

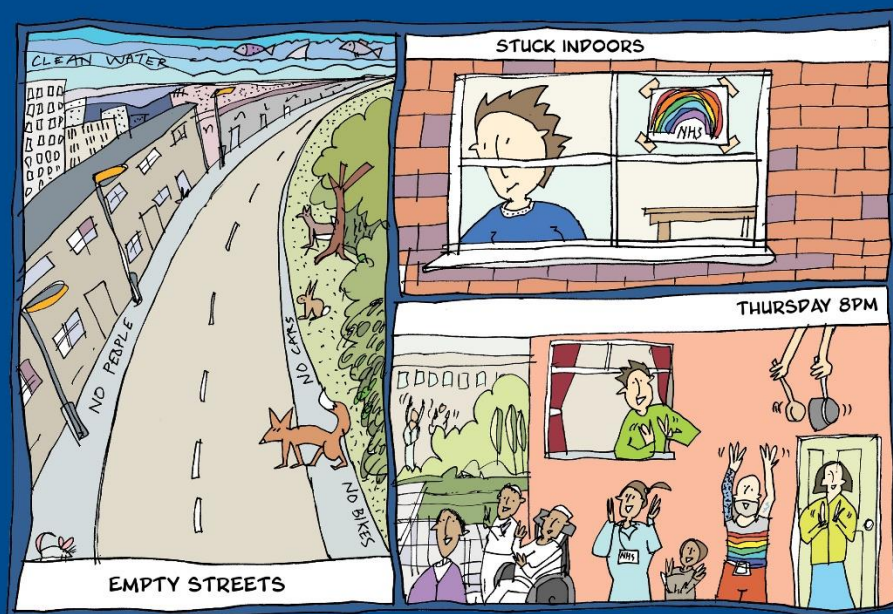


TalkforWriting™

Talk for Writing Home-school booklet

Lockdown creative writing unit

by Pie Corbett and Dean Thompson



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In this unit of work, we will write lots of different creative responses to the new 'lockdown' situation. Some of us have been going into school and some of us have stayed at home. It's been a pretty strange time but, in the end, everything will go back to how things were but, hopefully, we'll all be a bit wiser. Put your pieces of writing together in your writing journal.

5 ways to keep yourself amused in lockdown

Have you found any unusual or interesting ways to keep yourself amused during lockdown? Here are twelve things that you can do at home. Put them in an order with the most interesting at the top and the least interesting at the bottom. Then add things that you like doing that I've missed out. Think about things that you really like doing and really hold your attention and select 5 to write about:

- reading comics
- watching TV
- computer games
- looking out of the window
- cooking
- writing stories
- playing with lego
- painting or drawing
- talking to the cat/dog/baby brother, etc
- whistling
- staring at the ceiling
- daydreaming

Here are the 5 ideas that I have had. What ideas have you got? You can use the way that I have written my ideas to write yours, if you want. The hard bit is to make each idea different. I've tried to list unusual ways to keep amused.

Listen to an audio recording of the ideas below here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/5-ways/s-0nciRPDEqS6>

- *You can apply to the Guinness Book of Records for the world record as child couch potato.*
- *You can try surfing TV channels, and see if you can keep up with the plot of 5 programmes at the same time.*
- *When it rains, you can play raindrop races by betting on which drop will reach the bottom of the window pane first.*
- *You can train the spider that lives in the plughole to be an acrobat and develop skills as an arachnid trapeze artist.*
- *You can draw anything from a Gruffalump eating a cheese pasty to a Hippocrampus that is stuck in a drain.*

Writing tip: make each idea different and avoid repetition or the reader might get bored. Surprise the reader so each idea is a totally new suggestion.

List poems

Now we have had some fun making a list, I'd like to introduce you to the Japanese poet Sei Shonagon. She wrote list poems. Lists are a great way to write as you can have a long list or a short list. Sei wrote hundreds of lists about shiny things, soft things, hard things, worries, things that make her annoyed, sad things, things that worried her and so on.

