

***Run, Rebel* by Manjeet Mann**

Penguin 978-0241411421

I am restless, my feet need to fly.

Amber is trapped — by her father's rules, by his expectations, by her own fears.

Now she's ready to fight — for her mother, for her sister, for herself.

Freedom always comes at a price.

Run, Rebel is a trailblazing verse novel that thunders with rhythm, heart and soul — perfect for fans of Sarah Crossan, Elizabeth Acevedo and Rupi Kaur.

***Run, Rebel* was shortlisted for the 2021 CLPE Poetry Award CLiPPA.**

Overall aims of this sequence:

- To develop the skills of reader response book talk, close reading and critical reflective study of a selection of poems
- To interpret poems for performance
- To explore how poetry is presented on the page to enhance our understanding
- To gain and maintain the interest of the listener through effective performance of poems
- To recognise how a poet uses poetry as a voice to express their own feelings and views
- To explore how poetry is presented on the page to enhance our understanding
- To draft, compose and write poems based on personal interests, experiences and emotions using language and form with intent for effect on the reader

This teaching sequence is designed for an Upper KS3/KS4 class

Overview of this Teaching Sequence:

In this personal and emotional narrative Manjeet Mann draws on her own experience to follow the course of a young woman's revolution to overturn forces that hold her family captive. The narrative is captured through the voice of Amber Rai, but also through that of her mother and elder sister, the three of them struggling to assert their rights in a patriarchal society.

This first person perspective allows us to be right inside the journey and emotions of a character who has a foot in many camps: at one and the same time she is daughter and sister in a family, member of a community, student in a school, athlete in a running club, part of a friendship group. The novel deals with a number of powerful themes including a difficult relationship with an abusive father, bullying, adult illiteracy, arranged marriage, women's rights and worker exploitation. Teachers exploring this

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sequence will need to be aware of any students who may have faced similar issues in their own lives before exploring this text with a class.

This sequence provides the opportunity to reflect critically upon and respond to the ways in which language is used to express, convey, represent, symbolise and signify pertinent points, themes and messages. Reader response and group discussion prior to personal reflection on poems explored form an integral part of a number of the sessions detailed in this sequence.

Teaching Approaches:

- Reading aloud
- Looking at Language
- Role on the Wall
- Re-reading
- Emotional mapping
- Book talk reflections
- Shared writing
- Free writing of poetry

Outcomes:

- Text Analysis
- Response to provocation questions
- Character study
- Own free verse poem in the style of the text
- Own poems related to themes of rebellion against injustice or that present views and opinions on world issues

Exploring poetic forms and devices:

This verse novel gives an opportunity to explore the following poetic devices as well as being able to explore how poetry works on the page through word and line breaks and contrasting lengths of poems to carry and deepen the narrative:

- Acrostic
- Alliteration
- Assonance
- Enjambment
- Refrain
- Rhyme and Half Rhyme
- Rhythm and Repetition

Cross Curricular Links:

SMSC:

- Information on adult illiteracy in the UK from the National Literacy Trust <https://literacytrust.org.uk/parents-and-families/adult-literacy/> and Reading Agency <https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/>.
- Information on women's rights from the British Library <https://www.bl.uk/womens-rights>, Plan International <https://plan-uk.org/act-for-girls/girls-rights-in-the-uk> and Amnesty International <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/womens-human-rights>.

- Information about sweatshops <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-sweatshops> and campaign against low wages in the garment industry: <https://cleanclothes.org/poverty-wages>

PE:

- Manjeet is a passionate runner and founded [Run the World](#) to share the benefits of running with women and girls. Amber enjoys participating in athletics in school, but for students who prefer extra-curricular activity a variety of initiatives exist outside school, including the NHS [Couch to 5K](#) programme and free, weekly, community-based [parkruns](#).

Links to other texts and resources:

Other Books by Manjeet Mann:

- Manjeet Mann reads *Run, Rebel* as a compelling audiobook which would be an enriching complement to the printed text to engage students and allow them to hear the characters' voices as the author intended.
- The Crossing (Penguin)

Other Verse Novels:

- The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo (Quill Tree Books)
- Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo (Hot Key Books)
- The Crossover by Kwame Alexander (Andersen Press)
- Booked by Kwame Alexander (Andersen Press)
- Rebound by Kwame Alexander (Andersen Press)
- Home of the Brave by Katherine Applegate (Macmillan USA)
- Cloud Busting by Malorie Blackman (Random House)
- The Girl Who Became a Tree by Joseph Coelho (Otter-Barry Books)
- Love that Dog by Sharon Creech (Bloomsbury)
- Hate that Cat by Sharon Creech (Bloomsbury)
- The Weight of Water by Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)
- One by Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)
- Moonrise by Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)
- Toffee by Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)
- Weight of Water by Sarah Crossan (Bloomsbury)
- We Come Apart by Sarah Crossan and Brian Conaghan (Bloomsbury)
- Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds (Faber & Faber)
- Locomotion by Jacqueline Woodson (Puffin USA)
- Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson (Puffin USA)
- Red at the Bone by Jacqueline Woodson (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

Links related to Manjeet Mann:

- Manjeet Mann's own website: <https://www.manjeetmann.com/>

- Penguin YA book club extended interview: https://bit.ly/manjeetmann_penguinyabookclub
- Manchester Libraries: https://bit.ly/manjeetmann_manchesterlibraries
- Branford Boase interview with Manjeet Mann and her editor Carmen McCullough: https://bit.ly/manjeetmann_branfordboase

The poetry section on CLPE's website contains a wealth of resources including videos of poets performing their poems and talking about their writing process, which will inspire children in their own performances and writing. This can be found at: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry>

Here you can:

- Look up poets by age range or themes, enabling you to access a wide range of poetry to inspire budding poets.
- Find examples of children's work around poetry, including videos of performances submitted for the [CLiPPA School Shadowing Scheme](#).
- Find resources to support subject knowledge around poetic forms and devices.
- Manjeet Mann has a dedicated poet page where you can find her poems and videos: <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>.

