

CHAPTER 3:

The Natural World

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3.1 Short Story: *The Wave* by Liam O'Flaherty

Learning Intentions

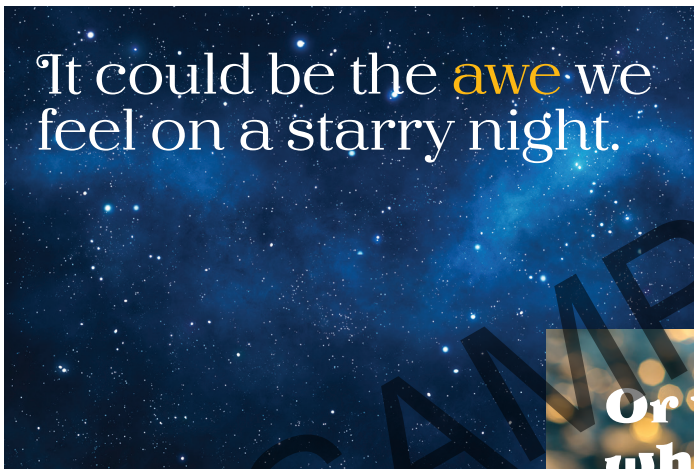
In this section you will ...

- ✓ Write an anecdote.
- ✓ Develop your understanding of descriptive writing.

Before Reading



Nature has the power to inspire, delight and terrify us. We have all seen incidents in the natural world which have evoked strong emotions. See the examples below.



Write a 50-word anecdote about a time when nature inspired, delighted or terrified you.

Reading

You are about to read a short story called *The Wave* by Irish writer Liam O'Flaherty. This story is unusual because there are no humans in it. Instead, the author describes a wave crashing into a cliff.

You should read this story at least twice.

1. On the **first reading** try to visualise (see) **the battle between the wave and the cliff**.
2. On the **second reading**, underline or take notes of the words 'wave' and 'cliff' as you read. What effect does the author's repeated use of these words have on his description of the scene?

THE WAVE

by *Liam O'Flaherty*



The cliff was two hundred feet high. It sloped outwards from its grassy summit, along ten feet of brown gravel, down one hundred and seventy feet of grey limestone, giant slabs piled horizontally with large slits between the slabs where sea-birds nested. The outward slope came to a round point twenty feet from the base and there the cliff sank inwards, making a dark cavern along the cliff's face into the bowels of the earth. At the mouth, the cavern was twenty feet high and at the rear its roof touched its floor, a flat rock that stretched from the base of the cliff to the sea. The cavern had a black-slate roof and at the rear there was a large streak of yellow gravel. The cliff was semi-circular. And at each corner a black jagged reef jutted from its base out into the sea. Between the reefs there was a little cove. But the sea did not reach to the semicircle of the cliff. Only its waves swept up from the deep over the flat rock to the cliff. The sea had eaten up the part of the cliff that rested on that semicircle of flat rock, during thousands of years of battle. It was nearly high tide. But the sea moved so violently that the two reefs bared with each receding wave until they seemed

to be long shafts of black steel sunk into the bowels of the ocean. Their thick manes of red seaweed were sucked stiff by each fleeing wave. The waves came towering into the cove across both reefs, confusedly, meeting midway in the cove, chasing one another, climbing over one another's backs, spitting savage columns of green and white water vertically, when their arched manes clashed. In one monstrous stride they crossed the flat rock. Then with a yawning sound they swelled up midway in the cliff. There was a mighty roar as they struck the cliff and rebounded. Then they sank again, dishevelled masses of green and white, hurrying backward. They rose and fell from the bosom of the ocean, like the heavy breathing of a gluttonous giant. Then the tide reached its highest point and there was a pause. The waves hardly made any noise as they struck the cliff, and they drivelled backwards slowly. The trough of the sea between the reefs was convulsing like water in a shaken glass. The cliff's face was black, drenched with brine, that streamed from its base, each tiny rivulet noisy in the sudden silence.