Since lockdown started, I've been doing a show called RadioBlogging every day (you can listen to it on www.radioblogging.net). I asked children on RadioBlogging to make lists of secret, special and delicate things. Here is a list of twelve things. Sort them into two groups – delicate and strong.

leaf skeleton lace butterfly wing spider's leg eyeball
fishing line bubble snowflake dried seaweed cat's tail
snake skin cloud rainbow electricity elastic band

Delicate things	Strong things

Delicate things are frail, fragile and easily broken. What would be your list of delicate things? Listing ideas and words is often a good way to start writing. Gather lots of ideas very rapidly. It doesn't matter if they look messy. You won't use all the ideas when you write. Jot them down in your magpie book or writing journal.

Now choose your special ideas. Choose things that only you know about. Look around the room that you are in. Look out of the window. Look into your mind to places that you know well. Try to spot small, delicate things. Make each idea different and choose your words carefully.

Listen to a reading of these three poems here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/delicate/s-WHFBgukqulj>

These are my 6 delicate things:

My cat's whiskers

The peacock feather tucked into the mirror

The old dusty books

The echo of my cat's meow

The shadow of the see-through table in the sun

The white grass on a frosty morning

By Hannah

These are my 6 delicate things:

- the touch of my pheasant feather
- the shoots from my cornflower plant
- my mum's soft orange scarf
- the water in a flowing stream
- a cracked egg shell
- my breath when I exhale

By Hector

These are my 7 delicate things:

The warm cookies in the oven

The flickering flames of the silent candle

The small slither of sun on the wall

The warm feeling when you drink hot drinks

The pages of a book as they feebly blow in the wind

The line between the horizon and the empty sky

The sweet sound of animals rustling in the bushes

By Lila

Writing tip: choose things to write about that only you may have seen or noticed or thought about. That way, your list of ideas will be a

special way of capturing your life. Try to avoid the temptation of borrowing other people's ideas. To get ideas, look around where you are, look out of the window and then look inside your head at places you know well. There will be hundreds of things to notice. Select your choice then make each one special by choosing your words to describe them with care.

Word-pictures - using similes

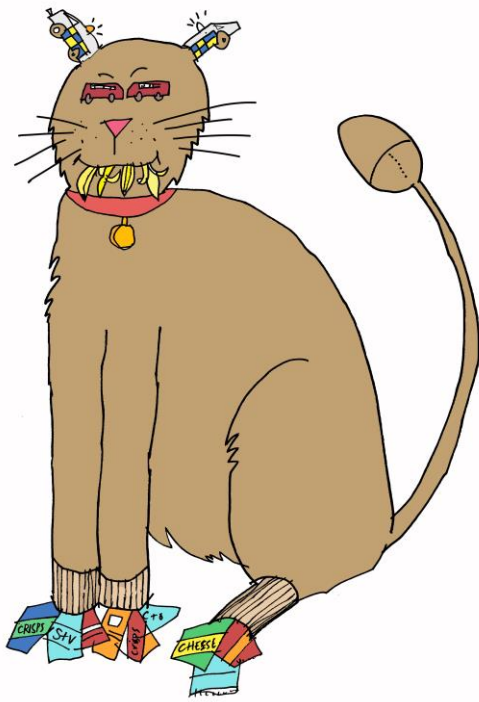
You probably know about similes. Similes are really useful when you write because they help the reader picture and get a better understanding of what you are writing about. There are two types like and as, for example: *It was as small as a grain of wheat.*
His hands were like claws.

Everyone has heard of the simile as quiet as a mouse. In this activity, you have to create new endings so that instead of as quiet as a mouse, you think of something else really quiet, for example, as quiet as a thief's whisper in a library. Can you make up new similes by completing the following:

as loud as
as red as
as large as
as small as

as tall as
as blue as
as soft as
as tough as

Let's have some fun by inventing a list of new, crazy similes. They don't have to make sense as you are just playing with the idea. Choose an animal that you like and describe it using invented and silly similes. You could describe your animal's eyes, ears, tail, paws, claws and teeth.