Teaching Sessions:

Part 1: Introduction to the focus poet, focus text and verse novel genre

Session 1: Introducing the verse novel as a genre

- Without revealing the title, author or front cover of the text, give the students, individually or in pairs, a copy of the first poem in the book, **Prologue** on page 1. Allow time and space for them to read and respond to the text, annotating and text marking with their thoughts, feelings and questions about the piece in mixed pairs or small groups to share ideas and interpretations. At this point, allow the students to reflect as a reader, without telling them specifically to look for poetic techniques or devices, although it is fine if they do this naturally.
- Come back together to reveal that this is the first poem in a verse novel. Ask the students if they have read any verse novels before. *What were they? Who wrote them?* If they haven't, ask them what they think a verse novel might be and how it might be different from a novel. Explain that this verse novel is written by award-winning author Manjeet Mann, and that she joins authors like Kwame Alexander, Sarah Crossan in being shortlisted for CLiPPA for a verse novel, and that verse novels have also been shortlisted for and indeed won a number of prestigious book awards, including the Carnegie Medal won By Elizabeth Acevedo for *The Poet X* in 2019.
- Consider the definition of a verse novel on [CLPE's website](#) as 'a narrative poem, or poems which are the length of a novel.' Explore the concept of the verse novels with the students. *Do you like poetry? Why or why not? Which poets or poems do you know and like? Do you like reading poetry? Performing poetry? Do you write your own poetry? Do you like reading*

novels? Why or why not? Which authors or novels do you know and like? What do you think might be distinctive about a verse novel, how might it draw on and extend the poetic or novelistic forms? Collect initial ideas from the students to reflect on in the next session.

- Share the paragraph from the Author Q&A on page 410 where Manjeet is asked why she chose to write a novel in verse. What do you think were Manjeet's main reasons for preferring this form, why do you think she finds it **quite liberating**? Can you summarise her thinking? Pupils might observe that it suits **big emotional subjects [...] saying more with very little; [...] playing with structure; [...] forces you to want to speak the words out loud**. Note these three features of the verse novel form that Manjeet identifies — the economy; the structural play; and the performative; and revisit them to support your discussion of the book as you read on.
 - Come back to the poem shared. Look at the title — **Prologue** — do you think this has any significance? Have you encountered prologues in other books you have read? What purpose do they serve, why does the author use them, how do they relate to the main narrative, and why are they set outside it? Think of the opportunities discussed above that Manjeet identifies in the verse novel. Do you see her **getting straight to the heart of the issue**? What do you think the issue is here, and how has she grabbed you as a reader and drawn you into the heart of it? How does she **use white space** and **play with key phrases**? How do you respond to the way the poem looks on the page, which words and phrases stand out for you, how has she drawn your attention to them? Do you feel drawn to perform these words, can you hear them being spoken?
 - Allow time now for a deeper analysis, marking up the text with examples of poetic devices such as the internal rhymes of **ripe, clotted, blister, crippled**, the violence of some of the verb choices in **carved, gouged, burrowed, out** the single word and short sentences, the alliteration in **prickly pain pulsing**. You may also wish to explore where the line breaks occur, how the text is broken into stanzas, the use of typefaces and italicisation and the impact of these on you as readers.
 - End the session by inviting students to reflect on how the prologue primes them for the novel. How does the prologue prepare you for what you are about to go on to read? What expectations do you have in terms of subject matter, emotional content and poetic and linguistic features? Can you predict how the narrative might unfold? Can you speculate on how the story might be told?
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- If you have space in the classroom set up a display area with a selection of verse novels — suggestions are made above — as well as novels by poets have also written verse novels, e.g., Sarah Crossan's novels *Apple and Rain* and *Breathe* alongside her verse novels *The Weight of Water*, *Toffee*, *We Come Apart* (with Brian Conaghan) or CLiPPA 2018-shortlisted *Moonrise*; or Jason Reynolds's Carnegie Medal 2019-shortlisted verse novel *Long Way Down* alongside his Carnegie Medal 2021-winning *Look Both Ways*. This display could include novels, poems, and photographs of novelists, poets and verse novelists mentioned by the students, as well as a space for students to share their own writing as the sequence progresses if they wish to.

Session 2: Exploring character

- Begin the session by reading aloud the poem **I am 1** (page 6–7). How does this poem make you feel as a reader? How does it make you feel about Amber specifically? What more do we find out about the relationships in the family from this poem? Give the students a copy of this poem to re-read and text mark with their thoughts, ideas and questions and then explore the language and poetic devices used to create an effect on the reader.
- You could support the students' response to the poem by sharing the proposal for approaching poetry with a personal reaction in mind shared by Michael Benton and Peter Benton in *Touchstones: A Teaching Anthology of Poetry KS3* (2021):
 - **Read with the eye:** look at the poem laid out on the page. Look at a poem as you would a painting, a photograph, a sculpture. What does it look like?
 - **Read with the ear:** read aloud poems that appeal — hear their 'music', their sound.
 - **Respond to what is unique:** read a poem at least twice — finds its heart, an idea, a feeling.
- Now go on to explore the character of Amber by sharing the poems in which Manjeet enlarges on the different strands of her personality and some of the influences that make her who she is. It might be most effective to read a few poems at a time, then allow time and space to reflect on what has been read and discuss what it adds to our picture of Amber. You could literally create this picture by starting to build a **Role on the Wall** for Amber: start by drawing an outline of a woman, either as a whole group or the students can do this individually. On the outside of the outline, using what you know from the text so far and as you read each selection of poems, write notes to share how you think Amber shows her character to others or how others might perceive her, with reference to specific poems or lines that evidence opinions. On the inside of the woman, write notes about what you think Amber is really like on the inside, again drawing on specific poems or lines for evidence.
 - *What do the poems **Bound** (page 5), **Burden** (page 8–9) and **Confused** (page 10) tell you about the role of Amber as a woman in her family and community? How do these poems make you feel? What stands out for you in them?*
 - *In the poems **My Voice** (page 11), **Dreams** (page 12) and **Prediction** (page 13), what do we find out Amber's ambitions and dreams for a different life, and her current means of escape through running? Why do you think Manjeet has laid these poems out on the page as she has? What do you think the single line **Correction.** on page 13 tells you about Amber's personality?*
 - *How do the poems **First Day Back** (page 14), **The Estate** (page 15), **The Grass is Greener** (page 16), **Our Secret Place** (page 17) and **A Room with a View** (page 18) add to your understanding of Amber as a product of her surroundings? What sense do you have of the importance of her friendship with Tara and David? How does the single line **Correction.** refine your view?*

