

GTR poetry competition set to get kids' imaginations back on track

March 26, 2024



Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has partnered with Children's Laureate, [Joseph Coelho](#), to launch a national poetry competition.

The competition (which will be open to entries for six weeks) aims to boost children's creativity and reduce screen time by encouraging them to write a short poem about somewhere they love to visit by train.

GTR added that, with 80 per cent of parents wishing they could keep kids entertained on the train without the help of tech, the competition is a perfect distraction for the Easter school holidays – especially as only one in five families (20 per cent) are now playing traditional travel games such as I Spy.¹

To enter the competition, children aged between five and 13-years-old simply need to write a short poem about somewhere they enjoy visiting by train, or think others should visit by train, on the Southern, Great Northern or Thameslink network. With a rail network spanning 11 counties, there are hundreds of destinations to choose from.

With the help of the Children's Laureate, 10 lucky winners will have their poems displayed on trains and at

stations across the GTR network, so they can be read and admired by travellers far-and-wide.² They will also receive complimentary return rail travel for themselves and four family members, perfect for a summer adventure!

To provide inspiration to young, budding poets, Joseph has written his own piece, titled 'To Hastings We Go!', inspired by a family's exciting trip to Hastings on a train (full poem in appendix).

Joseph, who will be judging the winning entries, said: "Poetry is a wonderful way to get children exploring their innate creativity and their voice, helping them to see that their words have power. One of my earliest memories of writing is during a poetry competition when I was twelve years old, so I am truly looking forward to reading the entries. I encourage the youngsters who get involved in GTR's poetry competition to have fun with it and good luck to all who enter."

When it comes to keeping children entertained when travelling by train, many parents opt for tech-based gadgets such as tablets (e.g., iPads) (32%), phones (25%), and gaming devices (e.g., Nintendo Switch's) (19%).¹ GTR is hoping that by launching the competition, they will be able to support parents and carers in getting children off screens whilst on the train – putting their creativity and imagination to the test.

On the competition, Jenny Saunders, Customer Services Director at GTR said: "Travelling by train is a great way to entertain kids, as the journey becomes part of the experience, but as a mother myself, I know how hard it can be to keep children occupied when on the move. This poetry competition is a fantastic distraction aimed at sparking children's creativity. We hope to inspire young explorers to take on an adventure by train this summer, with our far-reaching network that helps open the door to more!"

Submissions are open now and close 23:59, 10 May 2024. Poems will be judged by Govia Thameslink Railway and Joseph Coelho based on criteria including language, structure and theme (full selection criteria in appendix). Winners will be contacted between 3-14 June before the official announcement on 24 June.

To enter GTR's Poetry in Motion competition and view full T&C's, visit: [Southern – Poetry in motion \(southernrailway.com\)](https://southernrailway.com), [Thameslink – Poetry in motion \(thameslinkrailway.com\)](https://thameslinkrailway.com) or [Great Northern – Poetry in motion \(greatnorthernrail.com\)](https://greatnorthernrail.com).

¹Research conducted by Govia Thameslink Railway and Opinionium in March 2024 among 471 UK parents of children aged 0-13 years old.

²Poems will be displayed on digital screens on GTR trains where possible, and at selected train stations across its network.