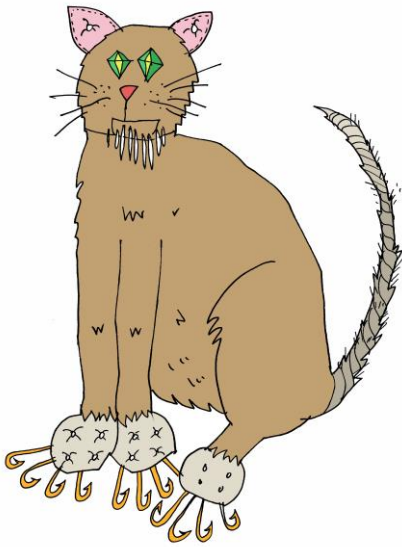


My crazy cat has
eyes like red buses,
ears like police cars,
a tail like a computer mouse,
paws like telegraph poles,
claws like crisp packets
and teeth like rotten bananas.

work, for example:

My cat has
eyes like emeralds,
ears like velvet corners,
a tail like a furry cable,
paws like small cushions,
claws like fishing hooks
and teeth like a necklace of white needles.

Now try writing exactly the same
poem but use similes that seem to



Which did you find easier to write? Was it when your brain was trying to think of the wrong thing or the right thing?

Which is your best idea and why?

Writing tip: If you are writing a playful list, then it can be fun to write a crazy simile. If you are trying to say what things are really like, then the simile has to work. Remember what we said earlier: there are two types of simile like and as . A simile is a comparison. It is when you say two different things are similar .

What you are - using metaphors

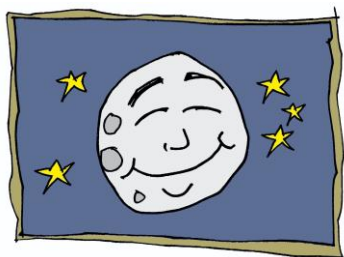
Now we have warmed ourselves up, let's try something that requires you to really think hard. Again, you have to try to make each idea different and not repeat yourself. Remember to name things so that you write Skoda rather than car if you want to suggest it's not posh. In this poem, we are going to write another list of playful ideas, using the phrase You are . In my example, I started by writing a list of similes:

You are like a cat ...

Then I removed the word 'like' and wrote what is called a metaphor. Again, you may well know about these:

You are a cat ...

A metaphor is stronger than a simile. It is when you say that one thing is another thing. It's a little bit of magic. Instead of writing,



The moon is like a
smile ...

You write,

The moon is a smile ...



Start by reading my poem. I had a lot of fun writing this. I made a quick list of ideas – different animals, objects, vehicles, things from nature, things from home or the countryside or town. I also listed things like sounds, feelings, smells, moments, delicate things. I allowed myself to be adventurous and tried to write an extended, playful poem.

You can listen to an audio recording of the poem below here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/you-are/s-dvnHTD8ZzH3>

You Are

You are a soft sofa and comforting cushions.

You are a wolfhound panting after a run.

You are a cat stretching his curious claws.

You are a red bus slowing to a full stop.

You are an ancient oak tree, gnarled and misshapen.

You are an ice cream cone with two flakes at different angles.

You are clouds of sheep on a hillside.

You are sunlight sleeping on a windowsill.

You are the Tardis travelling to an unexpected destination.

You are the squeak of a hinge that needs oiling.

You are the moment after a sigh.

You are the worker bee hovering outside the hive.

You are the gurgle gargling in a drain.

You are the scratching of fingernails on wood.

You are anger spun into a knot.

You are the sadness of 'never again'.

You are the nettle sting of a lasting lie.

You are the smell of chips and vinegar on a frosty night.

