



Where do you get your ideas?

How to use the poem by Pie Corbett

Where Do You Get Your Ideas?

Fish for them
in deep pools
search a dark
tree's moon.

Fallen stars
rabbit holes
backs of cars
bell's toll

Window's ledge
river tunes
spider webs
lost runes

Monster lairs
under beds
creaky stairs
inside my head...



Sue Hardy-Dawson

Why I wanted to use this poem

This poem caught my eye as a good way to satisfy children's desire to use rhyme without ruining the effect of the writing. Wenda Davies from Coastlands Primary tried the poem out – moving from reading and discussing into using a simple frame – starting with the first verse using openings such as:

Dive for them
Listen for them
Gather them
Search for them
Seek them
Find them
Capture them

Notice them

Seize them

Grab them

And so on...

Brainstorm places

Then Wenda brainstormed with the class possible places where ideas might be found, e.g. *caves, mineshafts, tunnels, suitcases, castles, dungeons, pockets, eagle's nest, Lobster pot, mole hole, mouse hole, Sunlight, Moonbeam, Planet, inside a Laugh, smile, wish, secret, lie, dream, attic, cellar, blackberry bush, waves, pool, puddle, ocean, rock pool, etc.* Plenty of ideas are needed, remembering that an idea might appear or be found in anything.

Model shared writing

The next stage is to model using shared writing. The first verse has two verbs so begin with one verb from the list above that you've created with the class, e.g. *Find them*. Then write a second line, e.g. *in dungeons deep*. You now have:

Find them

In dungeons deep.

Now add on a second verb, e.g. *Seize them*. The fourth line needs to rhyme with the second so run through some rhyming ideas and be looking out for one that could be used: *deep – sleep, weep, creep, etc.* 'Sleep' is a possibility, e.g.

Find them

in dungeons deep.

Seize them

when fast asleep.

Thereafter, you just need rhyming pairs where the first line rhymes with the third line and the second line rhymes with the fourth line. Choose an idea from the brainstorm and add to each idea so that you only ever have two words together. Start by writing two ideas, keeping to the 'two words' only rule:

Mouse holes,

Eagle's nest,

Then add in the rhyming ideas:

Mouse holes,

eagle's nest,

glowing coals,

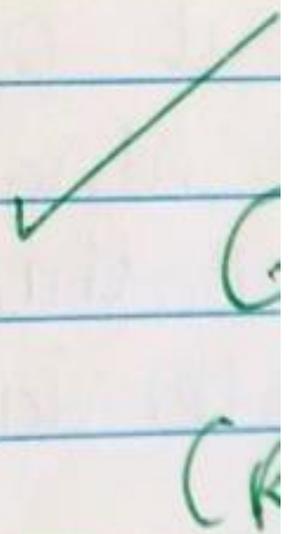
lemon's zest.

As you write, keep rereading to check that the words flow. In the first example, you can see that in verses two and three each line has two words, the first word with two syllables and the second word with one. I wouldn't worry the children about counting syllables but to go for the ideas and rhythm.

Delve for them
in hidden books,
listen to / a gang rooks.

Waters deep
unknown coves
Salmons leap
leazy groves.

Silky Sea's
grasses dew
Summers breeze
pigeons coo.



Where do you get your ideas?

Gather them
in wheat-filled fields
Search an
island filled with seals

People surfing
on the salty sea
Birds flying
through the trees
through

Waves drifting
on the sand
Kids playing
on the sand

Shells cater ^{clatter?}
Waves splatter
All along
the sea shore

Dike for them
in shattered walls
listen to an
echo cake

Shooting Stars
Mole holes
chutney jars
hollow poles

Country lanes
clouds that grin
oak leaf veins
Seeds that spin

jackdaw's wings
Shepherd's shed
ash trees rings
all in my head.