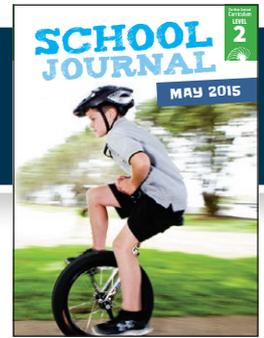


Leap

by Selina Powell

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Year 4



Overview

In this dreamy poem, a girl reflects on a summer in which she “took the chance” to leap into the sea. The poem uses an extended image of the passing of time to emphasise how important the leap was: she will remember what being in mid-air felt like long after other reminders of the day have gone.

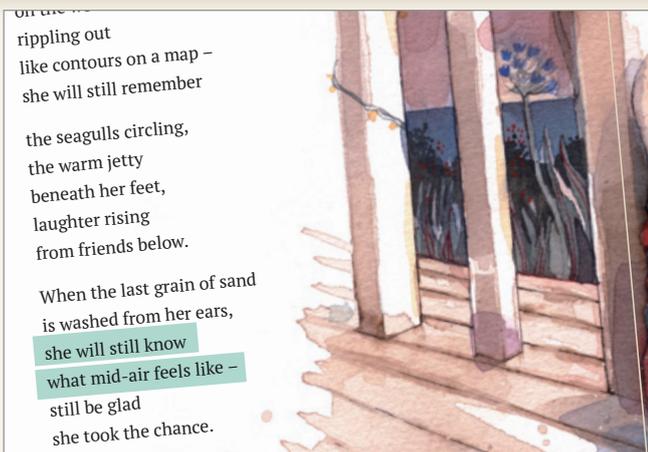
While it would be a shame to over-analyse the poem, it provides a great example of the effect of rhythm and poetic language in an unrhymed poem. It needs to be read aloud with sensitivity to show the cadence of the language and the careful placement of the line breaks. It also provides opportunities to discuss the way a writer uses imagery and sentence structure to hint at an important experience.

This poem:

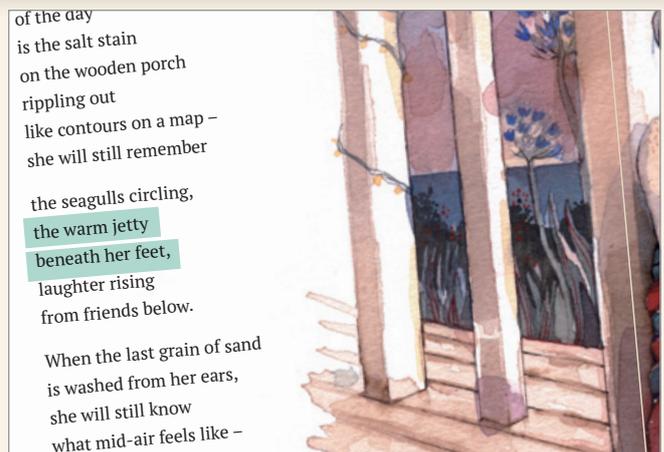
- requires students to visualise and infer meaning
- uses familiar images of summer at the beach
- uses poetic features such as alliteration and internal rhymes in subtle ways to support its overall impact
- has a thematic connection with “Jump!” and “Just One Wheel” (trying a new physical activity that marks a turning point for a character).

Texts related by theme “Jump!” SJ L2 May 2015 | “Iron Tamariki” SJ L2 May 2014 | “Poi” SJ L2 November 2014 | “Ask Eddie” SJ L2 April 2013

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard



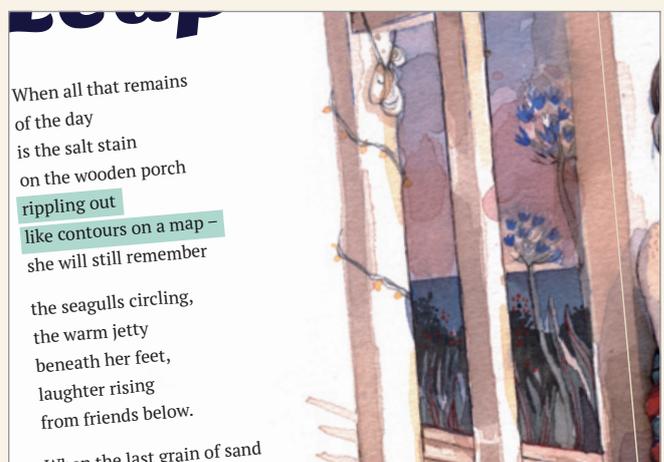
some abstract ideas that are clearly supported by concrete examples in the text or easily linked to the students’ prior knowledge



some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little competing information



some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses



figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

Possible curriculum contexts

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (Personal Health and Physical Development)

Level 2 – Personal identity: Identify personal qualities that contribute to a sense of self-worth.

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

Structure: Show some understanding of text structures.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.

Structure: Organise texts, using a range of structures.

