

## Task 1 – Speaking

- Are there differences between seasons in your country?
- What is your favourite season? Why?
- In which season is your birthday?



## Task 2 - Vocabulary

Work in groups of four. Look at the picture about and make a list of as many words as you can to associate with each season. Share your list with the other members of your group.

Spring	Summer
Autumn	Winter

### Task 3 - Reading and listening

Listen to Dylan Thomas' poem *Here in this spring*. Do any of the words in your vocabulary box from Task 2 appear in the poem? If so, circle or highlight them.

Now listen to the poem again and fill in the gaps.

#### Here in this spring

Here in this **(1)**....., stars float along the void;  
Here in this ornamental **(2)** .....  
Down pelts the naked weather;  
This **(3)**.....buries a spring bird.

Symbols are selected from the **(4)**.....'  
Slow **(5)** ..... of four seasons' coasts,  
In **(6)**..... teach three seasons' fires  
And four birds' notes.

I should tell summer from the **(7)**....., the worms  
Tell, if at all, the winter's **(8)**.....  
Or the funeral of the **(9)**.....;  
I should learn spring by the cuckooing,  
And the slug should teach me destruction.

A worm tells summer better than the **(10)**.....,  
The slug's a living calendar of **(11)**.....;  
What shall it tell me if a **(12)**..... insect  
Says the world wears away?

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### Task 4 – Reading and speaking

Read the poem again more carefully now paying attention to the relationships between words and images. Discuss the questions below in pairs or small groups. Write your answers below.

1. What is the main theme linking the missing words above?
2. What ideas do the words *star* and *sun* bring to you?
3. What ideas do the words *worm* and *slug* bring to you?
4. Why does the poet use these conflicting words in the same poem?

## Task 5 – Listening and reading

Dylan Thomas' birthday was in October, which is autumn in the UK. Listen to *Poem in October* and number the stanzas in the correct order.

### Poem in October

(1)

It was my thirtieth year to heaven  
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood  
And the mussel pooled and the heron  
Priested shore  
The morning beckon  
With water praying and call of seagull and rook  
And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall  
Myself to set foot  
That second  
In the still sleeping town and set forth.

( )

A springful of larks in a rolling  
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling  
Blackbirds and the sun of October  
Summery  
On the hill's shoulder,  
Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly  
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened  
To the rain wringing  
Wind blow cold  
In the wood faraway under me.

( )

Pale rain over the dwindling harbour  
And over the sea wet church the size of a snail  
With its horns through mist and the castle  
Brown as owls  
But all the gardens  
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales  
Beyond the border and under the lark full cloud.  
There could I marvel  
My birthday  
Away but the weather turned around.

( )

My birthday began with the water-  
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name  
Above the farms and the white horses  
And I rose  
In rainy autumn  
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.  
High tide and the heron dived when I took the road  
Over the border  
And the gates  
Of the town closed as the town awoke.

( )

And there could I marvel my birthday  
Away but the weather turned around. And the true  
Joy of the long dead child sang burning  
In the sun.  
It was my thirtieth  
Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon  
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.  
O may my heart's truth  
Still be sung  
On this high hill in a year's turning.

( )

It turned away from the blithe country  
And down the other air and the blue altered sky  
Streamed again a wonder of summer  
With apples  
Pears and red currants  
And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's  
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother  
Through the parables  
Of sun light  
And the legends of the green chapels

( )

And the twice told fields of infancy  
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine.  
These were the woods the river and sea  
Where a boy  
In the listening  
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy  
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.  
And the mystery  
Sang alive  
Still in the water and singing birds.

*As in many Dylan Thomas poems, there is a close association between nature and the passing of time.*

*Read the poem again at home and see if you can identify how the poet creates this connection.*

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### Task 6 – Language work

Read the text again, analyse the language and complete the table.

Verbs in <i>-ing</i> form	
Adjectives with <i>-ing</i> suffix	
Nouns ending in <i>-ing</i>	

### Task 7 - Speaking

- What do you usually do on your birthday?
- If you went walking on your birthday, where would you like to go?
- Would you go alone or would you take someone with you?

### Homework

This is a piece of creative writing:

- Write a poem (at least four stanzas) or a short story (300 -350 words) about someone's birthday
- *Use some of the language you studied in this lesson.*
- Post your writing to your class blog or bring it in to your next class.



*Materials by Chris Lima*