Then the silence broke. The sea rushed back. With the speed and motion of a bladder bursting it sprang backwards. Then it rose upwards in a concave wall, from reef to reef, across the cove, along whose bottom the slimy weeds of the ocean depths were visible through the thin sheet of water left to cover the sea's nakedness by the fury of the rising wave. For a moment the wave stood motionless, beautifully wild and immense. Its base in front was ragged uneven and scratched with white foam, like the debris strewn around a just-constructed pyramid. Then a belt of dark blue ran from end to end across its face, sinking inwards in a perfect curve. Then came a wider belt, a green belt peppered with white spots. Then the wave's head curved outwards, arched like the neck of an angry swan. That curved head was a fathom deep, of a transparent green, with a rim of milky white. And to the rear, great lumps of water buttressed it, thousands of tons of water in each lump. The wave advanced, slowly at first, with a rumbling sound. That awful mass of water advanced simultaneously from end to end of its length without breaking a ripple on its ice-smooth breast. But from its summit a shower of driven foam arose, from east to west, and fell backwards on to the shoulders of the sea, that came behind the wave in mountains pushing it to the cliff. The giant cliff looked small in front of that moving wall of blue and green and white water. Then there was a roar. The wave sprang upwards to its full height. Its crest broke and points of water stuck out, curving downwards like fangs. It seemed to bend its head as it hurled forward to ram the cliff. In a moment the wave and the cliff had disappeared in a tumbling mass of white water that yawned and hissed and roared. The whole semicircle of the cliff vanished in the white water and the foam mist that rose above it blotting out the sky. Just for one moment it was thus. In another moment the broken wave had fallen, flying to the sea in a thousand rushing fragments. The cliff appeared again. But a great black mouth had opened in its face, at the centre, above the cavern. The cliff's face stood ajar, as if it yawned, tired of battle. The mouth was vertical in the cliff, like a ten-foot wedge stuck upwards from the edge of the cavern. Then the cliff tried to close the mouth. It pressed in on it from either

side. But it did not close. The sides fell inwards and the mouth grew wider. The whole centre of the cliff broke loose at the top and swayed forward like a tree being felled. There was a noise like rising thunder. Black dust rose from the tottering cliff through the falling foam of the wave. Then with a soft splash the whole centre of the cliff collapsed into the cavern. The sides caved in with another splash. A wall of grey dust arose shutting out everything. The rumbling of moving rocks came through the cloud of dust. Then the cloud rose and went inland. The cliff had disappeared. The land sloped down to the edge of the cove. Huge rocks stood awkwardly on the very brink of the flat rock, with the rim of the sea playing between them. Smoke was rising from the fallen cliff. And the wave had disappeared. Already another one was gathering in the cove.

After Reading



Check your understanding

1. Summarise, in no more than five bullet points, the main events of this story.
2. What do you think is the most dramatic moment in this story? **REEL**



Personal response

1. Did you enjoy reading this short story? Give reasons for your answer. **REEL**
2. 'Including a couple of interesting characters would make this an even better story.' Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement. **REEL**

SHORT STORY TECHNIQUES

Descriptive Writing Techniques (1)

Writing that captures feelings, events and atmosphere is known as descriptive writing. Novels and short stories use descriptive writing to make characters, setting and storylines more vivid for readers. Here are five ways you can make your writing descriptive:

1. **Choose words carefully:** Verbs and adjectives are the starting point of strong descriptive writing. Pick words that make an impact and bring variety to your writing.
2. **Senses:** Use the five senses to make a reader feel like they are at the scene you are describing.
3. **Detail:** Work hard to spot the things that no one else does and point them out to your reader.
4. **Sentences:** Change them up. Long sentences are good for detailed description, while short ones are good for emphasis and impact. Use a mixture of both to keep your work feeling fresh and interesting.
5. **Poetic techniques:** Use alliteration, metaphor, personification, repetition, simile and other poetic techniques to make your descriptions truly memorable.

