

Poetry Prompts: Week 53

Shrinking

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 53 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. For this week's poetry prompt, Joseph Coelho encouraged you to think from the perspective of shrinking down and being tiny. This next poem, written by Joe, encourages us to think from the perspective of being small in a different way – thinking back to the viewpoint of being a baby...

Look at the poem:

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

Avocado! Avocado!

Avocado! Avocado!

Baby loves his avocado.

Avocado – let's go bravo!

As baby eats his avocado!

Avocado, green and creamy.

Avocado, tastes so dreamy!

Avocado! Avocado!

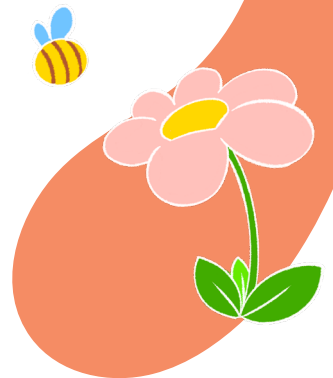
Baby loves his avocado.

From *Blow a Kiss, Catch a Kiss* by Joseph Coelho
(Andersen Press, 2022)

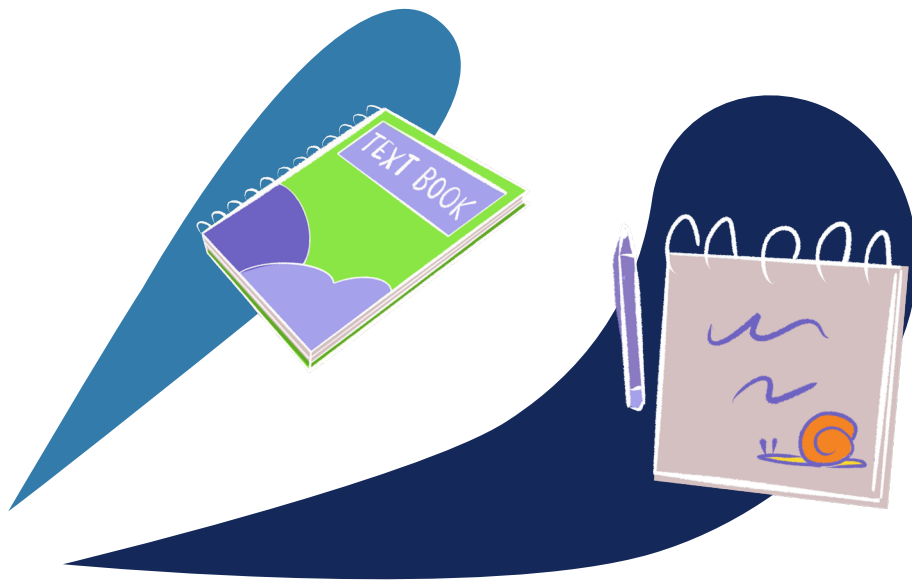


Think about the poem:

Think about the poem you just heard. What do you know or think you know about the baby? Why do you think he liked the avocado? Have you tried avocado before? What was it like? Did you like the taste or not?



Connect this to your own personal experience. Think back to when you were a baby, or the memories that have been recalled to you by your family, or through photographs you have of this time. What were you like as a baby? What were your favourite things to eat or do? What did you love the most? Why do you think this was? If you have a younger brother, sister, cousin or you know a baby, you could also think from their perspective.



Look at the language:

- Read the poem again for yourself. Look carefully at the words on the page. **Which words tell you about the avocado and how the baby feels about it? Underline or circle these as you read.**
- Think about the **words that describe the avocado**. Some of these are adjectives, like '**dreamy**' and '**creamy**', others are actions which show the baby's feelings without directly telling us, like '**let's go bravo!**', some are verbs that directly tell us the baby's feelings, like '**baby loves his avocado**'. **What feelings do these words share?** What other words might you use to describe the avocado after reading this?
- Read the poem aloud once more. **What do you notice about the patterns in the words?** Which words rhyme? Where do these words sit in the lines and verses?

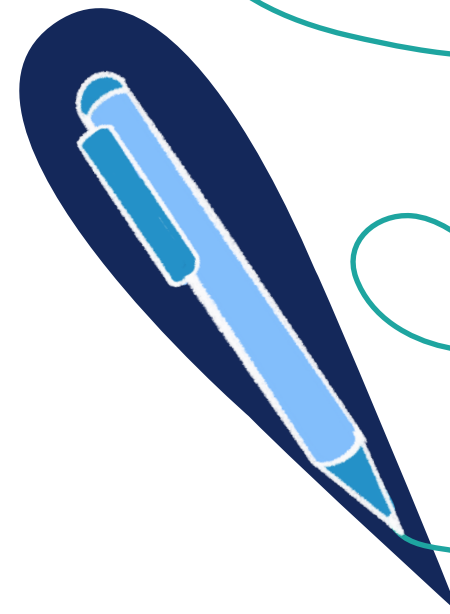
Perform the poem:

- Consider how **you could bring this moment to life in a poem**. Do you notice a difference in the way that people talk to babies? What is this like and why do you think they do this? Have you seen a baby being fed before? How does the person feeding them encourage them to eat?
- Think about how you might **use this knowledge in a performance of the poem**. How will you use your voice, your facial expressions and your body language to bring this out in a performance of the poem? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you make sure any actions you may decide to include 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**. What did they think was most engaging? Would they make any suggestions if you were to perform it again?



Write your own!

- Think about how you might **write your own poem about an experience specific to being a baby**. You could use the original poem as a model and write about a baby's favourite food, or you might write about something else that a baby likes to do, to play with or a favourite object or toy. To get your ideas going you could just write the word '**baby**' in the middle of a blank page and **write down all your ideas around the word, seeing where your mind takes you as you write**.
- When you have some thoughts written down, **see if any of these would be good ideas to work up into a poem of your own**. You might want to make it a playful poem, as Joseph Coelho did, giving the sense that you are directly engaging with the baby, or you might write in a different way, perhaps recalling a specific moment of being a baby of your own.
- The original poem rhymed. **Consider if you want your poem to rhyme too**. It also contained a repeated refrain '**Avocado! Avocado! Baby loves his avocado**'. You could do the same in your own writing, if you feel it is effective. If you're finding it difficult to come up with rhyming words, you could try using a rhyming dictionary, such as: <https://www.rhymezone.com/> or you could choose not to make your poem rhyme, and write it as free verse.
- When you have a draft of your poem, **read it aloud to check it flows and makes sense**. You could publish it for someone else to read, or, even better, find a baby or someone else who has or knows a baby to perform your poem to!



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

Find and explore more poems about families, including babies, 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.