



Taller and older

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 68 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. In this week's Poetry Prompt video, Joseph Coelho explored the idea of growing and getting bigger by writing a poem about turning into a giant! We are all getting bigger every day – we won't turn into giants, of course! – but we do grow taller and older. Here's a poem that reflects on this...

Look at the poem:

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

Last day of school

Come back taller

Come back with a recipe

Come back stronger

Come back with a story

Come back with something found

Come back with a new word

Come back and astound

Come back with the song of a bird

Come back with a friend Come back telling a joke

Come back with a new trend

Come back with a thing fixed that was broke

Come back with a beaten fear

Come back knowing a star

Come back with a sphere

Come back with stuff in a jar

Come back with a leaf

Come back pondering a query

Come back with a new belief

Come back spelling out a theory

Come back with a new taste

Come back smelling a pine cone

Come back with something traced

Come back proud at how you have grown.



Think about the poem:

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

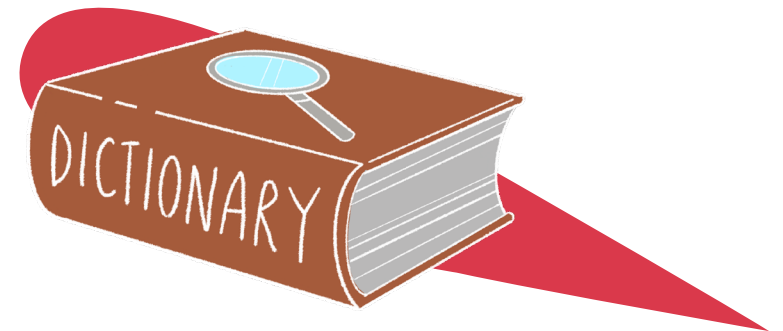
Read the poem once more and think about how it might connect with your own life. Does it remind you of anything that's happened to you, when you have come back to school after the summer holidays? How have you changed over the years that you have been at school? Do you feel different?

Look at the language:

- The poem contains many **verbs that describe actions that a child could come back doing, having done or bringing with them** after the summer holidays. Use a pen or pencil to **underline these**. Can you think of any more things that a child might come back to school doing or bringing with them after a summer break? **Write some of these down.**
- Joseph Coelho has also chosen to use rhyme in this poem. **Using two coloured pens or pencils, underline words that rhyme in the same colour.** What do you notice about the way these words are spelled? Are the spelling patterns in the rhyming parts of the word the same or different? When the rhymes sound the same, but the spelling patterns are different, is there anything that might help you to remember how each word is spelled?

Perform the poem:

- The repetitive structure and the rhyme used in the poem gives the poem a natural rhythm. **Try reading it out loud to feel the rhythm in the words.** You might need to do this a few times to get comfortable with it.
- When you are comfortable with reading the words, start to think about how you might **bring the poem to life for an audience.** How will you use your voice? Will some parts be louder or quieter, higher or lower, faster or slower?
- Consider all 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.** Could your audience sense the rhythm in the poem? What did they think you did that was most effective?



Write your own!

- The repetitive structure of this poem makes it a good model for writing your own poem about how you might grow and change over the summer holidays. **What would you like to come back being, doing, or having after the summer holidays?** You might want to be wiser, be reconnecting with friends, or with a sight or object you experienced or found over the holidays, like a suntan, a pebble or stone you found, or a poem you've written.

- Think about the **different ways that Joseph Coelho started each line:**

Come back _____

Come back with a _____

Come back and _____

- Think about different ways **you could end these lines**, considering your own experiences and aspirations. Remember that some of the lines that start with '**Come back**' have a verb following these words. **Jot these down on a sheet of paper.**
- The original poem **follows an ABAB rhyme structure.** This means that in the four lines of each verse, the alternate lines rhyme with each other. **Start to look at the phrases that you have written down and start to think about making the lines rhyme.** If you already have one thing, like **Come back with hope**, try to think about another thing that might rhyme with hope – **Come back and jump rope.** If coming up with rhyming words is challenging, lots of poets use a rhyming dictionary to support them with this, such as: <https://www.rhymezone.com/>. Try out or look through a range of rhyming words and choose the option that you think best fits your verse. Once you have one set of rhyming lines, think of a second in the same way, then alternate these to make a verse.

- Once you have one verse, have a go at a second and third. The original poem had six verses, which you may want to replicate in your own. **Try to think carefully about the final verse** and what you want to leave your reader feeling afterwards.
- When you have drafted your poem, read it again, thinking about whether you need to add or change anything before **writing it out in your best handwriting or typing it up and performing it for someone else** to hear. What did they like most about your poem? Could they suggest anything to improve it?



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

Find out more about rhyme and other poetic devices 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.