Read the first paragraph of *The Wave* again. Highlight any of the five descriptive writing techniques outlined above that appear in the paragraph.



Create

Write a short story that doesn't have any humans in it. The author of *The Wave* used **a wave** and **a cliff**. What will you use? Use some or all of the five descriptive writing techniques on page 99 to help you bring your story to life. Swap your stories with other students.



Success Criteria:

- I have made a plan for my story.
- I am using descriptive writing techniques.
- There aren't any humans in my story.
- My story is broken up into paragraphs.

3.2 Poem: *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* by William Wordsworth

Learning Intentions

In this section you will ...

- ✓ Read a poem about the helpful force of nature.
- ✓ Write an email based on the poem.
- ✓ Revise personification and use this technique to form sentences.

Before Reading and Listening

Think Pair Share

For many people, nature is a kind of *cure* for loneliness, sadness or boredom. Going for a walk in nature can help people connect to the world around them, lift their spirits or simply get them thinking and feeling well.

Think:	Take one minute to think about a place you go to clear your head and relax.
Pair:	Share your information with the person next to you and discuss your responses.
Share:	Be ready to tell the class about the places which are helpful to you.

Reading and Listening

DEFINITION

Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human.

You are going to read the poem *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* by William Wordsworth. The poet remembers an occasion when he felt lonely and sad – until his spirits were lifted when he saw daffodils beside a lake.

You should read/listen to this poem at least **three** times.

1. **The first time**, listen to an actor reading the poem and consider your response to this poem – what do you like or not like about it?
Link: [I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud](#)
Search Terms: Daffodils Ralph Fiennes
2. **Your second reading** should be done silently. Underline or take note of any examples of personification in this poem.
3. **Now, read it a third time.** Can you spot an example of 'reverse' personification in the first verse – where the poet gives himself the characteristics of the natural world?
4. What do you think the poet was trying to do in this poem, by giving human qualities to the natural world, and 'natural' qualities to the human world?

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

After Reading and Listening



Check your understanding

1. How does the poet feel in the opening two lines of the poem? And what, in the rest of the opening stanza, changes how he feels?
2. Write down two images of the daffodils that the poet creates in the second stanza.
3. In the third stanza, what does the poet say he did not think about enough?
4. How does the memory of seeing the daffodils help the poet when he feels down?



Personal response

1. The poem *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* is often known by another name – *Daffodils*. Which title do you prefer and why?
2. Did you enjoy this poem? Your answer should refer to at **least three** of the following poetic techniques: repetition, simile, tone, imagery, theme, personification. **REEL**



Create

The local council has given permission to a developer to build 100 new houses on the land where Wordsworth saw his daffodils. Write an email to the council, explaining why you think the houses should be built or why you think the place of natural beauty should be preserved.



Success Criteria:

- I am following the format of an email.
- I am using formal language.
- I am referring to the poem (this can be in detail or just in passing).



Build your vocabulary

Using personification, in your copybook, write out a sentence for each of the following objects. The first one is done for you.



Example:

Shopping trolley:

The shopping trolley *groaned* under the weight of the groceries.



1. Kettle:



2. Car engine:



3. Fridge:



4. Tree:



5. Mobile phone:

3.3 Poem: *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening* by Robert Frost

Learning Intentions

In this section you will ...

- ✓ Learn about rhyming schemes in poetry.
- ✓ Create a verse of poetry using a rhyming scheme.

POETRY TECHNIQUES

Rhyming scheme

The pattern of rhyme that comes at the end of each line or stanza is known as the **rhyming scheme**. There are many different types of rhyming scheme. The rhyming scheme of a poem is usually shown by placing letters at the end of each line. Lines that rhyme have the same letter at the end in brackets. See below:

Example:

Twinkle, twinkle little star (A)

How I wonder what you are (A)

Up above the world so high (B)

Like a diamond in the sky (B)

We can say that 'Twinkle, twinkle...' has an **AABB** rhyming scheme. This is because the words at the end of lines one and two rhyme with each other, as do the words at the end of lines three and four. We use the letters **A, B, C**, etc. to show which lines rhyme with each other.

