

Poetry Definitions

- imagery - the use of strong language which creates pictures (images) in your mind as you read it. All the uses of language given below may be referred to as imagery, especially simile and metaphor.
- simile - a type of description where a thing or person is compared to something else. It is usually introduced by *like ...* or *as... as ...*, e.g. *The park was as silent as midnight.*
The book spun through the air like a confused spaceship.
- metaphor - in this comparison an object is spoken of as though it *is* something else, even though it is clear that this is not literally true. e.g. *My gran is an absolute diamond.*
Her cutting comments sawed sharply through our conversation.
- personification - a special type of metaphor in which an object is spoken of as though it has human (or sometimes animal) qualities, e.g. *The kettle sang and whistled cheerfully. Poor Adam had been completely swallowed up by a ferocious pile of homework.*
- rhythm - the sound system in poetry or music, created with the use of stressed and unstressed syllables, e.g. *To be or not to be – that is the question.*
Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
- rhyme - two words are said to rhyme when they end with either the same vowel phoneme or the same vowel-plus-consonant pair of phonemes, e.g. *sky/try trap/clap /mishap*
- rhyme scheme - in rhyming poetry the rhymes usually occur at the end of lines. The pattern describing which final words rhyme with which is known as the rhyme scheme and letters of the alphabet are used to denote this, e.g. *ABAB indicates that the 1st and 3rd lines rhyme, so do the 2nd and 4th; ABBACC indicates that the 1st and 4th lines rhyme, so do the 2nd and 3rd, so do the 5th and 6th.*
- alliteration - grouping words together which begin with the same consonant sound(s), e.g. *the murmuring of innumerable men; silent, slippery, slimy slug*
- onomatopoeia - use of a word which makes the sound it describes when it is said, e.g. *crash, whisper, gurgle, whoosh*

The Sea

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 quiet days 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.

James Reeves

Sea-Fever

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown *spume*, and the sea-gulls crying. *foam*

I must go down to the seas again, to the *vagrant* gypsy life, *wandering freely*
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a *whetted* knife; *sharpened*
And all I ask is a merry *yarn* from a laughing fellow-rover, *tale*
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long *trick*'s over. *work, duty*

John Masefield (1878-1967)

Saving Kimmeridge Bay, Dorset by Rachel Jones (aged 9)

I like the cracking, crumbling cliffs,
The glorious sky
And the furious sea
The oily shale that smells when you break it,
The shiny seaweed that smells when you shake it.

I like the glimmering, shimmering rock pools
The racy shrimps
And the lacy fish
The anemones that cling to your fingers
The curious crabs that nibble your fingers

I like the shells that cover the seashore,
The crinkly cockles
And the wrinkly whelks
The barnacles bristling on slate on the seabed
The limpets that stick to the rocks on the seabed

