

Poetry Prompts: Week 55

Hintze Hall

This sheet is to accompany Poetry Prompt 55 that features Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022–2024 Joseph Coelho. This week Joseph Coelho was back at the Natural History Museum, visiting the Hintze Hall. The Natural History Museum is a very special place to Joseph, and somewhere he has visited throughout his life. Here is another of his poems, about a very different but equally special place. Think about what the poem tells you about this place 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 Streets Of New Delhi

On the streets of New Delhi
a small brown dog yawns.
The morning light is golden
on the new streets of barking Delhi.

On the streets of New Delhi
an oca seller calls.
With oca as green as grasshopper legs
on the new streets of barking, selling Delhi.

On the streets of New Delhi
a tuk-tuk tarries on a dusty road
thrumming its song
on the new streets of barking, selling, thrumming Delhi.

On the streets of New Delhi
Children giggle in starched school uniforms
chuckling their studies
On the new streets of barking, selling, thrumming, chuckling Delhi.

From *Poems Aloud* by Joseph Coelho
(Wide Eyed Editions, 2020)



Think about the poem:

Consider the poem you just heard or read. Which place is described in the poem? Do you know where in the world this place is? Can you find it on a map or globe?

Re-read the poem again. What images stay in your mind as you read it again? Why do you think this is? What do you know about the place described in the poem? What things happen there? How do you think it feels to be there? Which words or phrases tell you these things?

Look at the language:

- The poem contains many words that are specific to this place, for example words that describe the food and transport found there. **Are there any words that you haven't heard before or that you are unsure of the meaning of?** Use a pen or pencil to underline these. 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>.
- There are lots of verbs in the poem that describe the different actions going on in this place. Can you see these? **Use a pen or pencil to circle any verbs you find.** What kinds of actions are described? How do these words add to your understanding of what it is like to be in this place?

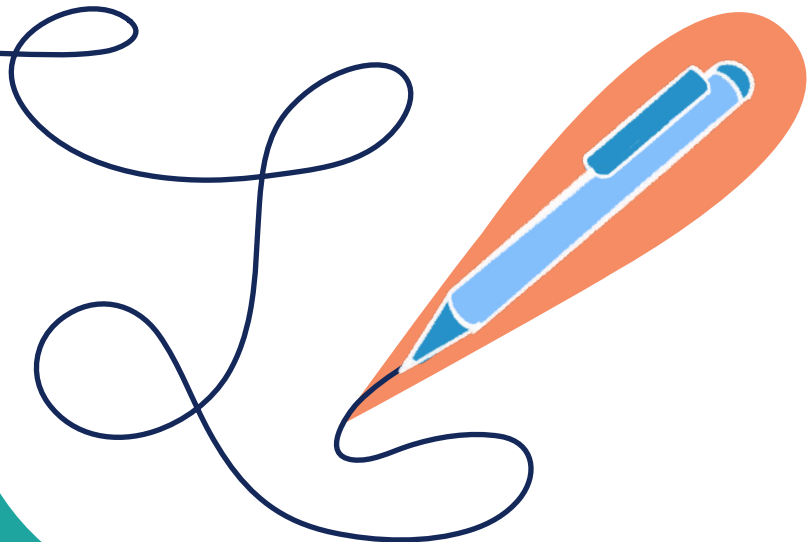
Perform the poem:

- Think about how you might **bring the place described to life in a performance of the poem.** How will you bring out the sights and sounds of the place? How will you capture the feelings of being there and noticing all the different things going on? Will some parts be louder or quieter, faster or slower, higher or lower? How will you pace your performance to bring out the experience of being there? 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 place from the way you performed the poem? What did they think you did that was most effective?



Write your own!

- Is there a **place that you have visited that is special to you?** It could be a place you've visited many times, like a museum or gallery. It might be a new place you have travelled to. It might be your own special place, like your bedroom, your garden or the home of a friend or family member.
- Picture this place in your mind and **write down the things that you associate with it.** Use all of your senses to help you. What can you see, hear, smell? What are you doing in this place? Is there anybody or anything else there with you? What are they doing? How does it feel to be there? **You might want to draw this place or look at a photograph** of it to help you.
- Think about the sights, actions and feelings associated with this place. **What words and phrases might help to describe what it's like to be there for someone else?** You might want to think of different verbs which accurately describe the actions taking place in this place as Joseph did in his poem. Think about how you might describe what it is like to be there without mentioning this directly. If it's a calm, quiet place, how could you describe it? If it's a noisy place, full of action, how might this be different?
- Look back at the things you wrote down about the place and **consider how to paint a picture of this place with your words** in a draft of a poem which describes this place for someone else. You might want to break the poem into verses, with each verse describing something different about the place, switching attention from one thing to the next, as Joseph did in his poem.
- When you're happy with what you have drafted, **write it out in your best handwriting or type it up to share with or perform for someone else.** You could illustrate it too.



Find all Poetry Prompts as well as more information about Joseph Coelho at www.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: www.clpe.org.uk.