- *What insights into the dynamics of the three-way friendship are we given by the poems **Secret Corners** (page 19–20) and **Act Cool** (page 21–24)? How do you think Tara and David’s summer break away has affected the relationship between the three?*
- *What more do we find out about Amber from the very short poem **Options** (page 25) and the four poems **Conceal 1–4** (pages 26–29)? How do the four **Conceal** poems make you feel about Amber?*
- *How do the poems **David** (page 30), **Just Friends** (page 31), **Tara** (page 32–33) and **I am 2** (page 34) deepen your insights into Amber and engage you with the dilemmas she faces? How do you feel about Amber? How does she feel about herself?*
- *How do the poems from **School** (page 35) to **Faking It** (page 41) place Amber and her friends in the wider context of school? Which words, phrases, lines or stanzas do you find especially effective in capturing Amber’s world?*
- Having begun to populate Amber’s Role on the Wall with the insights gained from the poems read to this point, read aloud the poems **Truth** (page 42–43), **Shame** (page 44), **Mr History Jones** (page 45) and **History Syllabus** (page 46–47). Allow time and space for students to reflect on what they have heard, then invite them to discuss what these poems — ostensibly inspired by her English, geography and history lessons/teachers — add to our picture of Amber, the various influences and tensions affecting her, such as the high but disappointed hopes Mr Walker had for her because of her sister Ruby; the shame she feels about her parents illiteracy; the unexpected moment in Mr Jones’s history lesson when *the words sing off the page*.
- Provide a copy of the poem **Anatomy of a Revolution** (page 48), sharing with the students, if they have not noticed it, that Section One of *Run, Rebel* is called **Restlessness**, the first poem (on page 4) ‘Anatomy of a Revolution Stage 1’ and that the cover has the strapline *It’s time to start a revolution*. They may scan on to observe that **Dissatisfaction** (page 120), **Control** (page 209), **Momentum** (page 267), **Honeymoon** (page 294), **Terror** (page 325), **Overthrow** (page 397) and **Peace** (page 462) are the titles of the remaining Sections, each beginning with a poem **Anatomy of a Revolution Stage 2–8**. *How does this structure affect your navigation of, engagement with and enjoyment of the book? How does it help you to predict how the story might unfold, and the journey Amber might take though the narrative? How do you think the different aspects of her make-up that you have explored in the poem so far might be affected by or play a role in effecting these stages of revolution?*
- End the session by enjoying Manjeet’s performance of **Running** (page 54) at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>, introducing the poem by reminding them of the line from **My Voice** (page 11) *I find my voice on the running track. It’s where I’m truly alive*. Then share a copy of the poem, inviting students to text-mark and annotate features that especially stand out for them, considering especially how the poem on the page translates to performance, and what insights it gives us into Amber’s character before we go on to consider her in her setting in the next session.

- After the session allow the students to read on up to page 62, as well as to re-read the whole book to this point. Ask the students to explore how Manjeet evokes sympathy for Amber. Allow time for the students to re-read closely and text mark the poems exploring what the author has done to make us feel sympathy. Allow time for the students to respond in writing, exploring these ideas with reference to the text.

Session 3: Deepening understanding of character

- Begin the session by reading aloud **Privilege** (pages 62–65), allowing the students to respond initially with their thoughts, feelings and questions about Amber’s interaction with Miss Sutton. Allow the students time to explore and discuss how it compares and contrasts with the other contexts in which we have seen Amber in the narrative so far (in her family, in her community, in her friendship group, in her class, in the school...).
- Then read on to **The ESAC** (page 66), **Allie Reid** (page 67), **Dad’s Words** (page 68) and **Next Time...** (page 69). Allow the students time to look at these four poems together. *How do these different perspectives on Amber’s passion for running work together? What is the key message of each poem, and how is it captured in each case? How are the different voices — Miss Sutton, Mum, Dad — represented on the page, and what is the tone of each one? How do you think these might translate into a performance capturing Amber’s conflicted state, for example of **Dad’s Words**?*
- Read on up to **Green-Eyed Monster 1** ending on page 78, allowing the students to discuss the narrative and characters. Give students three talking points to explore and allow them to choose to write about one of these, referring to the text they have just read and reflecting back on the narrative as a whole. The students might explore Amber’s feelings for David and the envy she feels inspired by the holiday he and Tara took together; or the conflict between her love of running and ambitions to compete at the ESAC and the expectations of her family; or explore how the poet weaves together the different threads of the narrative to capture the complexity of Amber’s character.
- End the session by exploring a further facet of Amber’s personality by reading aloud **Gemma** on page 79 then enjoying the poet’s performance of **Don’t be Fooled** (page 80) at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>. Provide a copy of the poem and explore the language choices, the way it is placed on the page, the notable features, such as the refrain **Yeah, she thinks she’s all that**. Consider also how the poem on the page translates to Manjeet’s performance. How does this give us a wider insight to the character of Amber; how it connects to the anxieties, tensions and conflicts we have seen so far in her.

Session 4: Developing empathy

- Begin the session by asking students to summarise what we know of Amber so far, the different aspects of her life that make her who she is, the tensions in her personality, including most recently her antipathy to Gemma Griffin. Encourage them to refer back to and update the Role on the Wall to support their discussion. Then read aloud **Aunties** (pages 84–89). Give the students chance to offer their initial reactions to the piece — *what questions do you have,*

what does it add to your perceptions of Amber? Now give time for them to read the poem back for themselves, annotating and text marking with thoughts, feelings and opinions.