You are a solitary cloud lost in blue sky.
You are the moment between laughter exploding
and its sudden end with an intake of knowledge.

Add to this ideas list. This will help you get lots of different ideas. You don't have to use all of them. Try to think of unusual ones.

birds
animals
fishes or water creatures
insects
plants
vehicles
coloured things
places
objects

sounds
types of food
natural things
things from a story
delicate or soft things
shiny or bright things
feelings
memories

To write your lines, think of an idea. For example,

You are a ... cat ...

Then extend the idea thinking about what it looks like or is doing:

You are a sleek cat curled asleep in the corner of the kitchen.

Writing tip: read your poem aloud. If there are any places where it is hard for you to read then you can be sure that it will be hard for anyone else to read. Change it – read aloud and tweak the poem so that it sounds good and says what you wanted it to say. Try to avoid repetition of words or ideas so each line is fresh and will surprise the reader.

Out of the window - eye spy

We've all spent a lot of time looking out of the window over the last few months. After a while, I started to notice things that I had not really seen before. I have two robins who live in the garden but they don't like each other. There is the scruffy robin and the well-kept robin. They argue.

I thought I would write a list poem about the things that I can see out of the window that interest me. To make the poem more interesting, I chose secret things that I think no one else would spot unless they had

spent a lot of time looking! This sort of poem is another list poem but it is about real things. I called it eye spy because of the old game.

Listen to an audio recording of the poem below here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/i-spy/s-WajErv4pAk5>

6 things that eye spy

Eye spy a shadow shifting by the Buddleia butterfly bush.

Eye spy sunlight slicing through the fencing.

Eye spy the way buses shudder as they pull up at the bus stop.

Eye spy John the postman's footsteps as he paces Silver Street.

Eye spy the tiniest red money spiders crazily wandering on the red brick wall.

Eye spy the rusted sign on Sharky's Chippie creak and squeak when the wind blows.

Notice how I have named things . Complete the spaces in these sentences, checking how I named each item. The first is done for you:

I didn't write 'bush', I wrote 'Buddleia butterfly bush'.

I didn't write 'the postman', I wrote

I didn't write 'the road', I wrote

I didn't write 'spiders', I wrote

I didn't write 'the chip shop', I wrote

When you are writing, you can make things sound more real and build the picture for the reader by naming things .

Writing tip: Try to name things so don't write about a flower but name it, e.g. a poppy, daisy or rose. Naming things helps the reader to see what you are writing about. You are trying to notice details, bring them alive for the reader and make them sound real.

I didn't know I'd miss

Lots of children have been at home for a long time now. Some have still been going to school but it has been different. What are the things that you have missed? Some of them might surprise you. Write a list poem

about the things that you didn't know you would miss. This is an example written by Tina who lives in Salford. She has been missing lots of things about school.

Listen to an audio recording of this poem here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/didnt-know/s-M7Rgv1VrhKV>

I didn't know I'd miss -
the hum of everyone in assembly
and the joyful sound of us singing together.

I didn't know I'd miss -
Miss Wood on the flipchart writing up our ideas
as we make up a story together
and the room is alive with creativity.

I didn't know I'd miss -
meeting with my friends each morning,
even when the playground was cold.

I didn't know I'd miss -
showing the little ones how to read
and help my friends with tidying up the class.

I didn't know I'd miss -
my pencil case with all my pencils
and the smell of the inside of my school bag.

I didn't know I'd miss -
finding a new book that I love from the class library.

I didn't know I'd miss -
school dinners, especially
the thick layer on top of custard.

By Tina

Writing tip: Make a short list of things that you have missed. Make them real things that matter to you and you look forwards to going back to. Then take each one in turn and add to the idea so that reader understands what you are missing.

Wishes

The lists about things that you have missed are like wishes. In this writing idea, you can contrast things that you really want to do with things that sound fancy but actually you can do without. For instance, I don't have to travel to the Caribbean but I wouldn't mind a trip to Weston-super-Mare. I don't have to travel in a limousine but I wouldn't mind a bike ride down to the shops.