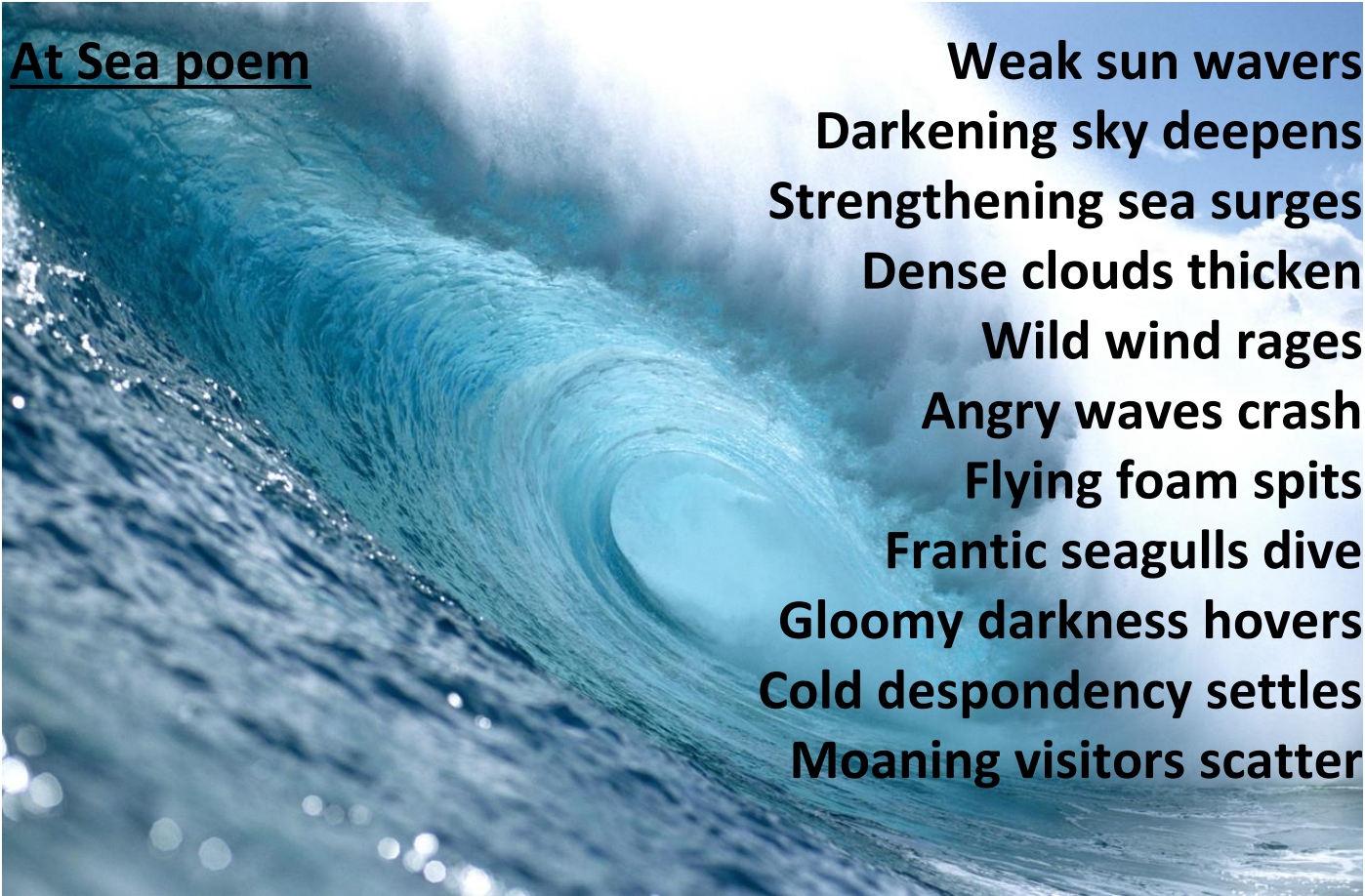
I like the fossils preserved over centuries
The curl of their shape
And the squirl of their shells
The fragile fossils that flake if you tap them
The delicate fossils that snap if you touch them.

I like the colourful boats in the bay
The lazy sea breeze
And the hazy sea sun
The fisherman sitting at work on the shoreline
The yachts out at sea silhouetting the skyline

I would like Kimmeridge kept safe for my children
No drilling for oil
No killing sea life
Keep Kimmeridge protected from deadly pollution
Keep Kimmeridge protected from man's evolution.

(Wednesday)

At Sea poem



**Weak sun wavers
Darkening sky deepens
Strengthening sea surges
Dense clouds thicken
Wild wind rages
Angry waves crash
Flying foam spits
Frantic seagulls dive
Gloomy darkness hovers
Cold despondency settles
Moaning visitors scatter**

At Sea prose narrative

When the weak sun wavered, the sky seemed to darken and take on a deeper colour. The dense clouds thickened and the wild wind raged, causing the waves to leap angrily, spitting out their flying foam. All around, frantic seagulls were diving. A gloomy darkness hovered; as cold despondency began to settle, the moaning visitors scattered in all directions.

Building expanded noun phrases to create evocative writing (Thursday)

- Choose a sentence.
- Think of details to add to the noun to make it evocative (stimulating feelings).
- Add details to build an expanded noun phrase.
- What strong verbs or adverbs could you also add?

The ship sailed away from the island.

Six birds were wheeling above the waves.

The tide was coming in fast covering the sand.

There was only a seal swimming along the coast.

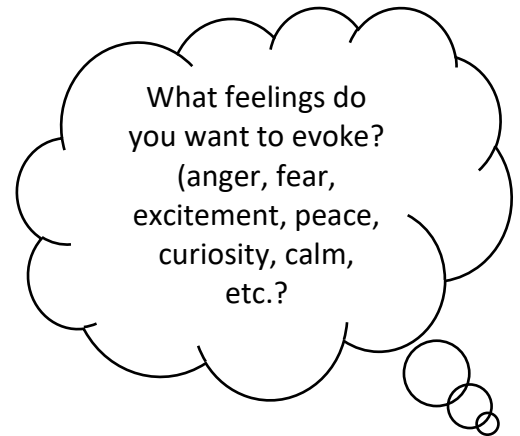
The waves were beating against the bottom of the cliffs.

