

Sea poems

In this example, a poem by James Reeves, the sea is described as a hungry dog:

The sea is a hungry dog,

Giant and **g**rey, (alliteration, where an alphabet sound is repeated)

He rolls on the beach all day.

- Is this how you imagine the sea?
Or can you think of another animal that the sea reminds you of?
- Can you describe the waves using personification?
Try a three line poem like the poem above.

Here is an example:-

'The waves are angry bulls,



rearing and snorting

hurling pebbles onto the shore.

The poem by James Reeves continues the idea of the sea being a hungry dog:

The sea is a hungry dog,
Giant and grey,
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and
shaggy jaws
Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling tumbling stones,
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones!'
The giant sea-dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.



And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and hollos long and loud.



But on a quiet day in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.



In the **first verse**, underline the words that suggest or describe the tide coming in and out and the waves splashing onto the seashore.

In the first verse, the sea is noisy and the waves are crashing onto the shore:

- Can you highlight 5 words that suggest a wild sea?

- Which words in the first verse are **onomatopoeic** ('sound' words): eg 'clashing' and 'rumbling'.

In verse 2, there are more examples of **personification** (giving things human or animal characteristics):

- What noise does the wind make?
What happens to the moon caught in the storm cloud?
- Can you find more examples of **alliteration** in verse 2, where a letter sound is repeated?
- In **verse 3** the sea is much calmer. How does the poet imagine the sea on a calm day?

Alphabet of the Shoreline and Estuary

- Can you complete an alphabet poem like the example below with your class, or a partner, using alliteration?

Artful **anemones** anchored to rocks,
tempting fish to stray near their tentacles

Bendy **barnacles** bonded to rocks
growing prickly shells to protect themselves

C

D

.....

Unusual **urchins** upended on the sea bed
scraping slimy rocks until they're clean



- To help you complete your **alliterative alphabet poem**, look at these pictures as examples of the variety of life that can be found on the seashore or in the Severn Estuary.



Allis Shad



Black Headed Gull



Conger Eel



Lug worm



Oystercatcher



Redshank



Thornback Ray



Whimbrel

- Some of these birds and animals like the ray, lugworm or eel, could be used to write a shape poem.

Haikus

Haikus are three-line poems with a **regular** pattern of syllables.

Poems that have a set pattern of syllables are a good way of giving a 'snapshot' of something. Haikus can sum up an idea, or a subject in just three lines.

Here are two examples of haikus. Haikus do not necessarily have a rhyme scheme but always have a regular pattern of syllables.

The syllable pattern is 5,7,5: Look at the examples and count the syllables.

High tide in autumn; (5 syllables)
Wild waves rearing and crashing (7)
Spilling onto land. (5)

Calm sea, gentle breeze;
Not a ripple to be seen.
Looks like mirrored glass.



- Write your own three-line haiku, using the set number of syllables, 5,7,5 to describe a stormy sea, looking out from Clevedon's seafront or the Marine Lake. These photos show the Marine Lake on a stormy day.



- To prepare, write down 10 (or more) words that fit with a wild, stormy day. Use your word-bank to help you select the words you need for writing your haiku.
- Now try writing a contrasting haiku, using the same view of the Severn Estuary but on a calm day with a flat, quiet sea. To prepare, write down 10 (or more) words that suggest a calm day.

Observing nature lends itself to short poems, like haikus or cinquains. A cinquain is a five-line poem with a set number of syllables in each line.

This '**Sunset**' poem is a cinquain:-

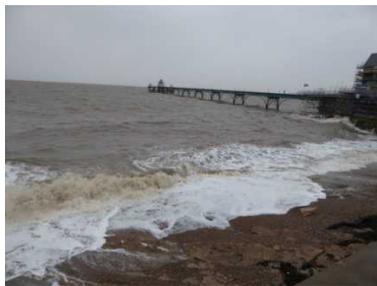
Sunset
over Clevedon
bright orange ball of fire
Slipping beneath the line of sea
and sky.



- How many syllables can you count on each line?
- Work out the pattern of syllables for a cinquain.
- Try writing your own haikus or cinquains based on observations of nature or human activity on the Marine Lake or the seafront of Clevedon. Look at the following pictures for ideas.



Low tide



High tide



canoeing



diving



jumping



swimming



crabbing and fishing



sailing



picnic on the beach



fishing



walking or sitting (Poets' Walk)



bird watching

