



EXPLORING 'WHO?' BY ANNIE FISHER

Resource written by Rachel Piercey

Riddle poems

Annie's poem is part of a long tradition of riddle poems, which describe something without telling us its name. The reader has to guess what, or who, is being described. Some of the earliest poems written in the English language are riddle poems – and scholars are still not entirely sure of many of the answers!

Do your class know any riddles? One of the most famous is 'The Riddle of the Sphinx', well over two thousand years old: "Which creature has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed?" The answer is a human, who crawls on all fours as a baby, then walks on two feet as an adult, and then needs the assistance of a walking stick as they get older.

Riddles like this one take the form of a single sentence – but it still has some of the characteristics of a poem, such as repetition, wordplay and the power of three. Riddle poems have the space to offer lots of different clues, and to make the language interesting, beautiful and memorable.

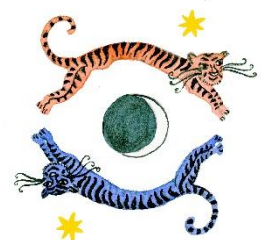
Getting to know the poem

Ask your pupils to sit with their eyes closed and read the poem out loud to them. Stop before the last verse. Who has guessed the creature's identity?

After you have finished, ask them what they thought and which parts stuck in their minds. There are no wrong answers! Display the poem (see below) or hand out individual copies and read it again.

Rhyme scheme

Ask them if they noticed the sounds of the poem. Annie has rhymed the second and third line of most verses. In the first verse, all three lines rhyme, and the last verse is a little different. Annie has had fun inventing her own rhyme scheme – and your poets should feel free to do the same.



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Similes

There is one simile in the poem – can your class pick it out? What does the description of the creature shining “like a sucked sweet” add to the picture they are building in their minds?

As a group, come up with some new similes to describe a slug. Try to make your similes as interesting and inventive as possible! You might like to show them [this video](#) all about slugs, to kickstart ideas.

- Silent like...
- As slow as...
- It moves like...
- For gardeners, they are as scary as...

Poets like to use unusual similes which make the world around us seem surprising and magical. A good simile helps us look at what is being described in a new way.

Clues

Make a list of the types of clues Annie gives us about the creature, e.g. texture (“goo”), movement (“shimmies”, “lurks”), appearance (“shines like a sucked sweet”, “leaves a silvery trail”), habits (laying eggs, consuming plants), reaction from others (“gardeners fear”), what it is not (“grub” etc).

Individual writing

Invite the children to write their own poems, inspired by ‘Who?’. Ask them to choose their own creature and offer a series of clues, inspired by the list above. They could add some more, too – what does their animal sound like? What is its habitat?

Will they invent their own rhyme scheme, follow Annie’s, or not use rhyme at all? It’s up to them!

Encourage them to redraft, scribble out and change things – poets almost never get their poem right first time and their notebooks tend to be very messy! When they’re ready to write it up neatly, you may like to use the print-out template below. What will they choose as their title?

Explain that if you have written a poem inspired by someone else, it’s important to acknowledge them – and the easiest way to do this is with a short line underneath the title (see below).

We would love to see what your pupils come up with! Tag us on Twitter @tygertygermag with a picture, or email us on tygertygermagazine@gmail.com for some personalised feedback.

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after 'Who?' by Annie Fisher

by



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WHO?

by Annie Fisher

Who
has one foot, but no shoe;
is all goo?

Who
shimmies down round your feet;
shines like a sucked sweet?

Who
leaves a silvery signature trail;
is a sort of a snail?

Who
lays five hundred eggs every year;
is the visitor gardeners fear?

Who
will consume
every cauliflower, sprout and legume?

Who
lurks in wet mud;
is not grub, is not beetle or bug?

*That's right,
it's a slug!*

