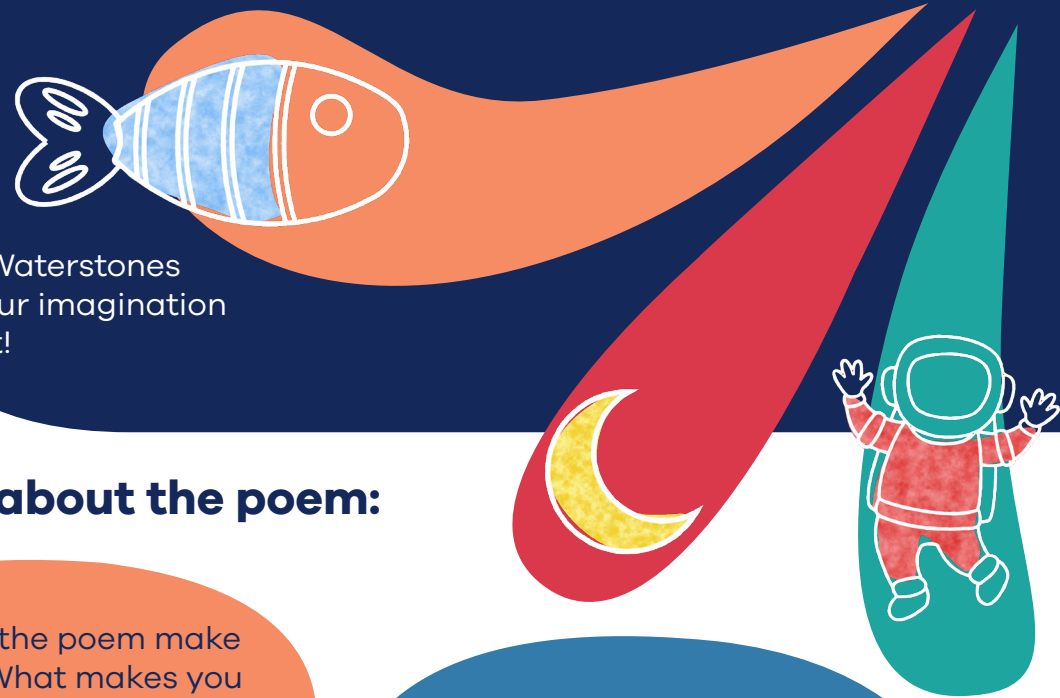


Poetry Prompts: Week 3

Free writing

This sheet is to accompany the third Poetry Prompt video featuring Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This is a time to let your imagination run free. Here's a poem by Joseph Coelho which is about exactly that!



Read the poem:

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

Imagination Running Free

Close your eyes
what do you see?
Imagination running free.

Imagine your toes
in a gentle sea.
Imagination running free.

Imagine your knees
are stripy like bees!
Imagination running free.

Imagine you're running with:
toes wet
legs wooden
knees stripy!

That's your imagination
running free.

From *Smile Out Loud* by Joseph Coelho
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2022)

Think about the poem:

How does the poem make you feel? What makes you feel this way? Do you feel the same way throughout the poem, or do your feelings change? Why is this?

What do you think about when you read the poem? Which images stick in your mind most vividly? Why do you think this might be? If you were to illustrate the poem, what would you draw? Use whatever drawing equipment you have to sketch some of your ideas.

Look at the language:

- Read the poem again and circle any adjectives – the words that describe the things mentioned in the poem.
- How do these words help to create the imagery and feelings you experienced as you read the poem? Would the poem feel different if the sea was stormy, if the trees were tiny or if the knees turned to mouldy cheese? How does replacing the words in this way affect the way you think or feel?

Perform the poem:

- The poem contains the repeated line, **Imagination running free**. How did it feel when your imagination ran free when you did the free write? If you can't remember, take a couple of minutes to close your eyes, or just stare into space, and let your imagination run free now. **How will you put this feeling of freedom into your performance** of this repeated line?
- **Think about the way the mood shifts** in the poem, from the calm feeling of closing your eyes and having your toes in the sea, to the silliness of having conker tree legs and stripy knees. How will you use your voice, facial expressions and actions to convey the shift in mood? 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 change the mood in your performance?

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

Write your own!

- Take some more time to let your **imagination run free**. Remove yourself from any distractions, clear your mind and close your eyes, or simply stare into space or out of a window. After about five or ten minutes, **write or draw what came to mind** as you did this. Did random thoughts, questions or ideas pop up? Did you focus on a particular memory or experience you've had? Were you struck by something happening around you at the time? Were they things that could be real, like dipping your toes into the sea, or silly, fictional things like having trees for legs?
- Work some of these **ideas into a poem of your own**. To help you get going, use the structure from the original poem, starting with the same first verse and closing lines. Begin the other verses with the word **Imagine** and end with the refrain, **Imagination running free**.
- After writing, you think about how to **illustrate your poem**, putting the ideas from your imagination onto the page in drawings.

You can explore a range of children's poems like this 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 www.clpe.org.uk.