Before Reading and Listening

Look at the image which accompanies this poem. What does it make you think the poem is going to be about? Discuss this with your class.



Reading and Listening

You are going to listen to and read the poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* by Robert Frost. In this poem a tired traveller stops in the woods to admire the falling snow – which leads to questions about whether the person would be happier in nature, or back in society.

1. **Cover the poem.** Listen to the poet reading it twice or listen to your teacher reading it.

Link: [Robert Frost reads Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening](#) (00.28 – 1.15)

Search Terms: Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening Robert Frost

2. Write down everything you remember from this poem: images, rhymes, or simply words you liked the sound of.
3. Compare what you have written down with a partner.
4. Uncover the poem and read the poem silently.
5. How much of the poem did you manage to capture while listening to your teacher/ the poet reading it?

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

After Reading and Listening



Check your understanding

1. Write down two things the speaker is doing in the first stanza of the poem.
2. When is 'the darkest evening of the year'?
3. How does the speaker's horse indicate that stopping in the woods is unusual for them?
4. How does the speaker feel in the final stanza of the poem?
5. Do you think the speaker prefers to be in the woods, or in the village?



Rhyming schemes

The **ABAB** rhyming scheme is where the ending words of lines one and three (A) rhyme with each other and the ending words of lines two and four (B) rhyme with each other.

The **AABB** rhyming scheme is where the ending words of the first two lines (A) rhyme with each other and the ending words of the last two lines (B) rhyme with each other.

1. Working with a partner, work out the rhyming scheme for each of the two verses below.

<p><i>Out of the night that covers me, Black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be For my unconquerable soul.</i></p> <p><i>Invictus</i> by William Ernest Henley</p>	<p><i>The tree that never had to fight For sun and sky and air and light, But stood out in the open plain And always got its share of rain, Never became a forest king But lived and died a scrubby thing.</i></p> <p><i>Good Timber</i> by Douglas Malloch</p>
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2. Write out the rhyming scheme for *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* using the letters **A, B, C**, etc. to show which lines rhyme with each other. What makes the fourth stanza different to the others? What effect does this have on the meaning of the poem?



Create

Write a verse of poetry using a rhyming scheme. You can use simple rhyming schemes such as AABB or ABAB or you can try something more complicated, like the one used in Robert Frost's poem. Have fun with your poems!



Success Criteria:

- I am writing a verse of poetry.
- I am using a rhyming scheme.

3.4 Poem: *Magnifying Glass* by Tim Seibles

Learning Intentions

In this section you will ...

- ✓ Learn about free-verse poetry.
- ✓ Learn about the speaker in poetry.

DEFINITION

Free verse is a form of poetry which follows the rhythm of natural speech. **Free verse** doesn't have a rhyme or particular rhythm.

The speaker of a poem is the voice behind the poem – the person we imagine saying the poem out loud. **The speaker** is often the poet, but sometimes the poet creates a character who becomes the voice of the poem.



Nature is such a powerful force that humans are always looking for ways to control it. But how far should humans go in controlling nature, and when should humans just leave nature alone? In groups, discuss your answers to the following questions:

1. Is it ok to remove a nest that seagulls have made in your chimney?
2. Is it ok to drill under the ocean to find gas?
3. Is it ok to kill a wasp if it comes into your house?
4. Is it ok to kill an animal for food?

Report your responses back to the class.

Reading and Listening

You are about to read a poem called *Magnifying Glass* by Tim Seibles. This poem is about a person who is thinking about killing an ant that they find near them. The poem is written in free verse.

1. **To begin**, listen to the poet reading the poem.

Link: [Magnifying Glass](#) (00.40 – end).

