

## Poetry Prompts: Week 28

# Insects

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 28 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In today's poetry prompt, Joseph Coelho showed you how a photograph of a ladybird could inspire a poem. Here's another insect poem, written by him, that will give you a clear picture of another common insect.

### Read the poem:

Read the poem aloud. You might do this yourself, with a friend or someone else could read it to you:

## ANT

I'm so small.

I'm sooooo small.

I'm sooooooooo very teeny, tiny small.

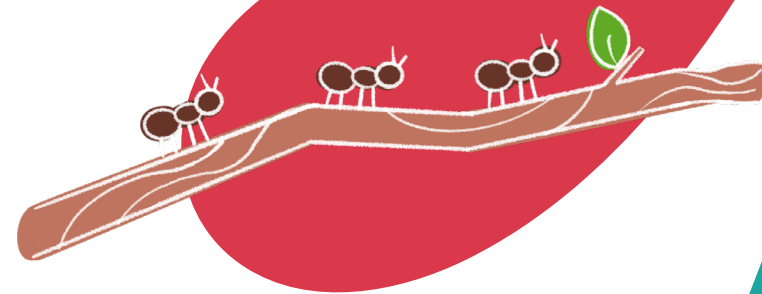
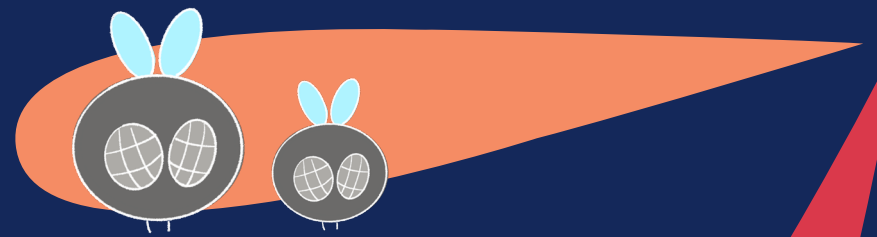
But I am MANY.

I am colony.

I am jaw and acid spit and attack and bite  
and weight lifter,

I am Red and Black and Fire and Crazy and Bullet.

From *Poems Aloud* by Joseph Coelho  
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2020)





## Think about the poem:

Think about the poem you just read or heard. What do you think and feel about the ant? Why do you think this is? Have you seen an ant in real life? Which elements of the poem do you recognise in the ants you've seen? Did you learn anything new about ants from the poem? Were any words new to you?

If so, what do you think these words mean? Use a dictionary to check the meanings of any words you haven't heard before. If you don't have one to hand, you could use an online dictionary, like this one:

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>

Now, read this webpage from the National Geographic Kids website, all about ants. Look carefully at the photographs, as you read the text: <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/insects/ant-facts/>. What parts of the poem linked with the information you saw on the webpage? What else did you learn about ants that you didn't know before? If you had to pick five single words to describe an ant, which words would you choose and why?

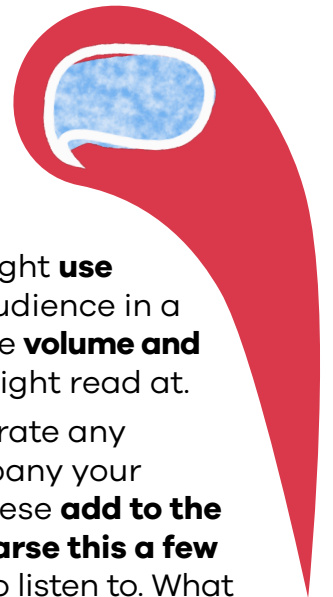


## Look at the language:

- In the poem, Joseph Coelho **draws on opposites** to show the might and power of these tiny creatures. **Look at the two verses again.** What **impression do you get** of the ant when you read the first verse? How **does this change** when you read the second verse? What is it that changes your impression?
- Now, **circle or underline** any words that tell you something about the **ant or ants more widely**. These might be **nouns to name specific types** of ant or **parts of the ant's anatomy**, **collective nouns to describe a group** of ants, **verbs to describe what the ant does** or **adjectives to describe its characteristics**. Which words **stand out** most to you? Why do you think this is?

## Perform the poem:

- Consider how to **create the sense of opposition** in a performance, as you move from the first verse to the second verse. Consider the **impression you get** of the ant in each verse and how you might **use your voice to communicate** this to an audience in a performance of the poem. Think about the **volume and tone of your voice, and the speed** you might read at.
- Think about whether you might incorporate any **facial expressions or actions** to accompany your performance. How will you make sure these **add to the performance**, not detract from it? **Rehearse this a few times** then perform it for someone else to listen to. What sense did they **gain of the ant** from your performance? What was it about your performance that made them **think or feel** these things about the ant?





## Write your own!

- Now, **look more widely** at the insects pages on the National Geographic Kids website: <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/category/discover/animals/insects/>. Pick an insect that appeals to you, which **you might like to find out more about**, or write about. Use the linked web pages to see photographs of the insects and find out information about them. **Make a note of any interesting words, phrases or facts** that come to mind as you read, either from the words you read or language of your own, inspired by the photographs you see. **Think about the language** you found interesting in the original poem and use **nouns** to name specific types of this insect, or parts of its anatomy, **collective nouns** to describe a group of the insect (if the webpage doesn't tell you this, you could do some **extra research** to find this out), **verbs** to describe what the insect does and **adjectives** to describe its characteristics.
- Now **try drafting some lines of your own** about your chosen insect. You might want to build up the impression of the insect as you move through the poem, starting with what might be an **initial first impression in the first verse**, then moving beyond this to more **powerful information about it in the second verse**, as Joseph Coelho does in the original poem.
- When you've finished, you could **handwrite your final poem** in presentation handwriting or **type it up** on a computer. You could think about **how you could display a photograph** of the insect alongside it, or how to build the text around a photograph of the insect when you present it. If you don't have access to a computer or printer, you could **draw an illustration of the insect** to accompany your own writing.
- You could also **perform your poem** to an audience, considering how to **share the characteristics** of the insect you chose as part of your performance.

Find all Poetry Prompts as well as more information about Joseph Coelho at [www.booktrust.org.uk/childrens-laureate](http://www.booktrust.org.uk/childrens-laureate)

Find and explore poems about animals and their habitats on CLPE's website.

This sequence of activities was designed in partnership with CLPE. CLPE is a UK-based children's literacy charity working with primary schools to raise the achievement of children's reading and writing by helping schools to teach literacy creatively and effectively, putting quality children's books at the heart of all learning. Find out more about their work, and access further resources and training at: [clpe.org.uk](http://clpe.org.uk).