

Animals

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 66 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In this week's Poetry Prompt, Joseph Coelho was looking at how to write poems about an animal and laying this out on the page to share an aspect of the animal. In his tiger poem, he laid out the lines to reflect the tiger's stripes. Here's another poem about a different animal by Joseph Coelho. As you read, think about what you learn about this animal...

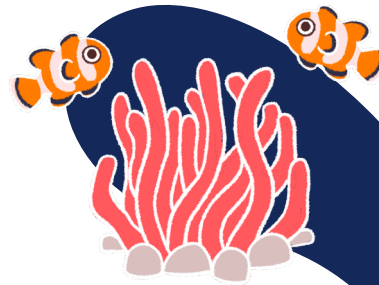


Look at the poem:

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

Frog

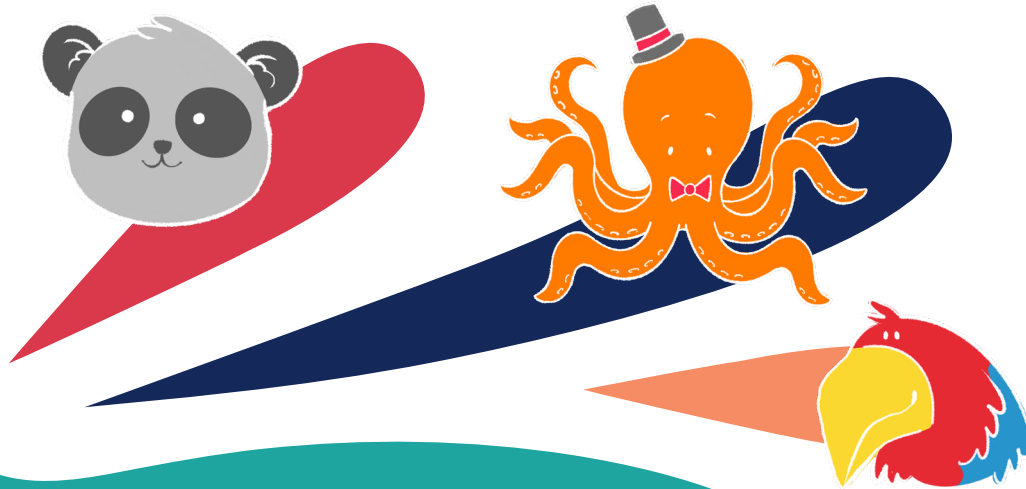
**I leap, I croak
I am the friend of witches.
I hop, I leap
I'm often found in ditches,
in ponds, in lakes
and even under logs,
some say I'm green and warty
but I'm a smooth, jewel-skinned frog.**



Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just heard or read. What do you find out about frogs from the poem? Do you know anything else about frogs?

Read the poem a second time. How are you left feeling about the frog after reading the poem? Why do you think this is?



Look at the language:

- Read the poem again and **circle or underline all the different words that Joseph Coelho uses to describe the frog**. These might be adjectives to describe their appearance, verbs that describe their actions or behaviours or statements that give us information about them. Why do you think Joseph Coelho says the frog is '**the friend of witches**'? Where might this connection come from?
- Re-read the poem and look at the things you've circled or underlined again. **What aspects of the frog could you use to lay the poem out in a different one**, to share something about the frog's appearance or behaviour with the person reading it? You could, for example, think about the frog's ability to leap and hop and use this to lay out the words in a jumpy pattern. You might think about the frog being '**the friend of witches**' and lay the words out in the shape of a witch's hat. **Try out some different ideas on a sheet of paper and see how they work**. Is the poem still easy to follow and read as well as visually interesting?

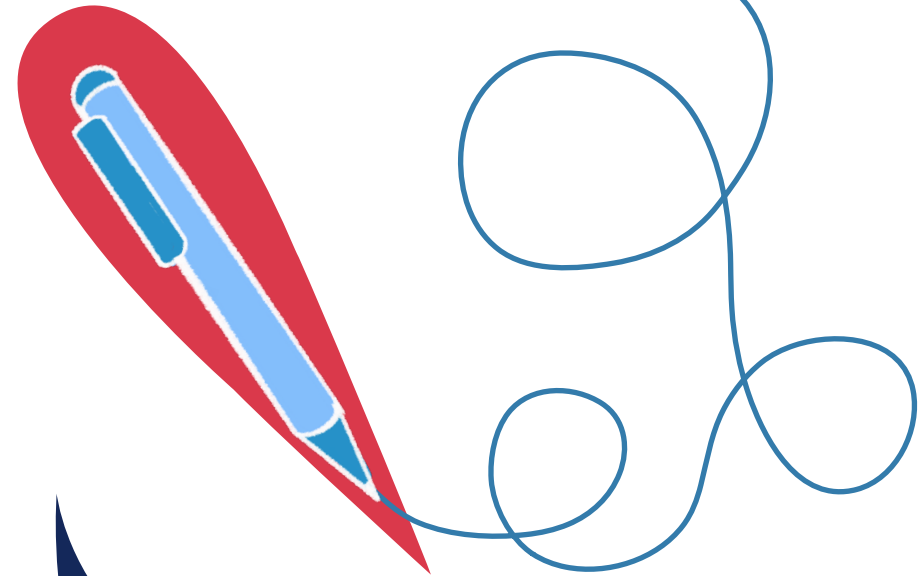
Perform the poem:

- Think about **how you might perform this poem to an audience**. How might you use your voice, facial expression and body language to bring out the different aspects of the frog? How might this affect the pace of your performance? Will some parts be louder or quieter, higher or lower, faster or slower? Consider the verbs used in the poem. These might direct you in how you choose to use your voice or in considering actions to include. How will you make sure any actions you choose to incorporate **add to the performance**, rather than detract from it?
- Rehearse your performance a few times until you are happy with it, **then perform it to someone else**. What sense did your audience get about this moment from the way you performed the poem? What did they think you did that was most effective?



Write your own!

- Think of **another animal that you might be inspired to write a poem about**. It might be an animal that you know lots about already or one you are interested in and want to find out more about. Take a piece of paper and **list all the information you know about this animal** already, this can just be words or phrases to describe aspects of its appearance or behaviour or statements that share facts about the animal.
- Once you've written everything you already know, you might want to **do some research to find out more about it**. You could go to a local library to find books about the animal or you might look online. The National Geographic Kids website is a good place to start: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals>. As you find out new things, write these down alongside what you already knew.
- Look over the information you have collected and think about which information you might choose and how you might **use this to draft a poem about your chosen animal**.
- Start to **think about the language you could choose and use in your poem**, remembering some of the things Joseph Coelho did in the original poem that you found effective. You might choose to use adjectives and verbs to describe the appearance and behaviours of things. You might include statements to share specific information.
- When you have drafted your poem, read it again, thinking about whether you need to add or change anything. Then, **think about how you might lay it out on the page to share an aspect of the animal**, as you did with the frog poem. Try out some different ideas on a sheet of paper and see how they work, before **writing it out in your best handwriting or typing it up for someone else to read**. Did they think the poem was easy to follow and read as well as visually interesting?



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

Find and explore more poems about animals and their habitats 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.