

Key Stage 1-2

THE SEA SAYS

What messages are being carried in by the tide?

A Bay In Anglesey

The sleepy sound of a tea-time tide
Slaps at the rocks the sun has dried,

Too lazy, almost, to sink and lift
Round low peninsulas pink with thrift.

The water, enlarging shells and sand,
Grows greener emerald out from land

And brown over shadowy shelves below
The waving forests of seaweed show.

Here at my feet in the short cliff grass
Are shells, dried bladderwrack, broken glass,

Pale blue squills and yellow rock roses.
The next low ridge that we climb discloses

One more field for the sheep to graze
While, scarcely seen on this hottest of days,

Far to the eastward, over there,
Snowdon rises in pearl-grey air.

Multiple lark-song, whispering bents,
The thymy, turfy and salty scents

And filling in, brimming in, sparkling and free
The sweet susurrations of incoming sea.

by John Betjeman



Founded in 2006 to mark the centenary of the former Poet Laureate John Betjeman's birth, the Betjeman Poetry Prize aims to foster creativity in young people whilst discovering and encouraging the next generation of British poets.

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This poem is a tongue twister.

Everybody in the class read it out loud together.

Then each student choose a colour.

Teacher, you could ask who chooses **pink**?
Who chooses **green**? etc. **Pink, Green, Brown,**
Pale blue, Yellow, Pearl-grey.

In six groups (one for each colour) discuss why you chose the colour you did, and discuss the meanings of (without looking them up) of PENINSULA, BLADDERWRACK, SQUILLS, THYMY, TURFY AND SUSURATION.

These words can mean anything you want them to mean.

Shut your eyes and listen to your teacher reading the poem again.

Imagine being on the cliff, watching the tide coming in.
On the incoming tide there is a dark green bottle and inside the bottle is a message written on a piece of folded paper.

Now everyone take a pen and paper and ready, steady, go write for a 5 minute burst to the prompt of MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE.

Who is the message addressed to?

What does the message say?

If you can't think of anything to write just keep writing *the sea says, the sea says, the sea says* until your pen starts writing and the message is revealed.

Stop when the 5 minutes are up.

Then, if you have time, go round the class and read out what you have written.

The expressive writing doesn't have to be a poem.

It is just a response to the smells, sensations and colours of this poem.

After the class, fold up your piece of paper and keep it safe.

Look at it a week later.

What does the message say to you now?