



KOESTLER ARTS - ART AID

Koestler Arts produce monthly Art Aid sheets featuring creative tasks that can be done in cell with just paper and a pencil. New sheets are available from the first Monday of every month.

We are now accepting entries to the 2025 Koestler Awards! Send your entries and signed entry forms to 'FREEPOST Koestler Arts' by 11 April 2025. Entry forms should be enclosed with this sheet, and you can contact your education department or Koestler Arts to be sent more. See our guidance notes for full terms and conditions.

JANUARY 2025

For each Art Aid sheet, we commission an artist or writer who has engaged with Koestler Arts to set a creative task and share their experience with creativity. This month we asked Koestler Award winner Joe, who recently completed his course of Koestler Arts mentoring.

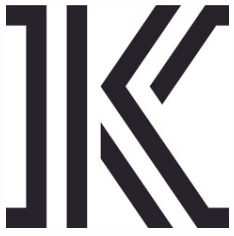
My Story

I was sent to prison in March 2021 amid the covid-19 pandemic. Faced with 23 hours behind the door, I needed something to do to occupy my time, so I used the art packs provided by the education team and Koestler Arts. These rekindled a love for both art and creative writing, things I had enjoyed doing at school but once I left, life got in the way.

It was getting feedback from a short story I had written that let me know about the Koestler mentoring scheme and I was urged upon my release to apply for it. I was deliberating whether to apply when someone said "What have you got to lose?" There was nothing. I could only gain, and when would I have an opportunity like this again? I applied for the scheme and was accepted.

My time being mentored has recently ended and I'm so glad that I did apply. The skills, experience, and opportunities the scheme has given me have all been invaluable. The feedback I have received has been informative and has made me really look at each word. My writing has improved immensely and I feel more confident with the whole process from start to finish.

I have won two writing competitions, which I would never have done without the help from my mentor. I have also run two writing workshops with a local community mental health hub, passing on some of the wisdom I have received. Koestler helped me whilst I was inside, on the outside, and I know it will have positively changed my future.



My Task: Poetry 101

Below are examples of different types of poem: limerick, haiku and acrostic. My task is for you to try writing one (or all three!) of these types of poem around the theme of winter, whatever that means to you. Think outside the box as much as you like. I've written my own to help you get started.

Remember you don't need an English degree to read or write or enjoy poetry. Poets like Pam Ayers, Ogden Nash and Spike Milligan created poems for everyone. Poetry can be funny, sad, thoughtful, inspiring, and even nonsense. Poetry can be anything and everything, and that is the true joy of it.

Limerick

5 lines only
Rhyming structure AABBA
A lines are 9 syllables
B lines are 6 syllables
Usually comical

There once was a man called Joe
Who loved to play in the snow
When it was all white,
He played through the night
Oh how he did love the snow.

Haiku

3 lines only
1st line - 5 syllables
2nd line - 7 syllables
3rd line - 5 syllables

The world is all white
Covered in a snowy shroud,
Sparkling in the sun.

Acrostic

A poem where the first letters
of each line forms a word

Remember all that's been before,
Enjoy what is yet to come.
Feel the optimism,
Leave the pessimism.
Empower your tomorrow,
Care not for yesterday.
Think only of the future.
I n this time
O f
N ew beginnings.

You don't need to send your responses to these tasks to us at Koestler, we just hope you'll enjoy giving them a go. If you do we'll be very happy to see them but please note they will only be entered into this year's Koestler Awards if they are sent with signed entry forms.