Search Terms: Magnifying Glass by Tim Seibles Longwood University

2. **Next**, read the poem silently. You should notice that this poem has a lot of interesting punctuation. As you read, highlight or take notes of the full stops, question marks, dashes and words in italics that you come across.
3. Read the poem for a **third time**, take extra care to read the highlighted parts as you think the poet wants you to read them. If possible, read the poem out loud. What effect does the punctuation have on the way you read this poem?

Magnifying Glass

by Tim Seibles

No one
would burn
your name
for not seeing
the ant's
careful antennae
testing the air
next to your
shoe, six legs
almost rowing
it along. Who

would be upset
if you brushed one
off-handedly off
your arm, undone
by the tiny
steps: *what do
they want,*
you ask—unaware
that they breathe
through their
sides. Do they
sleep? Do they
dream
anything? No
one should

mark your soul
short if you
mash one: when
two ants meet

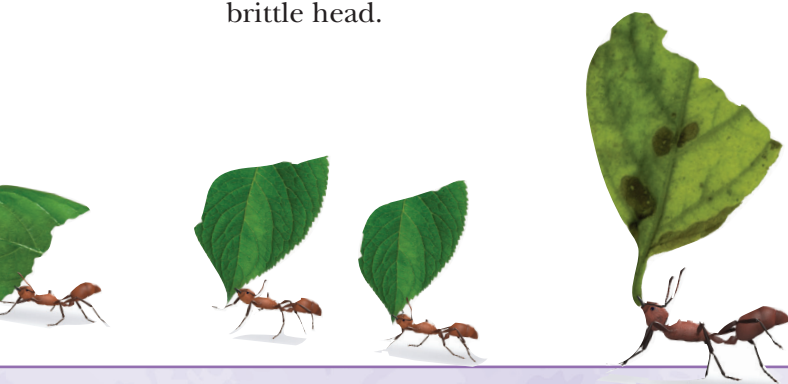


there's no tongue
 for hello—it's a
bug, a nearly
 less than
 little thing: at most,
 made to chisel
 crumbs
 under the fridge
 with eyes that,
 even in brightest
 day, see not reds
 or greens but gray
 and gray again.
 Who would

curse your life
 if you bring out
 the *Raid*?
 How many
 books have they
 read?—that
 brain a virtual
 speck. Is all
 they carry
really work

or just some
 dumb old daily
 ado?—the heart
 spending
 what blood, what
 prehistoric nudge
 on that
 handsome,
 brittle head.

SAMPLE



Vocabulary

Raid: (noun) a product that kills insects

After Reading and Listening



Check your understanding

1. Who is the **speaker** in this poem? Who do they address the poem to?
2. Write down **two** things that the speaker imagines the person doing to the ant.
3. Make a **list of the excuses** that the person gives to justify killing the ant.
4. What is the most **vivid image** in this poem, in your opinion?
5. What is the **theme** of this poem? **R E E L**



Personal response

Magnifying Glass by Tim Seibles is an example of a free-verse poem. Unlike, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* by William Wordsworth, it doesn't have a rhyming scheme. It is written in natural speech, i.e. it sounds as though someone is speaking rather than reciting poetry.

Do you like free-verse poetry? Write a 100-word email to your teacher explaining why you would or would not like your class to explore more poems like this one.



Create

Imagine you walk around looking at the world with a magnifying glass for a day. Write a free-verse poem about the things that you notice.



Success Criteria:

I am writing in free-verse style:

- I am using words that sound good together, but I am avoiding rhyming schemes.
- I am using natural speech.
- I am using punctuation, line breaks and detail.



Once you have a final draft of your poem, share it with your class.

3.5 Poem: *The Tree Agreement* by Elise Paschen

Learning Intentions

In this section you will ...

- ✓ Learn about how contrast is used in poems.
- ✓ Write a short piece of drama based on a poem.

Before Reading

POETRY TECHNIQUES

Contrast: In poetry, pointing out differences between people, places, things and ideas is known as contrast. This technique is often used to show that there are different ways of looking at ideas, arguments and points of view.

Think Pair Share

You are going to read a poem called *The Tree Agreement*.

Think: Study the title. What could the poem be about? What could a tree agreement be?

