

Scary Poems

Richard Edwards and Clive Webster

Text in a nutshell

These two poems are linked by the idea of imaginary or mysterious creatures that are frightening. They have similar tones and rhyming patterns but 'The Grobbles' is far more abstract as the creature itself is not really described. 'Our Pond' is based more in context, with the 'monster' lurking in a pond. Whether either creature really exists is up to the reader to decide!

Curriculum coverage

Spoken language

- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings.

Reading

- recognising simple recurring literary language in stories and poetry
- explaining and discussing their understanding of books, poems and other material
- discussing and clarifying the meanings of words, linking new meanings to known vocabulary.

Writing

- writing poetry
- writing down ideas and/or key words, including new vocabulary.

Assessment guidance

Spoken language

- Expectation: discuss a range of opinions and feelings; understand the language of reasoning
- Extension: recognise alternative opinions and feelings; use the language of reasoning.

Reading

- Expectation: recognise features of poems; compare different poems
- Extension: explain the effect of features of poems; describe emotional responses to poetry.

Writing

- Expectation: copy the style of a poem; create a narrative based on a given character
- Extension: experiment with different forms of poetry; write engaging narratives; develop a given character.

The main **assessable element** foci are: **1C1, 1Lfe1**.

Speak up! Guidance

This question allows the children to explore the concept of fear and how universal it is. They might consider how fears change with age. Encourage them to consider the term 'everyone', and to use the language of reasoning, e.g. everyone, some people, no one.

Prompt questions:

What makes some things frightening?
If you have a fear now, will you always have it?
Is it possible to fear nothing?

Teaching guidance and answers

Comprehension answers

1. Afraid, suspicious, disgusted.
2. It used to be clean and full of plants and fish. Now it is murky and full of mysterious creatures.
3. Answers may vary: it has been neglected; change of season; the 'shape from the ooze' has eaten the fish and polluted the pond.
4. Some kind of unpleasant creatures.
5. It means to eat or gobble up. Evidence includes:
'Teeth and gums
You'll soon be grobbled
Down their tums.'
6. Answers may vary. It is a made-up word that sounds horrid; it sounds like 'gobble'; it sounds mysterious; it is onomatopoeic.
7. Answers may vary: scared; disgusted; nervous.
8. Answers will vary but should refer specifically to the poems.

Reading activity answers

- 1 Answers will vary but may include: they both rhyme; they are both about mysterious creatures; both contain lots of adjectives.
- 2 Answers will vary but may include: use of stanzas; length of lines; rhythm; type of language.

Writing task guidance

- 1 This task requires the children to mimic the style of a poem they have read, but to create their own subject for the poem.
 - a. Ask the children to highlight what the poems tell us about the thing in the pond and the Grobbles. Sort the information: where it lives; what it looks like; how it makes people feel; what it does.
 - b. Ask the children to design their own frightening creature. They might draw it and add annotations with the same information that was included in the poems they have read.
 - c. Some children may choose to copy the structure and rhyme pattern of a poem they have read. Others may extend themselves to try something different. Encourage them to explain why they chose to write in the way that they did.
- 2 This task requires the children to adapt to a narrative style but to take an idea from the poem they have read and develop it further.
 - a. Ask the children to identify what they know about the 'shape from the ooze'. Discuss what they think it might be. *What could it be in a new story?*
 - b. The children should plan their story in a way of their choosing: a mind map, story mountain, comic strip, etc.
 - c. Some children may base their story on what has already happened in the poem. Others may extend themselves and create a completely new story about this creature. They may create a backstory, and its being in the pond could be the end of the story.
- 3 This task requires the children to combine their inferences from the text with their imagination.
 - a. Discuss what is already known about the Grobbles. Ask the children to write some questions to which they cannot find the answers in the poem. Work together to create possible answers.
 - b. Each child could draw how they imagine a Grobbly would look.
 - c. Before writing, decide what will be included in the fact file. Look at animal fact files from reference books to gather some ideas. It might include size, habitat, life expectancy, diet, special abilities, dangers, and so on.

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'Our Pond' by Richard Edwards

The pond in our garden
Is murky and deep
And lots of things live there
That slither and creep.

Like diving bell spiders
And great rams-horn snails
And whirligig beetles
And black snappertails.

There used to be goldfish
That nibbled my thumb,
But now there's just algae
And sour, crusty scum.

There used to be pondweed
With fizzy green shoots,
But now there are leeches
And horrible newts.

One day when my football
Rolled in by mistake
I tried to retrieve it
By using a rake,
But as I leaned over
A shape from the ooze
Bulged up like a nightmare
And lunged at my shoes.

I ran back in shouting,
But everyone laughed
And said I was teasing
Or else I was daft.

But I know what happened
And when I'm asleep
I dream of those creatures
That slither and creep:

The diving bell spiders
And great rams-horn snails
And whirligig beetles
And black snappertails.



'The Grobbles' by Clive Webster

Up and down
And round and round
The Grobbles grobble
O'er the ground,
Waiting, waiting,
Set to spring
On some poor
Unsuspecting thing.
Be it child
Or dog or cat
The Grobbles grob it
Just like that.
Gobble gobble
Gobble gobble
You'll go all weak
Your legs will wobble,
Your skin will sweat
Your heart will pound
As groobs of Grobbles
Gather round.
Gobble gobble
Teeth and gums
You'll soon be grobbled
Down their tums.
So little one
Beware, beware,
The Grobbles are
Just lurking there
For little children
Just like you
Who think that Grobbles
Can't be true,
But, oh, they can
My little one,
Just one quick gobble –
THEN YOU'RE GONE!





Comprehension questions

1. How do you think the writer of 'Our Pond' feels about the pond in his garden?
2. How has the pond changed?
3. Why do you think it has changed?
4. What do you think 'Grobbles' are?
5. What might 'gobble' mean?
6. Why do you think the poet chose to call these creatures 'Grobbles'?
7. How might some readers feel when they read 'The Grobbles'?
8. Which poem do you prefer, and why?



Reading activities

1

Find three things that are similar about these two poems.

2

Find three things that are different about these two poems.



Writing tasks

1

'The Grobbles' is a poem about imaginary scary creatures. Write your own poem about an imaginary creature.

2

Write a story about the 'shape from the ooze' in the poem 'Our Pond'.

3

Write a fact file about Grobbles. What are they? What do they look like? What do they eat? Where do they live? Illustrate it to show what Grobbles look like.



Speak up!

Discuss the question together:

Is everyone afraid of something?