



I Refuse

(Activity & Project Ideas)



- Ask the students to write down a list of rules that we all stick to on a daily basis. Then share them with the class on the board. As a class, discuss which are the most important and which are the least important. If you could get rid of one rule, which would it be? Could you write a story about one of these rules being removed? What would the world look like?
 - Why not (as a class) agree two new rules for the lesson/day?
 - A helpful new rule
 - A silly new rule



How long can everyone in the class go without breaking either? What is the reward for managing to observe these rules for an hour/the whole day? What impact did these rules have? Are there rules in the world that are useful and others that sometimes seem silly?

- Extend. Get the students to list other things that someone could refuse to do. Perhaps they have chores that annoy them that they'd like to add to the list? Here are some in case you get stuck.

washing the dishes

washing yourself

be kind to their brother or sister

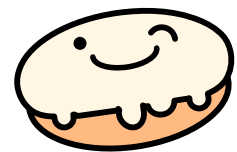
be quiet

Get each student to choose one of these things and then write a verse for the poem using them.

Why will the narrator refuse to do that thing?
Does refusing to do it go well or badly for them?

- Creative writing: Can you describe the narrator in this poem in five words or less? Which words would you use? Are they positive words or negative ones? Do you think the narrator got the ending they deserved?

Could you write a story featuring this character?
How would it start?
What would they refuse to do?
How would the story end?



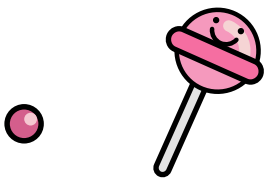
Using the text of the poem, can you identify the rhyme pattern and make your own poem that fits a similar pattern? You could call this poem

'I Refuse'

too, if you like. Or, if you're feeling ambitious, what would the opposite look like? What if the poem was called

'I Agree'?

If you do try to write 'I Agree', then what would the narrator agree to do?
What happens to them by the end of the poem?



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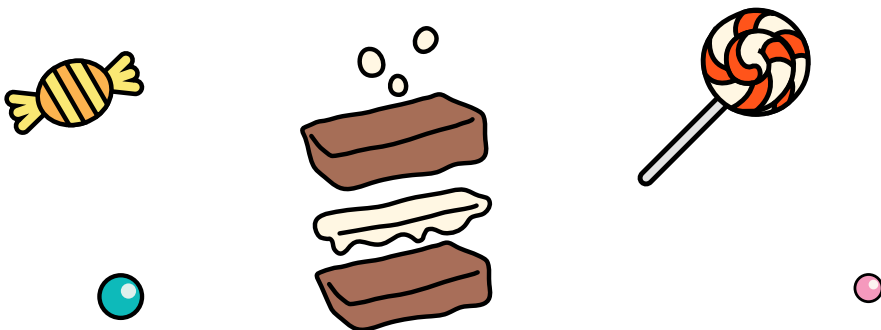
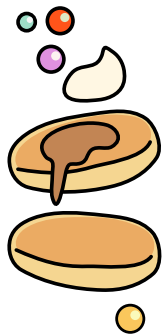
- Discuss what happens to the narrator at the end of 'I Refuse' – is there a message in the poem, do you think? Look at other poems/stories with messages – cautionary tales and fables. Can the students write their own cautionary tale? What lesson will be learnt by the reader/audience?
- Perform the poem – take a section of the poem and practise how you would deliver it. You could even film each other reading sections and then make one long video piece reciting the poem.

Class debate – 'Children shouldn't have to follow any rules.'

- Divide the class into two halves and give time for each student to prepare three reasons that support their side of the argument. Identify persuasive language techniques and hold a debate that encourages the students to use as many persuasive language techniques as possible. Why not get a member of staff/the Headteacher to adjudicate? Perhaps the students can try to persuade them to abolish all school rules?

EXTENDED TASK

Can you design a best friend for this character?
 How will you make this character different and unique?
 What is their name?
 What do they look like?
 What is important to them?
 Could you write a story about the two characters together?
 What happens to them?



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These activities were developed by Mark Grist in collaboration with Louise Double & Poppy Ould.
 Sheet design by Paper Rhino
 If you've found these activities useful and would like to get in touch/
 share your students' work feel free to email mark@markgrist.com