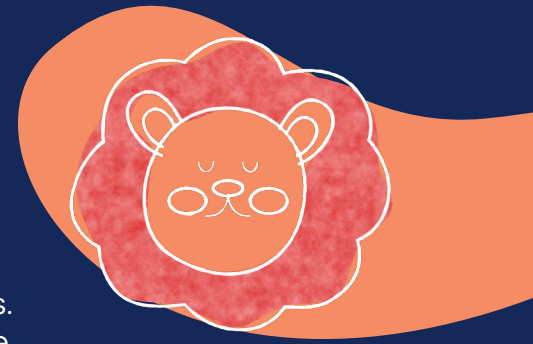


## Poetry Prompts: Week 9

# Turning similes into metaphors

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 9 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In this week's Poetry Prompt, Joseph Coelho focussed on turning similes into metaphors. Here's another poem written by Joseph Coelho in which he uses metaphors. See if you can hear and see these as you listen to and 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.

## Lion

I am meat-licker,  
bone-cruncher,  
big-meower.  
I cat-walk with pride.  
My mane is a hairdo of envy.  
My roar is a rumble of mountains.  
My claws, a savannah of pain.

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

### Think about the poem:

What image did you gain of the lion after reading the poem? What do the words make you picture in your mind? Which images stay with you most vividly?

When you heard the poem, what did it make you think and feel about the lion? What did you already know about lions? How do you feel about them? Did anything in the poem confirm what you knew or felt? Did it change the way you thought or felt in any way?

If you were to illustrate the poem, how would you do this? If you haven't seen a lion before, you can find out more information about them and see photographs of them here: [bornfree.org.uk/animals/lions](https://bornfree.org.uk/animals/lions)

### Look at the language:

- Read the poem again for yourself. This time, **circle or underline the metaphors in the poem**, where Joseph Coelho uses metaphors to **describe an aspect of the lion** as being the same as something else.
- Look carefully at the metaphors you've found. **What ideas, thoughts or feelings** do you have about the lion because of these metaphors? What **specific words or phrases** make you feel this way?
- **Read the poem once more** and really focus on the way you think or feel about the lion from the way it is described. **If you had to describe the lion** using only single words, what words would you choose and why?



## Perform the poem:

- This is a short poem, which helps you to learn the lines easily. **Take some time to learn the words** so that you can perform it off by heart.
- The poem is **written from a first-person** perspective, which means the lion is directly telling you about itself. Come back to the words you chose to describe the lion and **think about what this might tell you about its character**. What might this tell you about how the lion might speak, hold itself or move?
- Use this to **get into character as the lion** and to try to think like the lion. From what you know about it from your reading of the poem, imagine how it might speak its lines if it could. Try out different ways of using your voice, holding yourself and moving, to deliver this like the lion. **Make sure you keep your words clear as you perform**, so your audience can understand them. 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? How will you **make sure your actions add to the performance**, not detract from it?
- **Rehearse your performance** a few times until you are happy with it, then **perform it to someone else**. Did they think you embodied the lion?

## Write your own!

- Take some time to **think of an animal, fictional character or person** that you could write a poem about, **using metaphors** to share a deeper sense of what they are like. You might choose any kind of animal, a character from a book or film, a famous person or someone close to you. **Note a few different ideas** of the things you might choose as a focus for your poem. It's a good idea to **come up with more than one** so you can try out different ideas if one doesn't work out.
- **Write the name of the thing** you are going to write about in the middle of a piece of paper, then, **all around write down the characteristics** of this thing. You can focus on physical attributes or appearance as well as the behaviours and qualities.
- Now think about **how you might use metaphors to deepen understanding** of these characteristics, as Joseph Coelho does in the original poem, in lines such as: ***My roar is a rumble of mountains***. **Make a note of these metaphors on your page**.
- Now, **use the metaphors to help you write a poem** about the thing you have chosen to focus on. **Write in first person**, as if the thing is telling you about itself, as in the original poem. Remember, **not every line has to be a metaphor**. You'll see that in the original poem, Joseph Coelho has also used kenning to introduce the lion in the lines: ***I am meat-licker, / bone-cruncher, / big-meower***. You might also want to **try this out**.
- When you have finished writing your poem, **read it out loud** and see if it embodies the character of the thing you are writing about. **Could you make any changes to improve it?**

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

Learn more about poetic devices, including metaphor, and see these used in a range of different poems 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](https://clpe.org.uk).