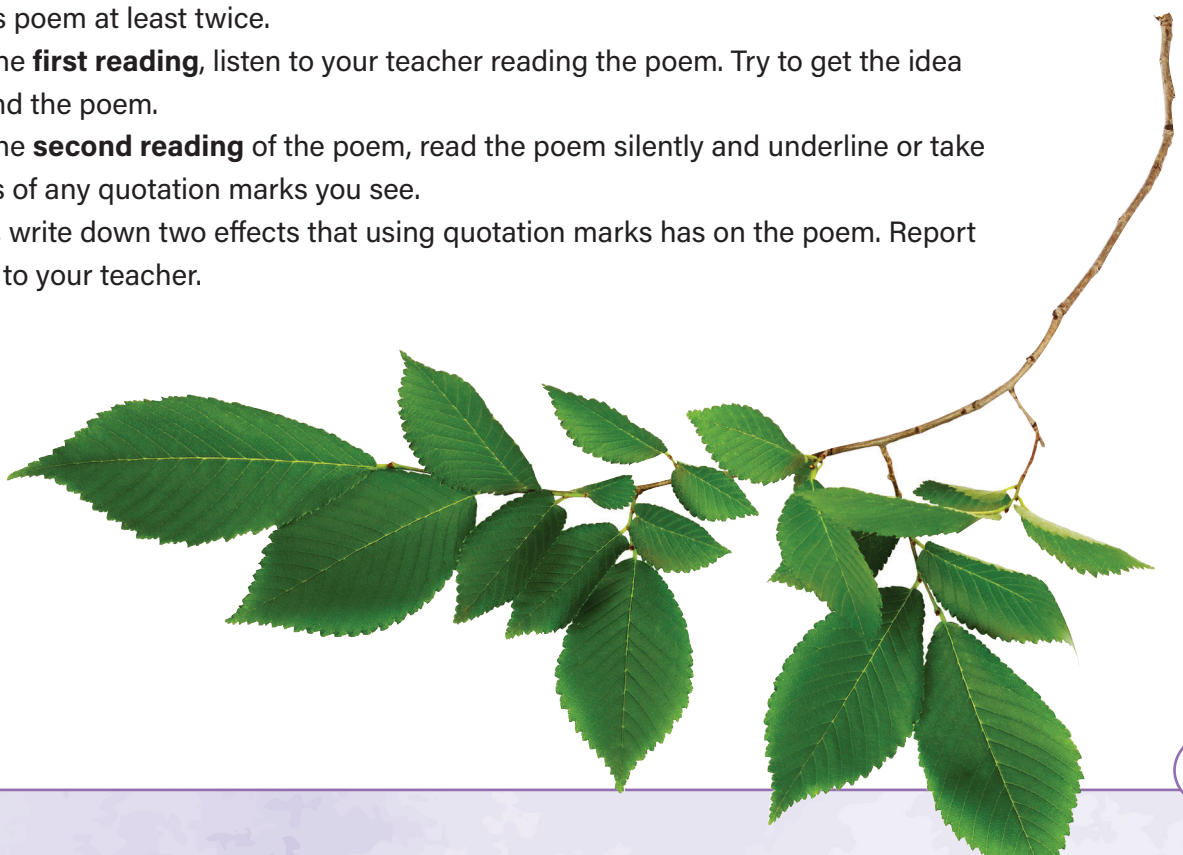
Pair: Tell your partner your idea(s).

Share: Report back to your class.

Reading

Read this poem at least twice.

1. For the **first reading**, listen to your teacher reading the poem. Try to get the idea behind the poem.
2. For the **second reading** of the poem, read the poem silently and underline or take notes of any quotation marks you see.
3. Next, write down two effects that using quotation marks has on the poem. Report back to your teacher.



The Tree Agreement

by Elise Paschen

The neighbor calls the *Siberian Elm*
a “weed” tree, demands we hack
it down, says the leaves overwhelm
his property, the square backyard.