A line of boats appeared on the horizon.

The tip of the whale's tail disappeared into the water.

The dolphins leapt and dived across the bay.

The ship finally sank below the waves.



Example: *The towering waves, some larger than a house, were beating with the violent anger of an omnipotent sea-god against the foot of the cliffs, more than two hundred metres below the ledge.*

Titanic – some background information (Monday)

Useful websites

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/titanic.htm>

Quite a readable account of what happened on the night of April 14th

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinking_of_the_RMS_Titanic

Usual Wikipedia but has lots of info and links

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1avWJELB9Ek>

Quite a dramatic short (2 minutes) film created to show the Titanic striking the iceberg and sinking.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Titanic

More info of a more general nature

PUT 'sinking of the Titanic' into Google images and get some really good pictures – from the time as well as subsequently produced.

<http://history1900s.about.com/od/1910s/p/titanic.htm> Quite a good lengthy account – fairly readable.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/britain_wwone/titanic_01.shtml THE BEST of the sites in terms of the quality and quantity of information given. REALLY worth a read.

Key FACTS

- ✚ The Titanic was built by White Star and was the largest ship in the world when she was launched in 1912. She was not as grand and bejewelled as her sister ship the Oceana but she had nevertheless many beautifully appointed apartments, ballrooms and restaurants.
- ✚ Titanic was neither the fastest nor the grandest ship of her era. She also had an 'Achilles Heel' in that her rudder was thin and poorly specified. Little thought had been given to how a ship of this size could turn in an emergency or avoid collision with an iceberg.
- ✚ Titanic was not trying to beat the record for an Atlantic Crossing Time, and it is exceedingly unlikely that the Captain – an experienced man – took orders from anyone other than his own judgement on this matter.
- ✚ The Titanic had not enough lifeboats for her passengers and crew. She sank with over 1000 people still on board. She struck the iceberg at 23:40 and sank at 02:20.
- ✚ Captain Smith failed to heed warnings about icebergs, he did not slow his ship when ice was reported directly in his path and he allowed lifeboats to leave the sinking ship partially filled, unnecessarily adding at least 500 names to the list of the dead. The first lifeboat, which could have held 40 people, left the ship in flat calm conditions carrying just 12 people.

Questions about the sinking of the Titanic (Monday)

- When did the Titanic sink?
- How many people were on board?
- What caused the Titanic to sink?
- How long did it take the Titanic to sink?
- What ship came to her rescue? How long did it take to get there?
- Why was the rescue call not more successful?
- What could the captain have done which would have made a difference?
- How could the ship have been built differently so that the tragedy might have been avoided?
- What simple things could have been done on the actual night which would have enabled more people to have been saved?
- Who were the people who were most likely to die on the night of the sinking?
- What world records did the Titanic hold?
- Why did people believe that the Titanic was 'unsinkable'?
- What were the headlines after the disaster?
- What was learned as a result of the disaster?

Notes on reading Convergence of the Twain (Tuesday)

Verse 1:

Remind chn what the Titanic was – and where she is now. She was the largest and grandest ship – everyone was VERY proud about her. They boasted that she was ‘unsinkable’.

Verse 2:

This verse is about the Titanic on the sea bed. ‘Salamandrine’ means being able to resist fire/or capable of living in fire. Pyre – a heap of combustible material/cremation. Lyres is a stringed instrument like a small U shaped harp.

Verse 3:

Explain ‘opulent’ (rich, wealthy, well-endowed). Look at the description of the sea-worms!

Verse 4:

What has happened to the jewels decorating the furniture and the necklaces worn by the ladies on the Titanic – where are these now?

Verse 5:

What are the fish asking? What is this grand and jewelled boat doing down here?

Verse 6:

Well (the poet is about to answer the fishes’ question) ‘Cleaving’ means to split or sever. While the boat was being built, the Immanent Will (Nature or God sent a blind force of fate that generally ruins lives.)

Verse 7:

What was the ‘sinister’ friend that Nature prepared for the Titanic to meet? What does ‘sinister’ mean? Why was the iceberg sinister? What does it mean – ‘far and dissociate’? ‘Dissociate’ is disconnected or separate.

Verse 8:

As the ship was being built and finished, so the iceberg was, far away, growing as well. Look at the power of the words ‘In shadowy silent distance...’