- Come back to the poem and look at how it is presented on the page; how does Manjeet capture the unfolding scene as Amber risks visiting McDonald's so as to spend more time with Tara and David? How does she capture, and how do you hear, the different voices? How are line breaks and blocks of text used to capture and pace what is happening and draw your attention to key points? Invite the students to share whether they have had any personal experience of having to lie low. How does Manjeet capture the drama of trying to avoid being seen, the panic at being caught doing something of which others might disapprove?
- Build on this discussion by reading on to **Mackie D's** (pages 90–92). You might focus the students' attention on the tension between the fear of being spotted by those who will report her behaviour to Dad; the desire and pleasure to be with David; and the drive to stop Tara and David spending more time together. Then invite the students to read for themselves the next nine poems from **Speed Training** (page 93–94) to **Insomnia** (page 105), allowing time and space for them to reflect on what they have read, and to discuss. *How do these poems present the aftermath of Amber's visit to McDonald's? How do they make you feel? Are there any words or phrases, any lines or verses, or even whole poems that stand out for you? How does Manjeet use the word **bezhti**, putting it in Dad's mouth; what is the impact of hearing this Punjabi term? What impression do you have of Dad from these poems, from the way he speaks to Amber, the fear she has associated with **The Man**?*
- End the session by reading aloud **Opposites** (page 106) to add to what we already know of Amber's older sister, before enjoying Manjeet Mann's performance of **Things I Miss about Ruby** (page 107) at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>. Then share the three poems **Love—Hate** (page 108–109), **Ruby's Broken Promises** (page 110) and **What's Easier?** (page 111). *What more do we find out about Amber from these poems about her relationship with Ruby? How does it make us feel about her, and the situation she finds herself in? Which of the poems really stands out for you as an insight into Amber's emotional life? How does it feel to see Manjeet perform the poem, compared to reading it for yourself? Does this help you to hear Amber's voice, and give you insights into how you might read the poems for yourself?*
- Invite the students to share their thoughts and opinions so they can build a full picture across the poems shared, and collate the ideas perhaps in a Reading Journal or as part of the wall display, so they can reference them in future sessions.

Session 5: Exploring conflict in character, and character development

- Begin the session by reading aloud **Overwhelmed** (page 112) — if you have access to it, Manjeet's own reading of this poem in the audiobook version might be a valuable complement to your reading. Invite the students to think of a time when they have felt overwhelmed and how this reflects that experience.
- Provide a copy so that students can re-read for themselves and consider how the poem looks on the page. *What insights does this poem give into Amber's state of mind?*

- Unpick the language used to describe her mind, jumble of images [...] mixing desk of sounds, T H E M A N, H E L P, I WISH I COULD ESCAPE, bewakoofbewakoofbewakoofbewakoofbewakoofbewakoofbewakoof, Anyone? Look at the order and intermingling of the different elements of her life — David, The Man, running, bezhti. What more does this poem tell us about her character, and how Manjeet wants us to feel about her? Look back at the lines:

I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE
 Inhale exhale inhale exhale inhale exhale inhale exhale inhale exhale
 Revoltuison traffic lights purple hair park toilet vomit fake students eyes
 track running
 RunningRunningRunningRunningRunningRunningRunningRunningRunning
 I WISH I COULD ESCAPE
 BehztiBezhtiBezhtiBezhti

- Explore the poetic techniques in creating an affective reader response. *What effect does the the diminishing point size for **Help** and the small final word **Anyone**?* Investigate the decline to this weak final plea through reading aloud. What connections can be made between this poem and the ones preceding it; the students may notice that it is almost a distillation of the nine poems from **Speed Training** (page 93–94) to **Insomnia** (page 105) considered in the previous session; how the presentation of the words on the page corresponds to Amber’s overwhelmed state (students might compare this to the scattering of the text across white space in **Thoughts** on page 76). *How does this poem build up our knowledge of Amber and the emotional state she finds herself in?*
- Now invite students to read on for themselves the remaining seven poems in this section, up to and including **Meditate** on page 119. Allow time and space to reflect on what they have read, then invite them to consider how these final poems lead back to the section title, **Restlessness**, and the revolution implicit in the book’s structure. Revisit the final lines of the section:

I’m too restless.
 Too angry.
 Too impatient.
 Too full of rage
 Too ready to

 REBEL.

- How have the poems they have read so far lead the students to this point?* Based on their knowledge so far, with reference to the text, go through Amber’s thought process that has led

her to the point of rebellion. Draft ideas into their own first person poem in role as Amber, using the techniques and devices they have seen in the poems so far to portray this moment most effectively for the reader. They might look at poetic devices such as assonance, alliteration, repetition, rhyme and half rhyme or how the poem is placed on the page, for example, separating words to emphasise conflict, repeating words or phrases to show her internal thoughts or opinions as they have seen in the text. Allow time for students to draft, work up and redraft the poem to a finished piece which could be displayed on the wall, performed for the group or printed as a collection to compare and contrast.

- End the session and this section of the Teaching Sequence by inviting students to reflect on the qualities of the verse novel that Manjeet identifies in the Author Q&A, discussed in Session 1. *How well do you feel the form has allowed Manjeet to **deal with big emotional subjects**? How has playing with structure helped her **bring words to life on a page**? What sense have you had of **the words out loud**?* Encourage them to support their views with reference to particular poems or passages, and explain that the next Part of the Teaching Sequence will address the possibilities for performance that the verse novel offers.

Part 2: Lifting Poems off the Page; Reading Aloud, Dramatizing and Performing

Session 6: Exploring performance of poetry

- Start the session by reflecting on what the students have read so far. Engage the students in **Book Talk** using Aidan Chambers's prompts from *Tell Me, Children, Reading and Talk with The Reading Environment* (Thimble Press, 2011). Tell me...
 - *What did you like about Run, Rebel so far? What did you dislike? Why?*
 - *What connections did you make? What patterns did you notice?*
 - *Do you have any questions? Did anything puzzle you?*
- Go on to elicit deeper responses:
 - *What do you think is the message of this verse novel? What is the poet trying to tell us? What would she want a reader, especially a young woman like Amber, to learn about herself?*
 - *Where were you as the reader? Were you beside Amber and the other the characters or looking on from somewhere?*
 - *What does this collection tell you about poetry and about verse novels? How does Manjeet want you to feel about her craft?*
- Explain that as you read on you will be adding performance to the ways in which you can explore the poems in *Run, Rebel*. Spend some time watching Manjeet Mann performing her poetry by revisiting the videos of the poems shared in the session so far:
 - Running (page 54)
 - Don't Be Fooled (page 80)
 - Things I Miss about Ruby (page 107)
- Allow time for the students to enjoy the performances and savour the poetry, language and Manjeet's performance. Ask the students to consider what they notice about her performance

style: Can you characterise it in any way? Is there anything that adds to her performance style that is uniquely hers? Is there anything she does that brings the poems to life in a way that another person reading it wouldn't be able to do? Can you 'hear' her voice when they look at her poems on the page?