Possible reading purposes

- To enjoy a lovely poem that evokes a summer day's activities
- To make connections between the text and personal experiences of trying a new activity.

Possible writing purposes

- To use the text as a model or as inspiration for writing about an important memory
- To evaluate the writer's use of language to portray the experience, feelings, and memory of a summer's day
- To explore the structures and language features a writer can use in poetry.



The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY

- Possibly unfamiliar words and phrases, including “salt stain”, “porch”, “rippling out”, “contours on a map”, “jetty”, “mid-air”, “took the chance”
- Descriptive verbs: “rippling”, “circling”, “rising”, “washed”.

Possible supporting strategies

Some of these suggestions may be more useful before reading, but they can be used at any time in response to students' needs.

- Identify words or concepts that may be unfamiliar to your students and decide which need to be introduced before reading and which should be left until after the students have had time to think about them. Prompt students to use the illustration to support meaning. Beware of over-teaching vocabulary that the students will work out as they read.
- Make a word or concept map by asking students to share the sights and sounds of summer at the beach, noting those that are encountered in the poem. Provide a picture of a beach to prompt ideas and to support students who may have no experience of swimming at a beach. Some ideas may need to be explained, such as “salt stain”, “contours on a map”, and “jetty”. Where possible, find real examples of the images, such as wooden seats in the school grounds that have stains that look like map contours.
- *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.
- See also [ESOL Online, Vocabulary](#), for examples of other strategies to support students with vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Some experience of being by the sea in summer
- Experience of trying to do something and the feeling of success
- Experience of jumping into the sea or watching others jump
- Familiarity with reading poetry.

Possible supporting strategies

- Invite the students to share their memories of time spent at the beach, including sights, sounds, and activities.
- If students have experience of jumping into the sea (or a lake, river, or swimming pool) from a height, ask them if they can recall what it felt like to be in mid-air.
- Review with the students what they understand about poetry, in particular, what poems sound and look like. You may wish to read a few familiar poems aloud, asking students to listen for the way they are different from straight narrative. Choral reading and clapping the rhythm of the poem will help students who have difficulty with the rhythm and pronunciation of English. Together explore the way poems are set out on a page, sharing ideas about why poets might write in this way. Leave these as open explorations: there is no one way that a poem should look or sound, but note that poems often evoke an emotion or allow you to visualise something in a different way.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE

- An unrhymed poem in three stanzas
- Use of internal rhyme (*all that remains of the day ... salt stain*)
- Use of alliteration (*salt stain; she ... still; seagulls circling*)
- Three stanzas of unequal length
- Complex sentences that start with adverbial clauses
- The use of a dash before a main clause
- The list of memories that form the second stanza
- The internal rhyme and repetition of “she will still”.

Possible supporting strategies

- Remind students of the features of poems they have read, heard, and written. Discuss how poems are different from narratives, making sure students understand that poetry does not have to rhyme.
- Allow the students to discover the poetic features for themselves, saving analysis until later readings, if at all. While it is not essential for understanding the poem, some observant students may wish to identify and use these features in their own writing.



Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

Health and Physical Education (Personal Health and Physical Development, level 2 – Personal identity: Identify personal qualities that contribute to a sense of self-worth.)

English (Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts; Structure: Show some understanding of text structures.)

First reading

Before showing the text, and without revealing that it is a poem, read the poem aloud, taking care to let the line breaks guide the rhythm as you read. Ask the students to share their first impressions, then show them the text and give them time to read it themselves.

If the students struggle with this text

- Prompt them to make connections between the words and the illustration. Support them to link specific words and phrases with details in the illustration and to make inferences about “what mid-air feels like”.

Subsequent readings

The teacher

Prompt the students to ask themselves questions to identify the voice and setting.

- *Who is “she”? Where and when is the poem set?*
- *What is it she “will still remember”?*

The teacher

Direct the students to work with a partner to check their inferences about the poem.

- *What place is the girl remembering? Why were her friends “below”? What were they doing?*
- *How do you think she will “know what mid-air feels like”?*
- *What information in the poem can help you work that out?*
- *How did you work out what she will “still remember”?*
- *How does the writer tell you that?*
- *What experiences helped you make connections and inferences as you read and reread the poem?*
- *What else can you infer about her time at the beach? Who else was there? What were they doing? What was the weather like?*

The teacher

Point to the last line of the first stanza and direct the students to reread the list of things “she will still remember”.

- *Why will she remember these things?*
- *What do they tell you about her experiences that day?*

Ask, *What makes this a poem?* There is no correct response, but return to the question after subsequent readings to tease out some of the features that students notice.

The students:

- ask questions as they determine the who, what, when, and why of the poem
- use their knowledge of sentence structure to identify the subject (she), main verb (will ... remember), and the main idea of the first two stanzas.

The students:

- identify experiences and relate them to the images and ideas in the poem (for example, summer days at a beach, map contours, seagulls)
- combine the words in the text with what they know to make inferences as they read, for example, making connections between the sights and sounds described in the second stanza and similar experiences of their own to infer that the girl was at a beach with friends on a hot day
- further infer that the girl’s friends had been jumping off the jetty into the water below
- make connections between their earlier inferences and the words “glad she took the chance” to infer that the girl had felt nervous about jumping but she did jump.

