

Poems that convey different emotions

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 25 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. Today's Poetry Prompt focussed on poems that convey different emotions, to link with the United Nations International Day of Happiness. Here's another poem by Joseph Coelho, which focusses on a range of different emotions we might experience or feel, ending with happiness.



Read the poem:

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

This Is...

**This is fear,
tiny little fear.
Not a smile on his face
not a grin, not a cheer.**

**This is joy,
happy, laughing joy.
Chuckling like a rainbow
as playful as a toy.**

**This is sad,
teary, bleary sad.
Heavy like potatoes
feeling pretty bad.**

**This is happy,
smiling, sparkling happy.
Always a bounce in her step
always feeling chatty.**

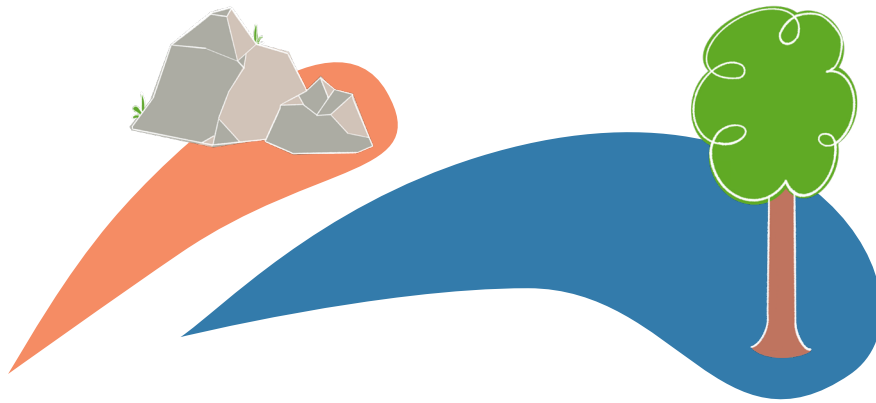
From *Blow a Kiss, Catch a Kiss* by Joseph Coelho
(Andersen Press, 2022)



Think about the poem:

Think about your own personal experiences, linked to this poem. Have you ever experienced these emotions? Do you connect with the descriptions Joseph Coelho has written? Can you think of any other ways to describe these emotions? Can you think of any other emotions you've experienced that you could write about in this way?

Consider why lots of poets write about emotions in their poems. Why might it be good to talk, share or write about the things we think and feel?

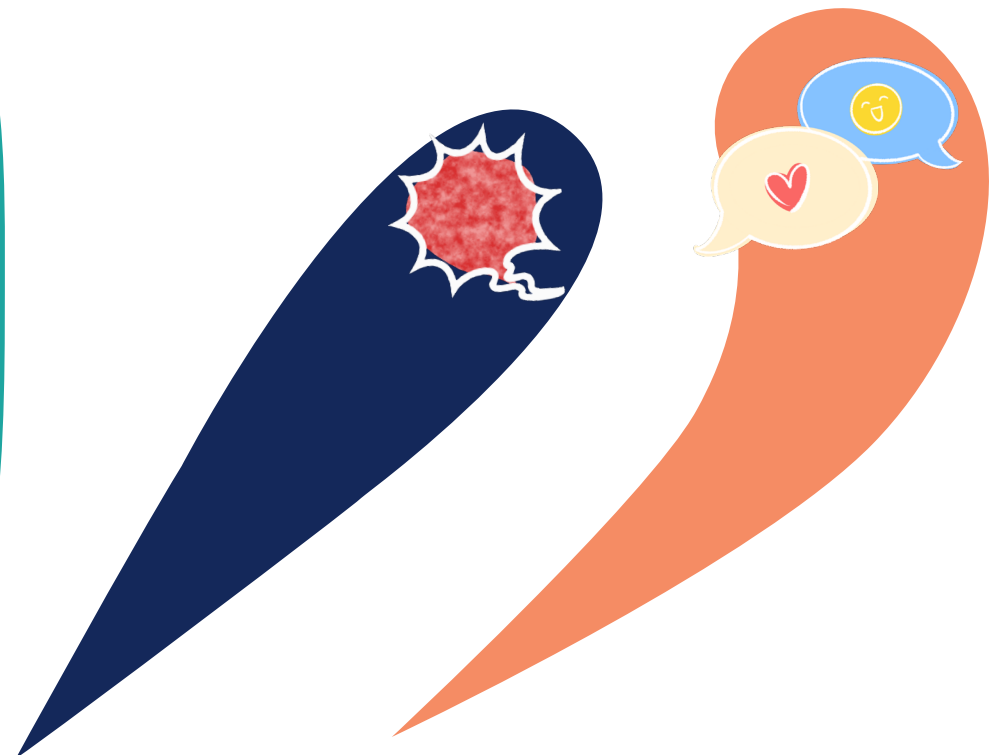


Look at the language:

- In the poem, Joseph Coelho talked about **each emotion like they were a different person**. This technique is called **personification**. Personification is **a poetic device where animals, plants or even inanimate objects, are given human qualities** – resulting in a poem full of **imagery and description**. Read the poem again and **circle or underline** any adjectives used to describe each emotion and any actions they engage in, which tell us more about them.
- Read the poem again. **Pick one of the verses**, related to the emotion that captures your attention. If this emotion was a person, **what would they look like?** What might their facial expression be? How might they hold their body – what might their arms or legs be doing, for example? What might their hair, clothing or accessories tell us about them? **Take some paper and some drawing equipment** – a drawing pencil and some coloured pencils or crayons would be perfect – and **sketch out what you imagine one of the emotion characters to look like** as you read or hear the poem being read. **Show your finished drawing** to someone else. **Can they guess the emotion** you were trying to represent?

Perform the poem:

- Consider how to **create the sense of each emotion in a performance**, as you move through each verse. Think about the **feelings you want to communicate** and how you might **use your voice** to do this. 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. Could they **sense the emotion** being talked about as you performed each verse? What made this possible?



Write your own!

- Consider **other emotions that you have felt or experienced**, or which you've seen someone else experience. Which emotions might be good to write a new verse about? **Write your ideas down on a sheet of paper**. You might also find it useful to **draw your emotion as a character** to get a sense of what they might be like.
- Now think about how you might be able to **describe these emotions as people**, exploring how to **use personification in your own writing**. First, think about **adjectives** that could be used to **describe the emotion** if they were a person. Then, think of **how they might behave** and write down some **phrases to describe** this.
- Now try **drafting some lines** of your own. You could start by introducing your emotion with the words ***This is...*** as Joseph Coelho does in the original poem. You might have also noticed that the **original poem rhymes**, with the last word of the second line rhyming with the last word of the final line in each verse. **You might wish to do the same**, or you might choose to **write more freely**. The important thing is for the imagery in the words to **convey the character** of the emotion, so **keep reading and re-reading** as you write to check this. You could write just one verse about one emotion or several verses about different emotions.
- When you've finished, you could **handwrite your final poem** in presentation handwriting or **type it up on a computer**. You could also **perform it**, considering how to share the emotion(s) you wrote about in your performance.

Find all Poetry Prompts as well as more information about Joseph Coelho at www.booktrust.org.uk/childrens-laureate

Find and explore poems exploring feelings 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.