- Following this, ask the students to consider what they think could influence a particular performance, e.g., individual style, accent, dialect, cultural heritage, the poem's theme, context or form. Share and consider some of the advice CLIPPA-shortlisted poets have given more generally on how to perform poetry at <https://bit.ly/performingpoetry>. Then, allow the students to respond to the different advice given. For example, A. F. Harrold suggests that you need to 'read it [the poem] many times'; Sarah Crossan suggests that students try to 'own the space... pretend there is no one else there...' and that 'you find it easier to make sense of the poem once it is said out loud'; Kate Wakeling suggests letting the students 'bring the sounds of words to life'; in <https://clpe.org.uk/videos/video/ruth-awolola-how-should-we-use-poetry-classroom> Ruth Awolola emphasises the importance of 'playing with the poem', and emphasising that 'it's impossible to be wrong'; and Steven Camden talks of 'connection to what you are saying' and 'fitting your emotional connection to the words'. You may also like to hear Manjeet's own insights into performing poetry at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>.
- Ask the students to reflect on the different advice given and to reflect on their own experiences of performing poetry. What do you notice about the difference between reading a poem silently to yourself, hearing a poem read aloud by your classmates or teacher and seeing a poem performed? You may want to summarise the advice given for a successful performance in the students' own words and record this in a Reading Journal or display this on the Working Wall for the class to refer back to. You might also consult the downloadable teacher guidance given in the supporting materials at the bottom of the page for the [CLIPPA shadowing scheme](#)
- Now take a previously read poem such as **I Am 1** (page 6–7). Allow the students the chance to read it aloud in small groups. Discuss the rhythm, rhyme and the patterns of language, and support the students, in Steven Camden's words to 'find your point of connection'.
- Ask the students to read it aloud again, encouraging them to move or beat to the repeated rhythm, listening out for emphasised words or joining in with the predictable words. Display the text of the poem on IWB or visualiser, this time reading it aloud to the students, perhaps more slowly, so they can join in, emphasising the repeated rhythmic structure. Repeat through shared reading, allowing the students to enjoy being able to recite parts, or all, of the poem by heart, engaging them in the rhythm and rhyme, the key phrases that resonate for them.
- If you have access to the audiobook, share with the students the poet's performance of this poem to support them. Discuss what they noticed about her performance style, her pace and emphasis.
- Ask the students to work on reciting the poem by heart in small groups, organising themselves any way they like, e.g., in unison throughout or each taking a verse. At the end of the session

confident groups can perform to the class. Compare performance styles, identifying what was successful and offering advice on areas of the performance that could be improved. Consider whether music could accompany or enhance the performances.

- After the students have had sufficient time to rehearse, allow space for them to perform their poems to the rest of the class. Before 11th February 2022, these could be filmed and submitted for the [CLIPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.

Session 7: Exploring the verse novel through performance

- Begin the session by explaining to the students that Part 2 of the Teaching Sequence will see them taking the lead in exploring the book, reading on for themselves and deploying the techniques they have practised in Part 1, including reading and re-reading, reading aloud and performing, text-marking and annotating, considering the poems in their own right as stand-alone pieces, but also as part of a coherent narrative.
- Invite the students to read the opening poems of Section Two **Dissatisfaction**, up to **Trainers** on page 139, which focus on Amber's home life, her parent's illiteracy, and her Mum's curiosity about reading and writing. Clarify their understanding and allow for discussion around what the students like, dislike, any patterns that they notice or any questions that arise. Share the video of Manjeet performing **Chai 1** (page 124) at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann> and invite the students to consider what the performance adds to their understanding of Amber's home life and their emotional response to the poem. How might it influence your own performance of poems such as **Ritual** (page 122), **Chai 2** (page 125), **Mum's Mantra/My Mantra** (page 128), **Made in Britain** (page 128; how would your performance realise the bold letters on the page that spell out **secret work**)?
- Provide the students with these poems to read for themselves: from **Sunset** (page 140) to **Rebel** (page 150) where we meet Ruby, Jas and Tiya; then **Dad's Back 1** (page 151) to **Morning Admin** (page 170) where we see interactions with Dad; and **Green-Eyed Monster 2** (page 171) to **Dabbawallas** (page 180) where we see Amber back in school. As they read, ask them to pick out the poems that are the most memorable for them and to note what they find out and can infer about the characters of Amber, Ruby, Jas, Dad, Mum, David and Tara from this section of the text. *Which character(s) interest you most? Why? What do you find out about Amber's wider family? How does this relate to what you have already read, and your expectations for the way the novel will develop?*
- Now look at the most memorable poems. *Why did you choose these? If you were to perform one of your most memorable poems, how might you do this? Would it be best performed individually, in pairs or as a group? How will you pace the performance? How will you use your voice(s) to help tell the story of this moment? Will you use any movement or action?* They may also want to use beat boxing or an accompanying beat, for example using an App such as Garage Band. Give time for the students to build up their poems, text marking with performance notes and ideas, practising, editing and polishing to a finished performance.

