

Poetry Prompts: Week 48

Homophones

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 48 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week Joseph Coelho was exploring homophones in poems. Homophones are words that sound the same but have different meanings. There are lots of homophones in the poem below, written by Joseph Coelho, see if you can spot them all as you listen to or read it...

Look at the poem:

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

The Duelling Duo

In the pitch of night
two knights shared a thought,
with a sword in each hand
as they slashed and fought
on the highest ramparts
of the crumbling fort.

The duo duelled
with their dual swords
hacking left then right,
their metal ringing,
each convinced they were right.

One would hit – one would miss
in the mine-dark night
with its coal-fist mist.
One blade rang on a helmet,
hand tight on a hilt-rung sword,
both proving their mettle
in this mourning morning.

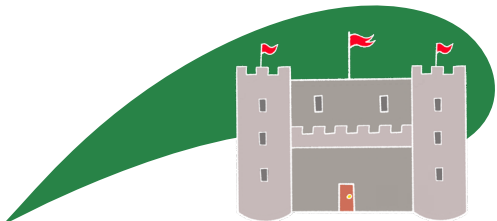
Each trying to raze
the other to the ground,
ignoring the sun's rays,
they danced their iron,
refusing to pause,
ignoring the sweat
that rained from their pores,
each desperate to reign
with their armour-bash peel.



The same thought in each head
that neither could still.
Both were right,
could not be wrong.
Apparent in their blades, raised.
Transparent in their eyes, glazed.
"I AM RIGHT."

The lie they thought
as they fought
in the fort.

From *Overheard in a Tower Block* by Joseph Coelho
(Otter-Barry Books, 2017)



Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just heard or read. What do you think it was about? What did it make you think about? How did it make you feel? What made you feel this way?

Re-read the poem again. Were there any words you weren't sure of the meaning of? What do you think they might mean? What makes you think this? Use a dictionary, either a physical one if you have one to hand, or an online one like: <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/browse/dictionary>

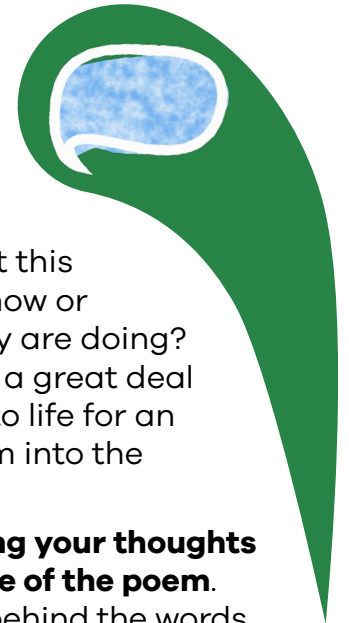
Look at the language:

- Read the poem again. Circle or underline any **homophones** – **words that sound the same but have different meanings**. Are the words spelled the same or differently?
- Write out each set of homophones together then **see if you can define the meaning of each one** of these, as it is used in the poem.



