



## EXPLORING 'THE POND' BY HUGH DUNKERLEY

Key topics: Habitats · Personification · Surprise · Individual writing

*Resource written by Rachel Piercey*

### Getting to know the poem

Ask your pupils to sit with their eyes closed and read the poem out loud to them. Ask them which parts stuck in their minds and why. There are no wrong answers!

Display the poem (see below) or hand out individual copies and read it again. Were some of the objects in the house familiar from their own lives?

Did anything surprise them about the poem? Is this how we normally think of ponds behaving? Poets like to surprise their readers!

### Personification

Hugh personifies the pond by showing that it has human interests and abilities. How would they describe the character and personality of the pond?

Can they relate to the pond's demands? What TV shows do they think the pond would enjoy and why? Can they think of any other water-themed music it might like?

Why do they think Hugh has chosen to end on the image of the "duvet for cold nights"? Does it make us feel empathy for the pond?

### Habitats

A pond is a kind of habitat. Go through the poem and pick out the words that relate to this particular habitat.

On the board, gather a list of other habitats found around the world. For example:

Soil · Sea · River · Desert · Rainforest · Arctic · Antarctic · Grassland · Forest · Tree · Cave · Mountain · Savanna · Swamp · Coral Reef



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## Gathering ideas

As a class, choose one of these habitats together. Then discuss the following questions – the more imaginative the answers, the better!

- The pond “trickles” around the speaker’s house. How would your habitat move if it came inside?
- Where would it go around the home?
- What would it like to play with?
- How would we be able to tell that this habitat had been inside? In Hugh’s poem, the speaker sees snails, tadpoles, a green stain, slimy taps, scattered books, and algae.
- The pond takes a cat to keep prisoner until its demands are met. How would your habitat get the upper hand? Would it take something other than a pet? Would it try a different method of persuasion?
- What would your habitat’s demands be?

## Individual writing

Invite your pupils to choose a habitat from the list on the board and then write their own poem, inspired by ‘The Pond’. They should ask themselves the same questions you went through as a class.

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 'The Pond' by Hugh Dunkerley

by .....





## The Pond

by Hugh Dunkerley

While we were gone today  
the pond, fed up  
with being left outside,  
broke in through the back door.  
It trickled round the house,  
leaving a snail here,  
a tadpole there,  
a green stain on the armchair.  
It must have been in the bath –  
the taps were slimy –  
and Dad's wildlife books  
were all over the floor,  
covered in algae.

What's more, my Xbox  
had been tampered with  
and someone, or *something*,  
had set a record score.

It's back in the garden now,  
but what's more disturbing  
is the message we found  
scrawled on the fridge door:  
*If you want to see the cat again...*  
then a list of demands  
including TV viewing rights,  
holidays abroad,  
a CD of Handel's Water Music  
and a duvet for cold nights.