He’s collar-and-tie. A weed tree?
Branches screen buildings, subway tracks,
his patch of yard. We disagree,
claim back the sap, heartwood, wild bark.

He declares the tree “hazardous.”
We shelter under leaf-hoard, crossway
for squirrels, branch house for sparrows, jays.
The balcony soaks up the shade.

Chatter-song drowns out cars below.
Sun branches down. Leaves overwhelm.
The tree will stay. We tell him “no.”
Root deep through pavement, *Elm*.

After Reading



Check your understanding

1. What does the neighbour think about the tree, as outlined in the first stanza?
2. What does the speaker think about the tree, as outlined in the second stanza?
3. What does the speaker urge the tree to do?
4. Re-read the poem, underlining or taking notes of the neighbour’s opinion about the tree as well as the speaker’s opinion about the tree. Explain how the poet uses **contrast** to explore different opinions in this poem.
5. Is this poem an example of a free-verse poem? Explain why/why not.
6. Do you agree more with the neighbour or with the speaker in this poem?

REEL



Create

Write out the script of a short piece of drama featuring two neighbours having an argument about a tree that overlooks both of their gardens. You should use this poem to help you. This activity can be done individually or in pairs.



Success Criteria:

- I am writing in drama format, see page 81–84 for an example.
- I am writing about two characters.
- I am including stage directions.
- I am using language or ideas from *The Tree Agreement*.

3.6 Lyrics: *The Anchor Song* by Bjork

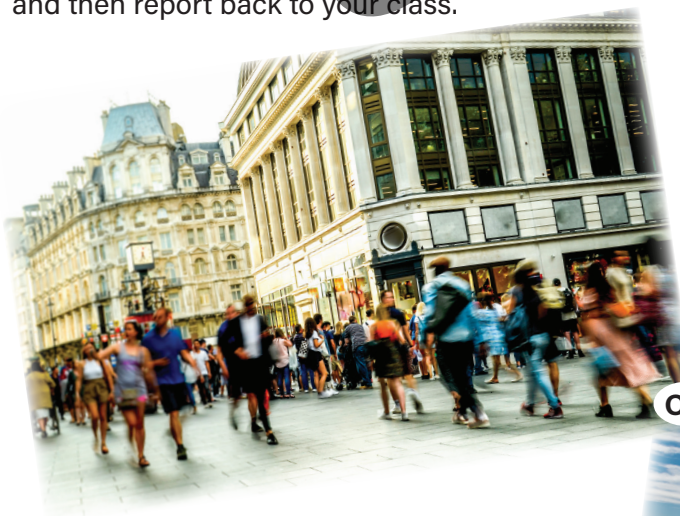
Learning Intentions

In this section you will ...

- ✓ Listen to a song about nature.
- ✓ Carry out research about music and nature.

Before Reading and Listening

Imagine you had to choose between living in a very busy, fast-moving city, or a very quiet, isolated part of the world – which would you choose and why? Write down your answer and then report back to your class.



OR



Reading and Listening

1. You are going to listen to *The Anchor Song* by Bjork. Find it on YouTube by searching for the song and artist. It is a song about a person who thinks of the ocean as their home; it is the place where they feel safe and happy.
2. You should listen to the song at least twice. While listening for the **first time**, read the lyrics below.
3. While listening for the **second time**, note down any instruments you hear. Do you notice any connection between the lyrics and the music of this song?

The Anchor Song

by Bjork

I live by the ocean
And during the night
I dive into it
Down to the bottom
Underneath all currents
And drop my anchor
This is where I'm staying
This is my home



SAMPLE

After Listening



Check your understanding

1. How do you think the person in this song feels? REEL
2. What do you think is the most striking image in this song?
3. What is the atmosphere in this song? REEL
4. How did this song make you feel? REEL



Research

There are lots of songs about nature. Some songs celebrate the natural world, others warn of the danger it faces.

1. Find a song that features the theme of nature.
2. Write out the lyrics.
3. Play it in class.