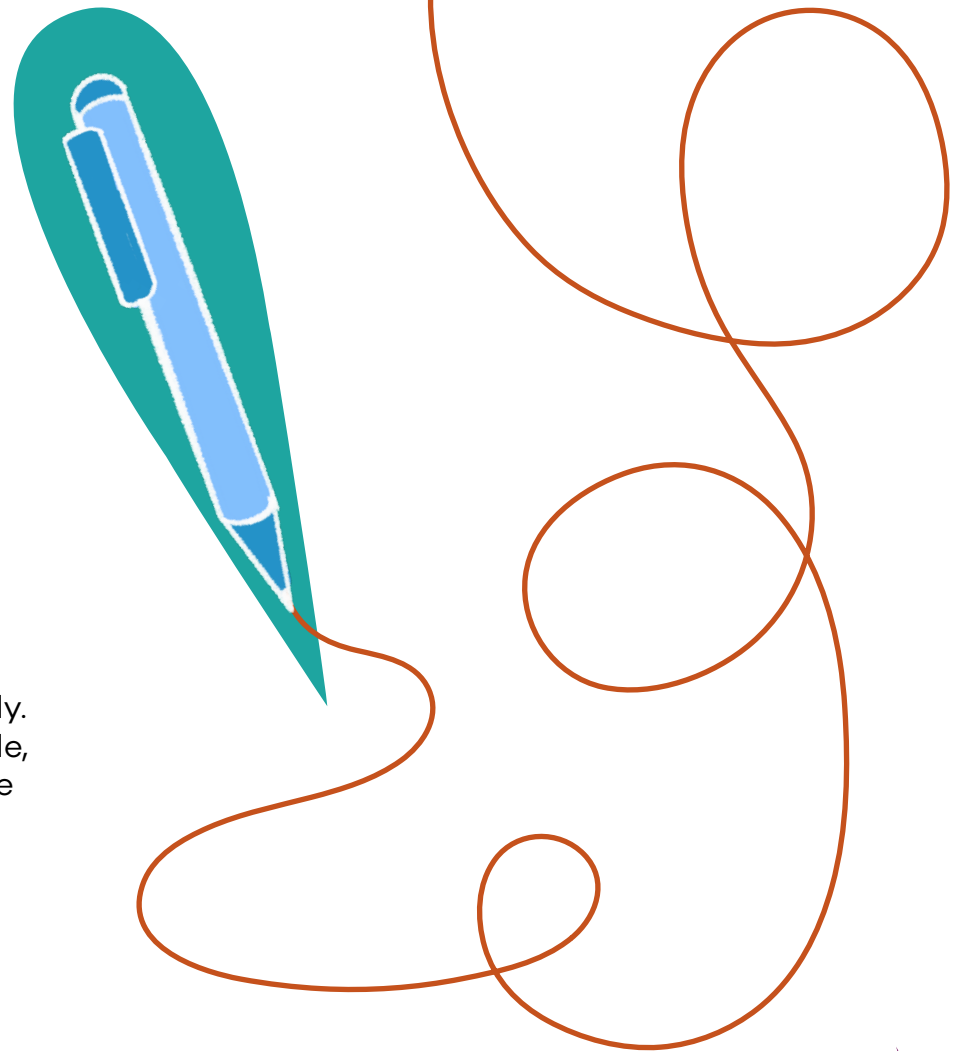
Perform the poem:

- Think about the **feelings associated with this poem**. How do you think the narrator of the poem feels about this moment? What do you think they know or feel about the knights and what they are doing? The poem describes a moment with a great deal of action. How might you bring this to life for an audience? How could you bring them into the scene described?
- Now think about how **you might bring your thoughts and ideas together in a performance of the poem**. How will you bring out the meaning behind the words chosen for the audience watching you? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you pace your performance to bring out the emotion or tell the story? 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!

- Consider **how you might describe a moment in time** in a poem. It might be a historical or fantastical moment as Joseph Coelho did in his poem; it could be based on a moment you have experienced in your own life; it could be based on a moment you can witness right now, staring out of your window.
- Think about **the action and feelings associated with this moment**. Is it fast-paced and action packed like the original poem, or is it something smaller and calmer, like a leaf falling from a tree? What words and phrases might help to describe this for someone else?
- Begin to note down a few words, phrases or lines about the moment, and then look at **how to bring these together in a draft of your own poem to describe this moment** for someone else.
- When you're happy with what you have drafted, **write it out in your best handwriting or type it up** to share with someone else. In your final piece, take care to make sure that every word is spelled correctly. **Watch out for homophones**, which are particularly tricky. For example, if you have chosen to use '**there**', '**their**' or '**they're**', make sure it is the right spelling for the meaning you want for this word. When you've finished, you may also want to **illustrate your poem**.



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

Find and explore more poems 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.