

Poetry Prompts: Week 1

The Sounds of Our Environment

This sheet is to accompany the first Poetry Prompt video featuring Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week, Joseph describes the sounds and movements made by something in the environment around us.

Read the poem:

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

Sparrow

Me tweet. Me hop.

Me peck!

Peck, peck peck.

Me ruffle feather - dust bath.

Me flee.

Me swoop and dive.

Me tweet and chirp

and peck, peck, peck.

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

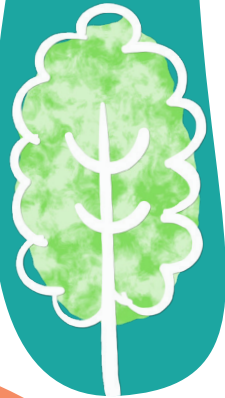
Think about the poem:

What does the poem make you think or feel about the sparrow? What makes you feel this way?

What do you think this sparrow is like? What words or phrases make you think this?

Look at the language:

- Read the poem again and **circle any words** that describe how the sparrow sounds or moves.
- **What do you picture in your mind** when you read these words? Which images stay with you most vividly?
- If you were to illustrate the poem, how would you do this? If you haven't seen a sparrow before, you can see a picture and find out more about them on the RSPB website: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/house-sparrow/>



Perform the poem:

- The poem is written from a first-person perspective, which means the sparrow is telling you about itself. **Try to think like the sparrow.** From what you know about it from your reading of the poem, imagine how it might speak its lines if it could.
- How can you use your voice in different ways to bring out the meaning of the words? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? **Try different ways of using your voice and moving to recite the poem like the sparrow.**
- How will you make sure your actions add to the performance, not detract from it? **Make sure you keep your words clear** as you perform so your audience can understand the words.
- **Rehearse your performance** a few times until you are happy with it, then perform it to someone else. Did they think you embodied the sparrow?

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

Write your own!

- If you were to **pick an animal to write about**, which would you choose and why?
- Start off by **drawing a picture of this animal** so you can focus on what it is like. You could find pictures of the animal, like you did with the sparrow, to help you.
- **What do you already know about this animal** that might be interesting to share in a poem? What else might you want to find out? How could you do this?
- When you have some ideas written down, use these to **make your own poem** titled with the name of the animal you have chosen.
- **Think about the language you liked** in the original poem. You could use verbs to describe the animal's movements or adjectives to describe any sounds they make. You might include interesting information about them.
- **Think about how you will present your poem** on the page. Where will you break the lines? Will there be more than one verse?
- You could also have a go at **illustrating your poem**.

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

This sequence of activities was designed in collaboration with CLPE. CLPE is a UK 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 www.clpe.org.uk.