- After the students have had sufficient time to rehearse, allow space for them to perform their poems to the rest of the class. Before 11th February 2022, these could be filmed and submitted for the [CLiPPA shadowing scheme](#) competition to win poetry prizes.
- Give time for the students to watch, reflect on and evaluate each other's performances; this could be done in turn in the order the poems come up in the text. *What did each interpretation add to your understanding of the narrative?*
- Finally, reflect on the reading you have done so far. *What engages you about the story so far? How do you feel about reading a novel in verse rather than in prose? How did you feel about the poet 'saying more with very little'? Did you feel like you were forced to 'want to speak the words out loud' as you were reading to gain a full understanding of what was going on?*

Session 8: Exploring poetic and authorial technique

- Begin the session by reading aloud **Lunch at David's** (page 181–183) then to enjoy Manjeet Mann's performance of **Beena** (page 184) at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>.
- Provide copies of both poems so they can re-read for themselves, text-marking and annotating, considering how the words on the page translate to the meaning of the poem and the performance they have seen. Go on to consider how Manjeet draws on Beena's phrase in **Lunch at David's** to articulate Amber's thinking in **A Product of the Environment...** (page 185).
- Read on, from **Secret Talks** (page 186) up to **New Trainers** (page 208), marking the end of Section Two **Dissatisfaction**. *What do you make of Amber's treatment of Gemma Griffin? Why do you think she acts in this way? What do you think lies behind her actions? How does Manjeet weave this theme in with the narrative strands of Amber's home life, the situation with Dad and Mum, her running and Miss Sutton's intervention over the trainers?*
- Now read **Anatomy of a Revolution Stage 3** (page 209), the opening poem of Section Three **Control**: *what do you think this short poem suggests for what this Section will contain, and how it will move the novel on? What do you think will happen next?* Continue on to read **A New Man?** (pages 210–211) and **Perfect** (page 212). *How does this change in Dad make you feel? Do you believe him? Do you think Amber believes him? Why or why not?* Invite the students to read on up to **Half-Term** (page 224) and to discuss the apparent change in Dad; the worsening situation between Amber, Tara and David; Mum's scepticism about Dad; and how all these developments affect Amber as revealed by the poems.
- Provide students with a copy of the poems on pages 225 to 232, so that they can mark up with feelings, ideas and questions. *What is the impact of seeing things from Mum's point of view? Why do you think Manjeet has chosen to offer this different perspective on the narrative? What do you notice about her voice?* Support students to scrutinise the text the way Mum talks about her background and early life, her work, her children, her husband. *How do these poems look and sound different from those in Amber's voice?* Allow time for the students to consider also the content of this section. *What do we find out about Mum and the life experiences that have made her the woman she is?* They may like to write a brief pen portrait

to capture what they have found out. Allow time for the students to come together to discuss their thoughts and opinions, referencing the text to support their ideas.

- Allow students to read to the end of this Section, including the poem **Harpreet 2** on page 266. *What do you think is happening in these poems? Can you summarise how the story has moved on and the impact it has had on Amber in practical and emotional terms? What do you think causes the reversal in Dad's mood? How do you understand his behaviour? Do any of the poems invoke your sympathy for him? Why or why not? How do you think Manjeet wants us to feel about Dad? Consider the change in Amber when she steps in to defend Mum, in the three poems **What Kind of a Woman Do I Want to Become 1–3?** (pages 250–252): *how does the poet capture the drama of this transformation, how might these poems be performed? What do you think Amber means when she says **I am//my father's//daughter. (Like Father Like...** page 255). How do the scenes with Tara then with Gemma make you feel? Do they alter how you feel about Amber? If so, how and why?**
- End the session by considering the poems inspired by the visit from Harpreet and what we learn of her history. *Why do you think Manjeet introduces the character of Harpreet? What do we find out about her, and how do Dad's and Amber's differing view about her behaviour inform our predictions about how the story might develop? Watch the video of Manjeet performing **Choosing Love** (page 261) at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>. What insight into Amber's character does this poem give you? What poetic devices does Manjeet Mann use to contrast the community's portrayal of Harpreet's behaviour with Amber's perception of it? Then how does the poem sit alongside the following poem 'A Lesson' (page 262–265)? What does the final acrostic on page 266 tell you about Amber? Do you think she has learned the lesson from Harpreet that Dad wants her to? Allow time for the students to share their thoughts and ideas before the next session. What is the next stage in a revolution and what do you think will happen in the next Section?*

Session 9: Developing understanding of narrative

- Begin the session by reading aloud **Anatomy of a Revolution Stage 4** (page 267), which opens Section Four **Momentum**. Unpick the word **momentum**, discussing what associations it has for the students and how momentum might have a role in the unfolding of a revolution. Encourage them to share their expectations for this section, how they think Amber will respond to the lesson Dad wants her to learn from Harpreet, and which of the strands that Manjeet has woven to together in Amber — her family, her friendship with Tara and David and feelings for David, her bullying of Gemma, her running — she will pull on to advance the plot.
- Invite the students to read the poems in this comparatively short section, from **Student-Teacher** (page 268) to **No Fear** (page 293), allowing time and space to reflect on what they have read and to discuss the poetical and narrative aspects of the pieces. Support them in exploring the sequence of events that happens in this section of the narrative and what it might mean in the context of the narrative as a whole, exploring Mum's expression of interest

in become literate; her signature on Amber's permission slip to join the running club; Amber's jealousy at Tara and David's friendship; Ruby's visit; the first athletics session; Amber's wariness of Dad.