Verse 9:

‘Mortal’ in this context means ‘human’. The Titanic and the Iceberg seemed to have nothing to do with each other and no human could see how they would ever be joined (intimate welding).

Verse 10:

Explain ‘were bent’ and ‘paths coincident’. Ask chn what they think an ‘august’ event means? (Famous, earth-shattering) ‘Anon’ means soon or shortly.

Verse 11:

‘Spinner of Years’ is God or Fate – so fate speaks and says ‘NOW’ and the consummation (ending

like an ending of a film) arrives (i.e. the iceberg crashes into the Titanic). Explain what is meant by 'jars two hemispheres' as two halves of the earth (America and Europe).

The Convergence of the Twain (Tuesday)

(Lines on the loss of the Titanic)

I

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thread, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls – grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: 'What does this vain gloriousness down here?'

VI

Well: while was fashioning

This creature of cleaving wing
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate
For her – so gaily great –
A shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be:
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event.

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said 'Now!' And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

Impressions of the Titanic sinking

The Titanic was touted as the safest ship ever built, so safe that she carried only 20 lifeboats - enough to provide accommodation for only half her 2,200 passengers and crew. This discrepancy rested on the belief that since the ship's construction made her "unsinkable," her lifeboats were necessary only to rescue survivors of other sinking ships. Additionally, lifeboats took up valuable deck space.

Four days into her journey, at 11:40 P.M. on the night of April 14, she struck an iceberg. Her fireman compared the sound of the impact to "the tearing of calico, nothing more." However, the collision was fatal and the icy water soon poured through the ship.

It became obvious that many would not find safety in a lifeboat. Each passenger was issued a life jacket but life expectancy would be short when exposed to water four degrees below freezing. As the forward portion of the ship sank deeper, passengers scrambled to the stern. John Thayer witnessed the sinking from a lifeboat. "We could see groups of the almost fifteen hundred people still aboard, clinging in clusters or bunches, like swarming bees; only to fall in masses, pairs or singly, as the great after part of the ship, two hundred and fifty feet of it, rose into the sky, till it reached a sixty-five or seventy degree angle." The great ship slowly slid beneath the waters two hours and forty minutes after the collision.

The next morning, the liner *Carpathia* rescued 705 survivors. One thousand five hundred twenty-two passengers and crew were lost. Subsequent inquiries attributed the high loss of life to an insufficient number of lifeboats and inadequate training in their use.

Here is a survivor's account

Elizabeth Shutes, aged 40, was governess to nineteen-year-old Margaret Graham who was traveling with her parents. As they sit in their First Class cabin they feel a shudder travel through the ship. At first comforted by her belief in the safety of the ship, Elizabeth's composure is soon shattered by the realisation of the imminent tragedy: "Suddenly a queer quivering ran under me, apparently the whole length of the ship. Startled by the very strangeness of the shivering motion, I sprang to the floor. With too perfect a trust in that mighty vessel I again lay down. Someone knocked at my door, and the voice of a friend said: 'Come quickly to my cabin; an iceberg has just passed our window; I know we have just struck one.'

No confusion, no noise of any kind, one could believe no danger imminent. Our stewardess came and said she could learn nothing. Looking out into the companionway I saw heads appearing asking questions from half-closed doors. All sepulchrally still, no excitement. I sat down again. My friend was by this time dressed; still her daughter and I talked on, Margaret pretending to eat a sandwich. Her hand shook so that the bread kept parting company from the chicken. Then I saw she was frightened, and for the first time I was too, but why get dressed, as no one had given the slightest hint of any possible danger? An officer's cap passed the door. I asked: 'Is there an accident or danger of any kind?' 'None, so far as I know', was his courteous answer, spoken quietly and most kindly. This same officer then entered a cabin a little distance down the companionway and, by this time distrustful of everything, I listened intently, and distinctly heard,

'We can keep the water out for a while.' Then, and not until then, did I realize the horror of an accident at sea. Now it was too late to dress; a coat and skirt were soon on; slippers were quicker than shoes; the stewardess put on our life-preservers, and we were just ready when Mr Roebing came to tell us he would take us to our friend's mother, who was waiting above.

