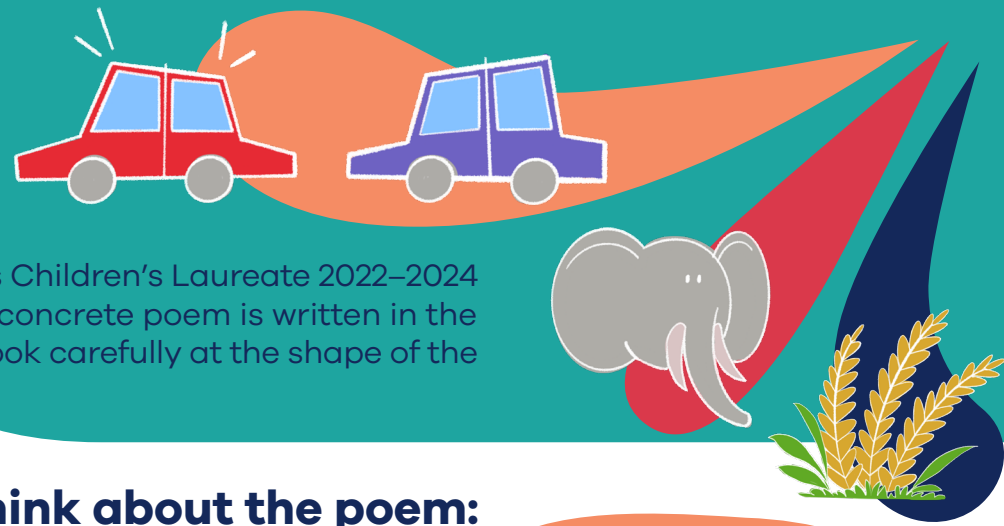


## Poetry Prompts: Week 30

# Concrete poem

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 30 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. Today's Poetry Prompt focussed on concrete poems. A concrete poem is written in the shape of its subject. Here's another concrete poem by Joseph Coelho. Look carefully at the shape of the poem on the page as you read it.



### Read the poem:

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

### Weights on a pole

MissIrwinTaughtUsScienceByPuttingAPlasticBagOnABroom  
HandleAndLayingItAcrossTheTopsOfTwoChairs

We

Added

Large Metal Weights

Until The Bag Reached its Capacity And...

S

L

P

I

T

From *Werewolf Club Rules* by Joseph Coelho  
(Frances Lincoln, 2014)

### Think about the poem:

This is a school-based poem. Can you think of any exciting or memorable experiences you've had at school, which might be good to share with others in a poem?

Think carefully about the poem you read or heard. What was it about? What happened at each stage of the experiment? How did the way the poem was laid out on the page reflect the experience that was being described? How did the layout help you understand what was happening?

### Look at the language:

- **Read the poem again.** Look at how Joseph Coelho **changes the pace** in the poem from the beginning to the end. How does he **set the scene** in the first part of the poem? How does he **build up anticipation and suspense** in the middle of the poem? How does he **create excitement** at the end of the poem? **Write your thoughts and ideas** around the poem and **circle or underline** any words or phrases that you think are important in **bringing this experience to life**.

## Perform the poem:

- Consider how to **create the same idea of shape** in the poem in a performance. How could you **use your voice and actions** to communicate the length of the broom handle? The weights going into the bag? The bag splitting? How will you make sure that **your actions bring the audience into the moment** you are describing, rather than detracting from the meaning?
- Think about the **rhythm created** in the middle of the poem, using phrases of three words in consecutive lines ***We / Added / Large Metal Weights / Until The Bag Reached its Capacity***. How might you use this rhythm to **support you in building the tension** for your audience as you perform?
- **Rehearse this a few times**, then **perform it** to someone else. Did they feel part of the experience? What was it about your performance **that drew them in** or brought things to life?

## Write your own!

- Consider **experiences you've had at school** that might be good to write about in a poem like this. Maybe you have also conducted a **memorable science experiment?** Perhaps you've been on a **memorable trip** and could write a poem in the shape of a landmark or artefact you saw? Maybe you **investigated something in History or Geography** that you can share the experience of in the shape of the layout? Maybe you **played a sport or did some activity in PE** that you could express in a concrete poem? Take some time to write down a range of options – you might find that **some ideas don't work** when you come to try and compose the concrete poem, so **it's good to have some more in reserve!**
- Now, think about **what you want to communicate** about the experience you had or the **knowledge you want to share**. How will you **build interest or excitement** about this for your reader, in the same way Joseph Coelho did in the original poem? **What layout will you choose** for your words so that this paints a picture of the thing you're writing about? It might help you to **lightly sketch out the shape(s)** you want to use first, **then to think about how to lay out** your text.
- When you've finished, you could **handwrite your final poem** in presentation handwriting or **type it up** on a computer. **Display this** so it can be seen by other people. A concrete poem is **only truly understood when it's seen on the page**.

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

### Find out more about concrete poems 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](https://clpe.org.uk).