

Poetry Prompts: Week 34



Pets

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 34 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week's poetry prompt was all about pets. In the video with Joe, you heard poems about a real pet – a hamster – and an imaginary pet – a dragon. Here's a poem about a different pet by Joseph Coelho; I wonder if you or anyone you know has this kind of pet at home?

Read the poem:

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

Not just for Christmas

I've got a new puppy
all wrinkles and snout.
I run home from school
just to take him out.

I've got a new puppy
all fur and tail.
I take him for walks
come sunshine or hail.

I've got a new puppy
all head-pat and rub.
He doesn't like baths,
he leaps from the tub.

I've got a new puppy
all walks in the rain.
I must take him out,
this puppy's a pain.

I've got a new puppy
all poop and scoop.
I clean up his mess,
this puppy's a brute!

I've got a new puppy,
now my room's in a mess.
But he does lick my nose
when I feel a bit stressed.

I've got a new puppy,
some bad days, some sublime.
I'll take what he gives,
this puppy's all mine!

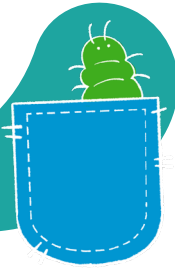


From *Werewolf Club Rules* by Joseph Coelho
(Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2014)

Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just read. What did the narrator of the poem think or feel about the dog? What tells you this? Were their feelings the same throughout the poem or did they change? What led to the changes in feeling?

Think about the title of the poem – ***Not just for Christmas***. Have you heard this phrase before? Why do you think it might have been chosen as the title of this poem?



Think about what the poem is showing you about pets. What does this poem make you think about owning a pet? Do you own a pet or know someone who does? What are the kinds of things you have to do to take responsibility for a pet? Which might be the things that bring you most joy? Which things might be more challenging?

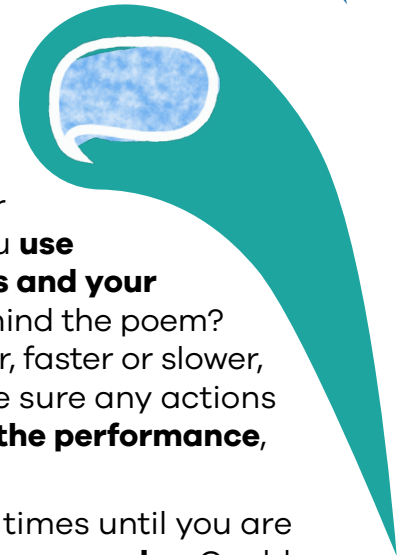


Look at the language:

- **Listen to the poem** being read again, or **read it back** to yourself. **Circle or underline** all the phrases that tell you about **things the owner has to do** for the puppy. Now, in a **different colour, circle or underline** things that tell you about **things the puppy does**. How do you think these things make **the owner feel** about owning the puppy? What do you think **makes them feel this way**?
- This poem follows a **rhyme pattern** where the **second line and the fourth line of each verse rhyme**. Take a coloured pen and **highlight the words that rhyme** in each verse. **Are all of them full rhymes**, as in **snout** and **out** or are they **half rhymes**, like **scoop** and **brute**?

Perform the poem:

- Think about how you might **bring the emotions** of the puppy's owner to life for an audience. How will you **use your voice, your facial expressions and your body language** to **tell the story** behind 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**. Could they feel the changes in emotion throughout the poem?



Write your own!

- Think about **your own experiences** of pets. Perhaps you **have a pet** of your own, maybe **someone close to you** has a pet, perhaps **you really want a pet** (real or imaginary!), or **don't want one at all!** How could **you share your experience** with others?
- **Write your own** pet-related poem. **Think about the story** you want to tell your audience and **the emotions** that come with the storytelling, just like in the original poem. First, **jot down all your initial ideas**, then look at how to **work these up into lines and verses**. You might want to explore whether you want to **make your poem follow a rhyming pattern**, as Joe did in his poem.
- When you have a draft of your poem, **read it aloud** to check it **flows and makes sense**, then **type it up or write it out in your best handwriting** to share with others. You may even want to **illustrate it**.

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

Find and explore more poems about pets and other animals 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.