- Chart the different emotions and feelings Amber might go through in each poem, as well as the emotions of the other protagonists, and how Manjeet reveals them to us as readers: Mum's cautious steps towards a better life; Tara and David (*do you think theirs is secret talk and what might it be about?*) interacting with Amber; Gemma's need for protection; David taking selfies with Amber; Amber's watchfulness around Dad (*in a performance how would you bring out the bold text I'm so scared in the final poem of the section?*). How does each poem offer us a glimpse into the various and characters and build up the **momentum** of the section, moving the plot on towards revolution. *How has Manjeet conveyed the sense of impetus, of a movement that is building and cannot be slowed or stopped? Which poems help to portray this shift?*
- Repeat the process for the poems in the similarly short Section Five **Honeymoon**, starting on page 294, beginning with their expectations around the word honeymoon and its connotations, the fact that **honeymoons//never//last**. Consider the shifts we see in this section, with Mum's increasing literacy, an easing of tension between Amber and David that leads to the three poems **Panic 1–3** (pages 308–310), resulting in distance between the two. *Which poems especially capture the shifts in mood?*
- Support them in discussing the section in which we see events through Ruby's eyes (pages 315–321), comparing with the poems from Mum's perspective discussed in Session 8. Again, consider the impact of seeing things from Ruby's point of view, and Manjeet's decision to offer her perspective? *What do you notice about Ruby's voice?* Compare how Ruby talks about her attempts to escape, her thwarted dreams, her feelings for her sister and daughter, and her husband through an arranged marriage with Mum's words about her life. *How do these poems look and sound different from those in Amber's voice and in Mum's?*
- Allow time for the students to consider also the content of this section. *What do we find out about Ruby and the experiences that have shaped her life and personality?* They may like to add a brief pen portrait of Ruby to that for Mum, capturing what they have found out.
- Take this opportunity to focus on Amber's Mum and sister with reference to poems in their own sections and the narrative as a whole: *what are your feelings about these characters at this point compared to the start of the narrative? How have they each dealt with Dad's bullying and patriarchal ideas? Do you think they are actually the people they have been portrayed as up to this point?* Create a rounded picture of one or both of these characters with reference to the text as a whole up to this point.
- Returning to Amber's perspective, allow time for the students to come together to discuss their thoughts and opinions about the changes in her situation and character, referencing the text to support their ideas. Explore the emotions she experiences throughout these sections, referring to specific poems. You could chart this journey on a graph of emotion to visually represent this. *Is it a steady trajectory or a mixture of highs and lows?*

- End the session by discussing the revolution that is taking place, the stages of which Manjeet is using to structure the novel; what do you expect of the Sections Six **Terror**, Seven **Overthrow** and Eight **Peace**. *What events in Amber's life might correspond to each phrase, how do you predict that the narrative will unfold?*

Session 10: Exploring the emotional impact of the text

- Pupils are now well equipped to direct their own reading on through Section Six **Terror** and Seven **Overthrow**. Allow them time and space to engage with the poems in these two sections, reading, reading aloud and re-reading, text-marking and annotating, reflecting, considering performance and discussing the development of themes from the novel. Ask them to summarise what has happened and to identify key poems that capture the shifts they see in the narrative. They could continue to use Aidan Chambers's questions to scaffold their discussion, discussing what they like or dislike in these sections, the puzzles they see and any connections they make; encourage them to look for these connections in both form and content, so that they see the story developing along the lines that the poet has woven from the beginning, but also the language and poetic forms that support her in conveying the revolution that is happening in Amber's life and family.
- The opening of Section Six **Terror**, where Mum is hospitalised as a result of domestic violence is a highly emotional part of the narrative and students are likely to have strong reactions to the text. Encourage students to reflect on the whole narrative so far, to see if they are surprised that Dad behaves this way. Consider why the poet made the decision to carry the narrative to this point, where Mum's hospitalisation brings despair (see e.g., the acrostic **Hospital**, page 330), but galvanises Amber to work with Ruby and Beena to support her, to stand up to Dad in **Dad's Back 4** (page 393–394) and rebel in **Rebel** (Page 395). *What would the difference have been if Dad had reformed himself as he seemed about to do earlier in the story (Section Three **Control**, page 209) and a crisis point had not been reached? How would it have changed your reactions to the text? Do you think it would be true to life?*
- Encourage students also to reflect on other events in Amber's life, the situation with Tara and David, her confrontations with Gemma, her running. Ask them to reflect on whether Section Seven **Overthrow** offers a happy-ever-after outcome, and why the poet doesn't tie up all the loose ends neatly. *What impression do Amber's continued sightings of Dad and his attempts to find a way back into her life make on you?* To support this aspect of the discussion, share Manjeet's performance of **What Happened to Dad?** (page 452) at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>. *How do you feel when Amber is not easily reconciled with Gemma (see **Counselling with Gemma** page 459)? Does this feel authentic?*
- Go back through the poems in these sections of the text and explore the ways in which Manjeet builds emotion and tension in this part of the text. Focus on the structure and length of poems, how poems — especially about different aspects of Amber's life — follow each other in the narrative, how Manjeet uses particular poems for different effects, e.g., **Sleepless Night** (pages 413–415), **Park Runs** (page 421), **A Vacancy/Ruby Has Taken** (page 428), **What I**

Talk about (page 433). *How does telling the story in this way compare to what a conventional prose novel offers?* Come back together to discuss which poem(s) in this section made most impact on them as readers and why.

Session 11: Evaluating the text

- Read to the end of the text exploring Section Eight **Peace** and the beginning of Amber’s post-revolutionary life.
- Here you could explore the impact on Amber and on those around her, the changes in Mum, for Ruby and Tiya, for David and Tara, in her running and school life, her ability to tell **my truth** in **Dear Mr Walker** (page 477). Encourage them to reflect on Amber’s new life — which includes a **New Home** (page 461) and **A New Mum** (page 465) — and how it compares to the **life half lived** she lived before.
- Drawing on the Role on the Wall and poems throughout the book, discuss how Amber’s character has developed over the course of the novel. *Can you evidence from the text how she has changed or grown in the many aspects of her life, as daughter, sister, friend, student and runner? What evidence of these changes is offered by her interactions with the various characters with whom she comes into contact? Can you identify specific poems that show this?*
- Allow time and space for the students to reflect on the narrative as a whole, their likes, dislikes, questions they are left with or connections they made with the text, personally or in other stories, films or real life events. *What were your most memorable poems or parts of the narrative? Why? What have you learnt about verse novels or poetry that you didn’t know before? Would you be encouraged to read more verse novels or poetry after studying this text? Why? Why not?* A list of verse novels that the students may wish to read following on from this can be found above.
- Encourage students to read the Author Q&A (pages 480–482) and to discuss Manjeet Mann’s answers to the questions posed. *Are you surprised by anything she says here, do her answers coincide with yours?* Revisit the dedication **For [...] all the women and girls who dare to rebel** and the **Prologue** (pages 1–3), reflecting on the ‘emotional connection to the words’ that Manjeet might want the reader to make with the book and the fragments of Amber’s life that she has shared.
- To draw the students’ thinking together you could introduce students to the criteria used to judge the CILIP Carnegie Medal, one of the UK’s oldest and most prestigious book awards, awarded by children’s librarians for an outstanding book written in English for children and young people. *Run, Rebel* was shortlisted for the prize in 2021 and was the Shadowers’ Choice.
- Encourage the students to explore the elements of the narrative against the same criteria used by the judges of this award:

Style

- *Is the style or styles appropriate to the subject and theme and conducive to the establishment of voice?*
- *Do dialogue and narrative work effectively together?*

- *How effective is the use of literary techniques and conventions?*
- *How effective is the use of language in conveying setting, atmosphere, characters, action etc.? How appropriate is that to the theme?*
- *Where rhyme or rhythm are used, is their use accomplished and imaginative?*
- *Where factual information is presented, is this accurate and clear?*

The plot

- *Is it well-constructed?*
- *Do events happen, not necessarily logically, but acceptably within the limits set by the theme?*
- *Is the final resolution of the plot credible in relation to the rest of the book?*

Characterisation

- *Are the characters believable and convincing?*
- *Are they well-rounded, and do they develop during the course of the book?*
- *Do they interact with each other convincingly?*
- *Are the characters' behaviour and patterns of speech consistent with their known background and environment?*
- *Do they act consistently in character throughout the book?*
- *How effectively are the characters revealed through narration, dialogue, action, inner dialogue and through the thoughts, reactions and responses of others?*

Invite them to share their opinions around the novel using this award criteria. *If Manjeet asked you what could be improved in the book, what would you discuss? Would you recommend it to another reader? What would you tell them about it or what wouldn't you tell them because it might spoil the book for them or might mislead them about what it is like?*

Part 3: Writing and Performing Poetry

Session 12: Generating ideas and writing

- During this part of the Teaching Sequence you might like to share and discuss two videos in which Manjeet discusses her own creative process, 'How do you go about writing your poetry?' and 'How do you work on your poems?' at <https://clpe.org.uk/poetry/poets/manjeet-mann>.
- Pupils could think about their own themes or topics to explore through poetry. Perhaps they have faced a sense of injustice in their own lives in some way that they could explore through poetry or could present a view on a theme or topic of interest or concern to them as Manjeet has with the issues of adult illiteracy, domestic violence, women's rights compounded by cultural attitudes, garment sweatshops. You might make a list of potential subject areas or themes with which the students feel a connection. They could work this up into a series of poems that follow the narrative of a situation in the way that Manjeet does in *Run, Rebel*. If

they do this, reflect back on how she creates and shapes characters, builds empathy in the reader and creates emotion and tension.

- You could also focus on single poems that reflect different injustices and world views explored by some of the poets in another CLiPPA-shortlisted collection, *Rising Stars: New Young Voices in Poetry*; or by poets such as Michael Rosen in *Listening to a Pogrom on the Radio* or *Don't Mention the Children*; Benjamin Zephaniah in *Too Black, Too Strong*; Linton Kwesi-Johnson in *Selected Poems*, George the Poet in *Search Party*; Anthony Anaxagorou in *Heterogeneous*, Dean Atta in *I am Nobody's Nigger* or Hollie McNish in *Cherry Pie* or *Nobody Told Me*. The collection *Slam!* edited by Nikita Gill, also shortlisted for this year's CLiPPA, also offers a range of poems about issues students may feel strongly about.
- Select poems suitable for the age and experience of the students and provide opportunities for these to be shared and reflected upon. This could be done through a **poetry papering** exercise. Here, you select a number of different poems, sharing different poets, styles and forms. Photocopy the poems and pin them up around the classroom or another space for the students to find and explore at their leisure. They don't have to read all of them, they can read, pass over, move on and then select one they'd like to talk about with someone else. This encourages students to enjoy the experience of simply reading a poem and to relish the uncertainties of meanings and the nature of the knowledge and emotional responses that poems invoke in them as readers. Let them look for connections, ask questions, explore what they like about poems and the language contained within and use this as an opportunity to look at specific forms or devices used within the poem.

Session 13–14: Drafting and editing

- You could model writing a poem based on one of the topics discussed during a shared writing session, talking through the choices that you are making as a writer to bring the experience alive for the reader before allowing time for the students to draft their own poems around the themes and subjects of their choice, then allow them to read aloud to a response partner to lift the words off the page, hearing how they sound when performed.
- Give time for response partners to ask the writer's questions, discuss parts they aren't sure are working or make suggestions to improve the writing. Think together about how the poem could be presented on the page to enhance the meaning and the reader's understanding linked to their explorations in *Run, Rebel*.
- The value of hearing the input of a response partner is emphasised by the Branford Boase Award, which recognises the talent of the author but also '*marks the important contribution of the editor*'. Pupils might benefit from reading this interview with Manjeet and her editor Carmen McCullough at https://bit.ly/manjeetmann_branfordboase.
- When they have a poem that they have read aloud to a partner, discussed and explored changes that they are happy to present to a wider audience, start to think about how that poem could be best presented. *How will it look on the page? What form will it take? How will you use line breaks, spacing on the page to enhance the meaning or emotions behind your*

poem? Will you hand write it? Will you publish using ICT? What script or typeface will you choose? Will you make any specific decisions about the way certain words look or are placed on the page? Will you illustrate the poem? If so, how will the words and illustration sit and work together? Allow plenty of time and space for students to make a final draft and then publish their work accordingly.

- Ensure you obtain each child's consent before publishing their work. This might lead on to wider explorations around the concept of copyright. You may wish to draw on the resources CLPE produced in partnership with the ALCS to explore this in more depth:

<https://clpe.org.uk/teaching-resources/ALCS-resources-on-copyright>.

Session 15: Presenting poetry through performance

- When they are happy with the way their poem looks on the page, think about how this could lift off the page and be performed to an audience. Give each student a photocopy of their finished poem and allow them to mark this up with performance ideas. *Will you perform on your own? Do you need others to support you? How will you use voice, body movements and facial expression to enhance the listener's engagement and understanding?*
- Ensure time is given to try out ideas and rehearse performances of students' own poems. You may wish to provide examples of some of the poets they have studied performing their poetry so that they can see examples of this before performing themselves.
- You could also present the finished poems into an anthology to print and make available to other students, parents/carers and the wider school community.