

## Poetry Prompts: Week 78

# Made up words

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 78 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week, Joseph Coelho was having fun making up words in his poetry prompt, putting two words together to make a brand new word. In this poem by Joe, he has played with words in a different way; finding words that rhyme with the first part of an animal's name then adding the second part of the animal's name to the end.



### Look at the poem:

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

## Hippopotamus

I know a hippopotamus  
he sips from a teapot-amus  
he's such a proper hippopotamus  
he ties his tie with a Windsor knot-amus.

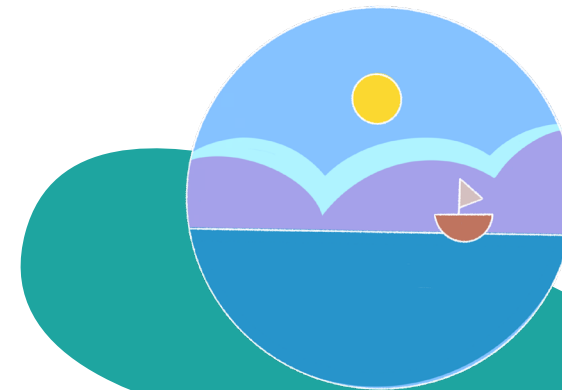
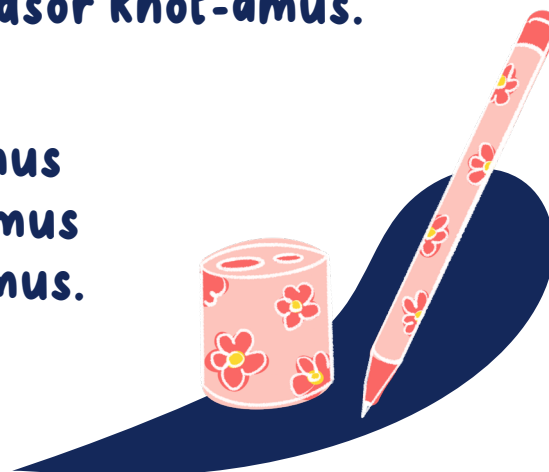
I know a hippopotamus  
who won the jackpot-amus  
and sails on his yacht-amus  
such a lucky hippopotamus.

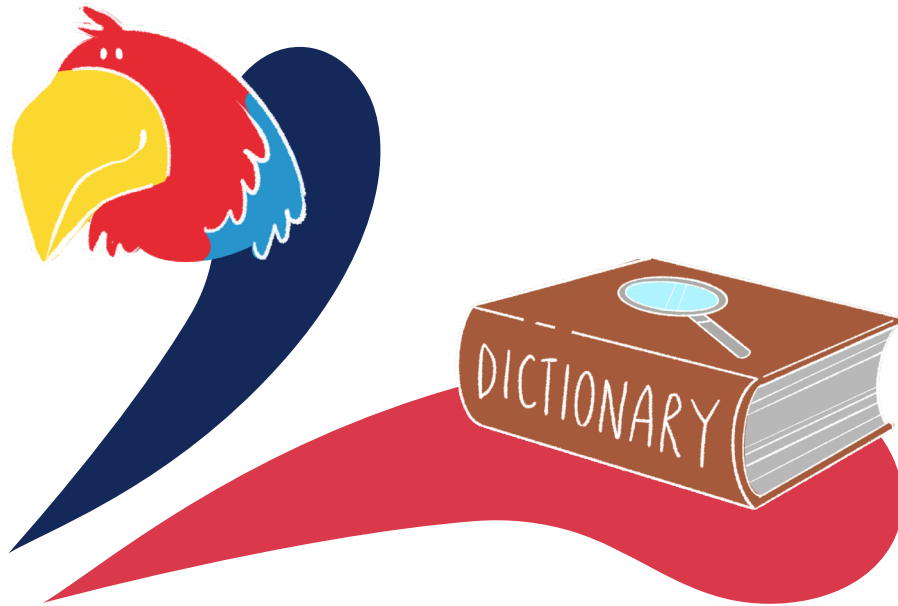
From *Smile Out Loud* by Joseph Coelho  
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2022)

### Think about the poem:

Consider the poem  
you just heard or read.  
What do you think  
the character of the  
hippopotamus was  
like? What makes  
you think this?

In the poem, the  
hippopotamus wins the  
jackpot. What does this  
mean? What did he do  
with his money? What do  
you think you would do  
if you won a jackpot?



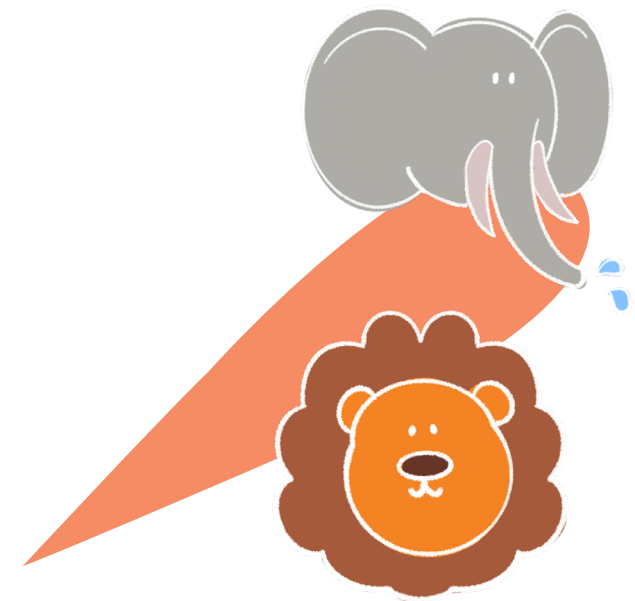


## Look at the language:

- Look at how Joseph Coelho has created the rhyming words in the poem. He split the word Hippopotamus in the title into two parts – **Hippopot** and **amus**. **Circle or underline all the words that rhyme** with the first part of the word: **Hippopot**.
- Do you know the meanings of all these words or the phrases that they are contained in?** What is a yacht or a Windsor knot? If you're not sure, what do you think they mean, in the context of the poem? Find a dictionary, either a physical copy or an online dictionary like: <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/browse/dictionary>, and check whether your predictions were correct.
- Now, **see how many more words you can think of that rhyme with Hippopot**. Can you think of any more lines or verses that you could add to the poem using the words you've come up with?

## Perform the poem:

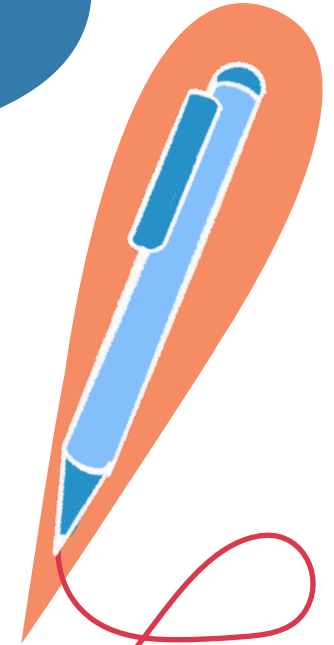
- Think about **what you can tell about the character** of the hippopotamus from the poem. What do you think he is like? How does he behave? What in the poem makes you think this?
- Now, think about how to **bring his character out in a performance** of the poem. Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you use actions or facial expression to exemplify the actions described? How will you make sure any actions you choose to incorporate **add to the performance**, rather than detract from it?
- Rehearse your performance a few times until you are happy with it, then **perform it to someone else**. What did they think was most effective about your performance?



## Write your own!

- Consider some **other animals that you could play with the name of in a similar way** that Joseph Coelho does with the hippopotamus in this poem. You could try an octopus, an armadillo, an orangutan, an alligator or a crocodile. Consider how you would **break down the name into two parts** as Joseph did with Hippopt-amus, e.g. oc-topus, armadill-o, orang-utan, alli-gator, croc-odile.
- When you have decided on an animal, **think of as many words as you can which rhyme with the first part of the name**. For example, if I chose an octopus, I might take the first part **oc** and think of words like shock, rock, tick-tock, block, croc, flock. If you struggle to come up with words yourself, you might use a rhyming dictionary, such as: <https://www.rhymezone.com/>.
- Now **use the words to create verses of your own** about your chosen animal, e.g. I know a little octopus / She's the leggiest creature on the block-topus / It might give you a shock-topus / If she springs out from behind a rock-topus / That playful little octopus.
- When you have something written down, **read it aloud to hear how it flows** off the page. Do all the rhymes work and make sense? Make any changes you need to then **write or type up your finished poem**. You might even want to draw an illustration to accompany it.
- Give your finished poem to **someone else to read**. You may even wish to perform it to them.

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 and explore more 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).