this will link back to the ideas students had in the Warmer.

VOCABULARY

3 **Answers**

- 1 lane
- 2 basket
- 3 yard
- 4 kingdom

4 **Answers**

- 1 clock
- 2 poster
- 3 board games
- 4 guitar
- 5 bookcase

WRITING

5 Use the questions to give the writing structure – students answer the questions and combine them to write their description. A follow-up activity would be to swap the descriptions with another student who then draws the room according to the description.

MIXED ABILITY

For stronger students add more questions for their room descriptions such as: *What can you see from the window? What furniture is in the room? Who cleans this room? How tidy is this room?*

SPEAKING

6 For this activity, explain the idea of 'poems or songs read with several voices'. This is a performance activity in which students decide who (and how many people) are going to read each line. For example, two students might read line 1, the whole group line 2, one student line 3, etc. Or individual words can be read by more than one person. The activity encourages students to think about important words and their sounds, intonation and stress.