No laughing throng, but on either side [of the staircases] stand quietly, bravely, the stewards, all equipped with the white, ghostly life-preservers. Always the thing one tries not to see even crossing a ferry. Now only pale faces, each form strapped about with those white bars. So gruesome a scene. We passed on. The awful good-byes. The quiet look of hope in the brave men's eyes as the wives were put into the lifeboats. Nothing escaped one at this fearful moment. We left from the sun deck, seventy-five feet above the water. Mr Case and Mr Roebing, brave American men, saw us to the lifeboat, made no effort to save them- selves, but stepped back on deck. Later they went to an honoured grave.



Two lifeboats approach
the *Carpathia* April 15, 1912

Our lifeboat, with thirty-six in it, began lowering to the sea. This was done amid the greatest confusion. Rough seamen all giving different orders. No officer aboard. As only one side of the ropes worked, the lifeboat at one time was in such a position that it seemed we must capsize in mid-air. At last the ropes worked together, and we drew nearer and nearer the black, oily water. The first touch of our lifeboat on that black sea came to me as a last good-bye to life, and so we put off - a tiny boat on a great sea - rowed away from what had been a safe home for five days.

The first wish on the part of all was to stay near the *Titanic*. We all felt so much safer near the ship. Surely such a vessel could not sink. I thought the danger must be exaggerated, and we could all be taken aboard again. But surely the outline of that great, good ship was growing less. The bow of the boat was getting black. Light after light was disappearing, and now those rough seamen put to their oars and we were told to hunt under seats, any place, anywhere, for a lantern, a light of any kind. Every place was empty. There was no water - no stimulant of any kind. Not a biscuit - nothing to keep us alive had we drifted long...

Sitting by me in the lifeboat were a mother and daughter. The mother had left a husband on the *Titanic*, and the daughter a father and husband, and while we were near the other boats those two stricken women would call out a name and ask, 'Are you there?' 'No ' would come back the awful answer, but these brave women never lost courage, forgot their own sorrow, telling me to sit close to them to keep warm... The life-preservers helped to keep us warm, but the night was bitter cold, and it grew colder and colder, and just before dawn, the coldest, darkest hour of all, no help seemed possible...

...The stars slowly disappeared, and in their place came the faint pink glow of another day. Then I heard, 'A light, a ship.' I could not, would not, look while there was a bit of doubt, but kept my eyes away. All night long I had heard, 'A light!' Each time it proved to be one of our other lifeboats, someone lighting a piece of paper, anything they could find to burn, and now I could not believe. Someone found a newspaper; it was lighted and held up. Then I looked and saw a ship. A ship bright with lights; strong and steady she waited, and we were to be saved. The two, the ship and the dawn, came together, a living painting."

Planning my poem (Thursday)

Whose point of view will I take?

A survivor

A relative of someone who died

A star shining down who sees it all

A person who drowned

A crew member

A passenger

A person writing after the event (like Hardy)

The iceberg

What feelings do I want to convey?

Terror

Confusion

Panic

Sorrow

Regret

Sadness

Anger

Frustration

Bitterness

Disbelief

Thoughtfulness

Resignation

What images do I want to describe?

Interesting opening clauses

Strange and astonishingly wonderful, the iceberg...

Use these openers to give you ideas for your own writing.
Don't just copy!

Turning like a giant spinner, the great ship sank...

Gasping for breath, the lifeboat rowers...

Bearing down on me like a gigantic mountain, the ship...

Silent, sinister and unstoppable...

Freezing, bitter-frost biting, the ice-laden sea...

Polishing your Poem

Your poem is more or less finished but there are still some things you can do to make sure it's perfect. Work your way through this list and make the changes needed to ensure it's the best poem ever!

- Make sure your poem is set out in lines. If you need a new line anywhere, mark the place where the new line should start //
- Read it through to check it makes sense.
- See whether your poem would sound better if you change the order of any words or lines.
- Do any words or phrases sound a bit ordinary? Try to replace them with more original words.
- Now read your poem to a friend – or let them read it quietly. Do they understand it all? Ask whether they think everything is clear and original.
- Read it again for one final check. Everything great now? Good! Then you're ready to:

✚ Ensure that each line starts with a capital letter.

✚ Think about where you need punctuation and what you will need. Usually, punctuation in poetry is used like punctuation anywhere else.

✚ Check there are no spelling mistakes. If in doubt, get the dictionary out!

✚ Now it's perfect, are you going to write or type your final best version?

✚ If you're typing, use a suitable program and make sure your poem is well set out on the page. Choose a sensible colour and font.

✚ If you're writing, choose a good pen and use a line guide to keep your work straight. Think about space, and aim to have an even-sized border around your work. Copy accurately – you've checked spellings, so don't get them wrong again!