The students:

- evaluate the poem by comparing the girl’s feelings with their own (real or imagined) feelings of doing something others were doing, even though they had felt nervous
- discuss some of the features the author used so the reader could easily imagine what the girl was feeling and why.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- *You didn’t know what a jetty was, but you asked your partners. Their descriptions helped you understand. It’s an important word in the poem, and it was very sensible to check it out.*
- *Your connection between the poem and the boy in “Jump!” showed that you understood an important idea in both texts: the way we sometimes have to overcome our fears to do something that we enjoy.*

METACOGNITION

- How does listening to a poem aloud help you to visualise and understand it better?
- How is reading a poem different from reading a narrative text? How is it the same? What do you think putting your head “in poetry gear” means?



Reading standard: by the end of year 4



The Literacy Learning Progressions



Assessment Resource Banks

Instructional focus – Writing

Health and Physical Education (Personal Health and Physical Development, level 2 – Personal identity: Identify personal qualities

that contribute to a sense of self-worth.)

English (Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics; Structure: Organise texts, using a range of structures.)

Text excerpts from “Leap”

When all that remains
of the day
is the salt stain
on the wooden porch
rippling out
like contours on a map –
she will still remember

Examples of text characteristics

STRUCTURE

It opens with a subordinate clause, which gives the poem a sense of anticipation.

DESCRIPTIVE VERB

rippling

SIMILE

A simile tells readers that one thing is like something else. This helps readers understand or visualise the thing described

Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

Prompt students to consider the way they will structure their writing to convey their ideas.

- How will you start your writing?
- What feeling or information do you want readers to understand?
- Poems are often quite short: how will you hook your readers in quickly?

Model using the poem as a way to start writing.

- The poet starts with the word “When”. That lets readers know they will learn about the time the poem is set. Her first stanza sets the time and place. It makes me want to go on reading to find out what the girl will remember.
- Try using a similar structure and begin with “When” to catch your readers’ attention and make them want to read on.

Remind students that descriptive language will help readers think or feel more deeply about the ideas.

- Some verbs convey movement as well as action. For example, “rippling” tells readers a lot about the shape of the stain and the movement or action that caused it. If she had just said “going”, it wouldn’t be nearly as effective.

Identify examples of different types of verbs in the text (action, saying, sensing, and relating verbs) and challenge students to use each type in their writing.

- Review the verbs you’ve used: can you find replacements that give more information or a stronger feeling?
- Is there a simile you can use to help readers understand an idea better?

Brainstorm other images the writer could have used to replace “the contours on a map” simile, then model turning these into written text.

When the last grain of sand
is washed from her ears

ADVERBIAL CLAUSE

An adverbial clause adds information to a main clause. It may tell where, when, what, why, or how.

SHOW, DON’T TELL

Writers use details and descriptions to give readers information indirectly. They expect their readers to think and use their imaginations to gain a deeper understanding of the events, characters, or feelings they are writing about.

Explain the difference in form and impact of phrases and clauses.

- A phrase describes or adds information but it does not have a verb. A clause has a verb and is almost a sentence, for example, “when the last grain of sand is washed from her ears ...” – it’s a way of providing more detail than a simple phrase would give.
- In this poem, the writer repeats the way she started the first stanza. This is a way of making the impact even stronger: she’s telling us that “when” is an important part of her big idea.
- Think about ways you can use clauses to make an impact.

Direct the students to consider the way they let readers know information.

- The writer could have “told” the reader by using a simple phrase to show time, such as “Later that night” or “The next day”. What is the impact of using this clause? As you review and revise, look for places where an adverbial clause could “show” rather than tell your readers some information.
- How can you add impact by letting your readers see something for themselves, rather than telling them directly?

... she will still know
what mid-air feels like –
still be glad
she took the chance.

IMPLICATION

The writer needs to give clues to help the readers infer ideas from information. The writer expects readers to make connections with their own knowledge and “read between the lines” to understand the meaning.

Model making an inference.

- The writer uses a lot of small details to show that time has passed and that the girl still remembers something. She has also given a lot of clues about what the girl and her friends were doing.
- Using clues in the poem and my own experience of jumping off something into the sea, I can infer that the girl took the chance and jumped off the jetty for the first time.
- Have a look at your writing and identify if there is a place where you could give clues to help your readers infer the meaning.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- You’ve read your poem aloud many times to find places where you could make changes. These verbs you’ve chosen are more precise: they help me visualise what was happening.
- I see you’ve taken out a long explanation and replaced it with some small details. They give your readers clues they can use to infer meaning.

METACOGNITION

- What are the things you enjoy about writing poetry? What can make poetry hard for you?
- What did you assume your readers would already know or have experienced? How can you help them to “read between the lines”?

Writing standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions