

Poetry Prompts: Week 11

Theme of food

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 11 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week's Poetry Prompt focussed on the theme of food. Joseph focussed on a poem to describe favourite foods, but here's another poem written by him, which describes food in a very different way.

Read the poem:

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

School Dinner

A slice of gravy
A spit of jelly
A smear of custard
A husk of sausage
A dribble of beans
A sickly sliver of meat
A cold snotty mush of veg
A yellowed rock of sugar
A browning mash of fruit
A lump of milk
A scab of pizza.

A packed lunch please.

From *Werewolf Club Rules* by Joseph Coelho
(Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2014)

Think about the poem:

What does the poem make you think about? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way?

What are your least favourite foods? Why is this?

If you were to illustrate the poem, how would you do this? Would you focus on the food itself? The person eating it? Both? Or something completely different? Gather together any art materials you have available and try out some of your ideas.

Look at the language:

- Read the poems again and **circle any words** that specifically describe each type of food.
- Look back at all the words and phrases you have circled. **What images do these words put in your mind?** Which ones stick in your mind the most vividly? Why do you think this is?



Perform the poem:

- All the foods are described in a way that makes them sound very unappealing. How will you **bring the feelings of disgust** about these foods to a performance? How can you use your **facial expression, body language and voice** in different ways to express these feelings? Where can you slow down or speed up, make your voice louder or quieter? How will you make sure any facial expressions or actions **add to your performance**, rather than distract from it?
- **Rehearse until you are happy** with how it sounds, then **perform the poem** to someone else or record your performance to watch back for yourself. Did you manage to **make the foods sound as horrible** as the descriptive phrases infer?

Write your own!

- **Make a list** of all the foods that you really dislike. Maybe you like them when one person makes them, but somewhere else they taste different. Now, think about **what it is that you dislike about these things**. Is it the way they taste? Is it the texture? Is it simply the way they look on the plate? You might want to **draw what these things look like to you** as you think about them, to bring your ideas together.
- Now, try and **think of some descriptive phrases** about these foods that make them sound really unappealing, in the way Joseph Coelho did in his poem. This **could be a group of nouns, adjectives, or a verb**, that act together to **describe each food type**, like the ***cold snotty mush of veg*** in the original poem. Try to **think of words and phrases** that make someone else really see and feel what these foods are like and why they are so unappealing.
- Now, see if you can put some of these together to **make a revolting food poem** of your own. **Think about the order of the words and lines**, how you can build up the sense of disgust as the poem goes on, and **how you might end the poem** with a request for something else, like in the original poem where, ***A packed lunch please***, is asked for.
- When you've finished, **think about a good title for your poem**. How could this **lead the reader** in to the mood of the poem? Maybe you could **play with the sounds** of the words, like '***A Disgusting Dinner***' or '***A Sickening Supper***'.

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

Find and explore more poems about food 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 clpe.org.uk.