

# International Dance Day

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 31 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week's Poetry Prompt helped to celebrate International Dance Day. In the video, Joseph Coelho explored ways to describe what dancing is like in a poem. Here's another poem written by him, which is all about dancing.



## Read the poem:

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

## Dancing Families

**Mum and Dad are dancing,  
baby can't stop laughing  
when Mum and Dad are dancing.**

**Mum is wiggling,  
baby can't stop giggling  
when Mum gets to wiggling.**

**Dad is sliding,  
baby is a-gliding  
when Dad gets to sliding.**

**Mum and Ma are twirling,  
baby can't stop swirling  
when Mum and Ma are twirling.**

**Dad and Pa are spinning,  
baby can't stop grinning  
when Dad and Pa are spinning.**

**Ma and Pa are bopping,  
baby's eyes are popping  
when Ma and Pa are bopping.**

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

## Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just heard or read. What did it make you think about? How did it make you feel? What made you feel this way?

Now, think about the poem in relation to your own experiences. Do you or anyone in your family like to dance? What kind of dancing do you or they like doing? What music do you or they dance to? How does doing or watching dancing make you feel? Do different types of dance or the music being danced to make you feel differently?

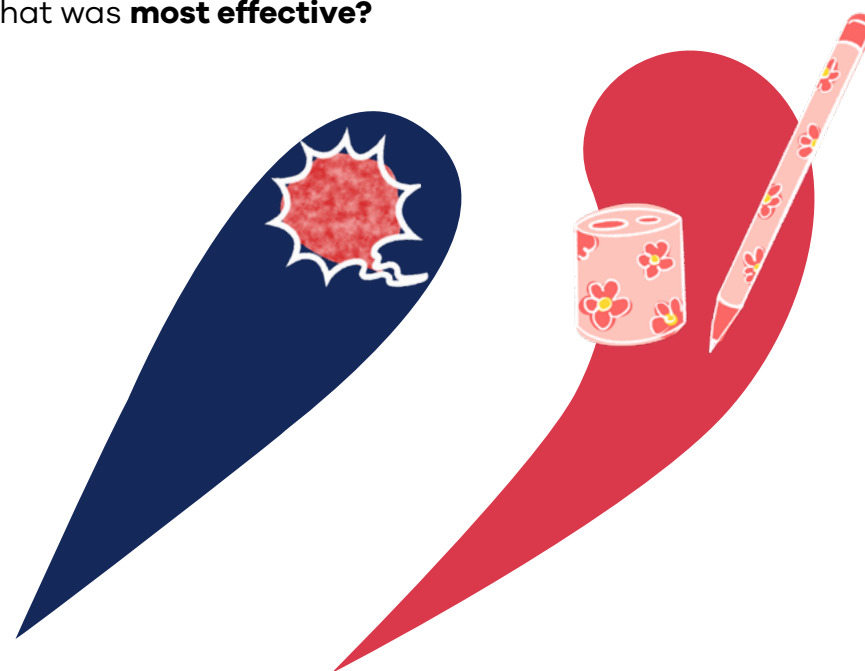


## Look at the language:

- Read the poem again and **circle or underline** any words or phrases that are used to **describe the actions** that the people do as they dance. Look at these words again. How would **you make each movement?** What does this **word look like** in action? What **kind of music** do you think each family described might be dancing to?
- In a **different colour**, **circle or underline** the words that **describe how each of the babies feel** as they see the dancing happening. **How would you describe** each baby's feelings? Do you think they all **respond to the dance** in the same way or differently? If you were to **draw each baby's face**, what would it look like? Take a pencil and a piece of paper and **have a go at creating an illustration** of the baby in each verse to **show how they feel** as they watch the dancing happening.

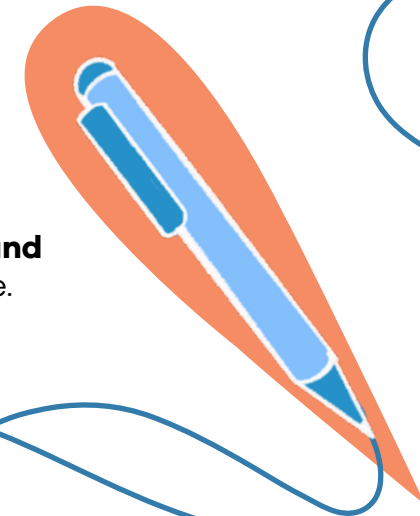
## Perform the poem:

- Think about how to **bring the action described in each verse of the poem to life** in a performance. Think about the **actions and dance-specific words** you've identified. Could you bring these to life in your performance? How will you make sure this **adds to the meaning**, rather than detracts from it?
- Try out **different ways** to read each verse. **Think about the emotions** that might be felt by the baby in each verse. How can you **use your voice in different ways to bring out the different feelings** in each of the verses? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower?
- **Rehearse your performance** a few times until you are happy with it, then **perform it to someone else**. Could they **feel the action of the dance** and the **emotion of the baby** in each verse? What did they think you did that was **most effective?**



## Write your own!

- Think about a **time when you have seen someone dancing**. It might be someone in **your family**, as Joseph Coelho described in this poem, it might be a performance you've **seen at school**, in your **local area** or at **a theatre**. It might be a dance you've seen performed on **TV or in a film**. If you can't think of a time you've seen a dance performed, you could **watch this one** from BBC's Strictly Come Dancing: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/av/64018860>.
- Now, **think about the dance-specific actions or words** you could use to describe this dance for someone else in a poem. **Think about the verbs** Joseph Coelho used in the poem above. What verbs best describe the movements in the dance you are thinking of? You might also want to **talk about the effect the dance** had on you as you watched it, like Joseph did when he described the baby watching.
- Use some of these ideas to **write your own poem** about watching someone dance. Think about how you'll **break up the lines and verses to build the story** of the dance. Or, like Joseph, you might want to **make each verse about different dances** you've seen, using **different words to describe** the differences in the movements **or the reaction you felt** watching the dances.
- When you've finished, **try reading your poem aloud** to explore how to **use your voice and any actions** to bring out a sense of the movement and emotions involved in the dance.



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 more poems which describe movement and activity 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).