

# JUST WRITE

At the Canal & River Trust, we think life is better by water so we've come up with some **FUN** activities to help you explore your local canal.



# Explorers

Canals were built to transport cargo around the country and rivers were used to carry goods too. Today, people use waterways mainly for leisure such as boating, jogging and cycling along the towpath.

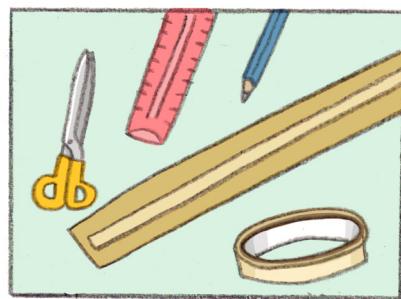
## Write away!



Canals and rivers inspire writers to create stories and poems. This activity invites you to write a poem about your canal or river, or a short story about something that happened near it, or describe ideas you have for your canal.

### Get out!

Take a walk along your local canal towpath or riverbank. Make a journey stick to help you remember what you see, smell and hear.



### You will need

- a piece of card measuring about 30 cms long x 6 cms wide
- double-sided sticky tape
- a pen

### To make

- 1 Cut a length of double-sided sticky tape the same length as the card. Fasten down the middle of the card.
- 2 Walk along the towpath or riverbank and collect items that will remind you which way you went and what you saw.
- 3 Stick them on to the card.
- 4 On the edges of the card write descriptions such as Bridge No.3, tall reeds, quacking ducks, colourful boats.



Remember the **SAFE** message:  
**Stay Away From the Edge**



Leaders: for advice on how to plan a visit go to [canalriverexplorers.org.uk](http://canalriverexplorers.org.uk)

# Getting creative



Use your journey stick to write a poem, a story or ideas about your canal.



## 1 Make up a story

Kenneth Grahame, who wrote '[The Wind in the Willows](#)', used his observations of wildlife to invent a story about the animals who lived along the river bank.

## 3 Fun places

Do you have good ideas about what you'd like your canal to be?

- a safe area for boating and picnics?
- a secret location for spotting wildlife?
- a fun learning space?



## 4 Just Write

Write your poem, story or ideas here...

## 2 Let's hear it for canals!

Poet Ian McMillan loves canals and says:

'The canal tells you stories  
The canal sings you songs  
They hang in that space  
Between memory and water'.

In his poem '[Canal Life](#)' Ian wrote:

'Once got waved at by a jogger as I stood gongoozling  
On the towpath; her running gave rhythm  
To the early afternoon, dog-strollers and kids  
Who'd rather be here than sitting in school.  
To gongoozle is to stand and watch narrowboats pass  
And a canal is a lesson, a water-based school.'



[For more information](#) about writers and canals log on to: [canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/waterway-arts/canal-laureate](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/waterway-arts/canal-laureate)?

[For more education resources](#), activities and to book a volunteer led visit log on to: [Canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers)



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