

**TITLE: Funky chickens**

**AUTHOR: Benjamin Zephaniah**

**INTEREST AGE: 8-15 Years**

**OUR REVIEW:** Accessible & modern. Performance poetry at its best.

### ACTIVITIES:

Find out more about Benjamin Zephaniah.

Write a biography of his life.

Read a selection of Zephaniah's poems and discuss the language features and the meanings behind them.

Choose a poem and write your own version in a similar style.

Choose one of Zephaniah's poems and perform it to others.

How do you think Benjamin Zephaniah would perform it?

Benjamin Zephaniah's poetry is strongly influenced by Jamaican culture, yet he was brought up in Birmingham. Find out about Jamaica and make comparisons with Birmingham.

In which place would you prefer to grow up?

How would life be different for Benjamin if he was raised in Jamaica?

Look at poems by different poets. Make comparisons between them.

Do you have a favourite poem? Why?

What language features are used that are most effective?

Benjamin Zephaniah is a Rastafari.

Find out what this means.

What are their beliefs?

Read "Health food Stop" poem on Page 14.

Why do you think Benjamin Zephaniah wrote this?

What does it remind you of?

What is the same as/different to the nursery rhyme?

Have a look at different nursery rhymes. Can you alter any in the way that Benjamin Zephaniah has done?

Benjamin Zephaniah wrote a selection of poems based on the senses.

(If you see, if you hear, if you smell, if you taste, if you touch")

Discuss the language used in these.

Can you make up your own verses for each of the five senses?

Read "Good Hope" poem on Pages 62-63.

Why do you think Benjamin Zephaniah wrote this poem?

What are the meanings behind it?

Many different religions are mentioned in the fourth verse – why? Find out a little more about each of these religions.

What are your hopes for a better world? Can you write these into a poem?

Read "Walking black home" poem on page 73.

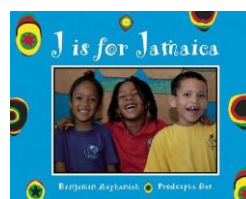
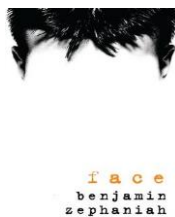
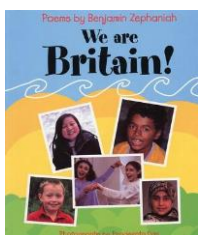
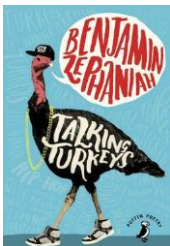
The poem ends with

"Sometimes it's hard to get a taxi when you're black."

What do you think Benjamin Zephaniah means by this?

Discuss skin colour and racism.

## Other books by Benjamin Zephaniah include...



Peters