Make a list of a few simple things that you'd like to do but haven't been able to do. Then add in some contrasts. Here is my list.

You can listen to an audio recording of this poem here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/wishes/s-h8IK9mqHnXj>

I don't need to be on Caribbean island with turquoise seas but
I do wish that I was walking along the canal path in Stroud, where a
kingfisher zips by in a sudden electric blue fizz, a fistful of
feathered energy.

I don't need to be at the top of Everest, planting the Union Jack
but I do wish I could climb Strawberry Banks where the speckled
woods, small blues, orange tips and brimstone butterflies flutter
like frail candle flames.

I don't need to sit in the Ritz, eating lobster thermidor but
I do wish I could drop into Fat Toni's for a slice of fresh pepperoni
pizza with gooey cheese, tomatoes and basil with a can of cold
lemonade.

I don't need to go for a trip to Bristol zoo to check out the
penguins, listen to the howler monkeys or watch the grumpy camels
or elegant giraffes stretch their spotted necks but
I do wish I that I could visit my aged Aunt to chatter with her
dogs, whose greeting is always full on energy, the air alive with
yapping and barking.

I don't need to win the lottery or rob a bank but
I do wish I could catch the village bus into town and mooch about
the bookshop, checking new titles and then wander over to
Moonshine's for a snack.

I don't need to own the crown jewels, drive a Lamborghini or get into the Guinness book of world records but
I wouldn't mind being able to buy a Winstone's icecream from the van up on Minchinhampton Common, watch the kites being flown and the hang gliders drift with the wind.

Yes I don't need much but
I am storing up all the good ordinary things
That once were everyday
But now have become
My special things.

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We tried this idea out on RadioBlogging.net and here is a poem by one of the children. I like the way that the poet has named things – *Bailey*, *Beacon Hill*. The writing pattern using the word *but* to introduce the contrast is a simple but very effective way to write your list down.

Wishes

I don't want to go to a faraway island,
but I do wish I could go camping with my family.
I don't want to climb Mount Everest,
but I do wish I could go up Beacon Hill, and look for fish in the pond, and climb up a tree.
I don't want to eat at a fancy restaurant,
but I do wish I could get ice cream with a friend.
I don't want to see lions roaring, monkeys up trees, and giraffes munching leaves,
but I do wish I could stroke my friend's dog, Bailey.
I don't want to buy the contents of the shopping centre,
but I do wish I could wander round a bookshop.

Writing tip: write about real things that matter to you and things that you are really looking forwards to experiencing again. These can be quite small things that in the past we didn't think much about. Now, they may be things that you are longing to do.

A quick warm up before reading on ...

- ★ Have a look at a few of the words and phrases below. They are
all in my poem below but I have mixed them up!
- ★ What does it make you think about?
There are no right or wrong answers – just good ideas!
- ★ Write down or draw some of your ideas, memories and thoughts.
- ★ What do you think this poem might be about?

soft sand
Before *shrieking*
sighs and smiles
swings and sways
No one swings *shouting*
slithers After *Steel springs squeak*
thump, thump, thump *down the slide*
a sign arrives *Steel saucepans* *watches and waits*
Red. Orange. Yellow. Green ... *window of hope* *wooden spoons*
Weekly street clapping *squealing*

Lockdown

In March 2020 the world changed. Coronavirus arrived and we were all told to stay safe and stay at home. They called it **lockdown**.

Suddenly, many of us were doing our schoolwork at home without our teacher. A lot of the things we used to enjoy doing like playing with our friends, visiting our family, going shopping or eating at a favourite café all stopped.



I thought about all the things we used to do before the lockdown and it got me thinking about doing some writing to describe some of the changes and how I felt about them.

Every day, I walk past a playground called Cawston Park. There are usually lots of children playing. Now there is a sign on all the equipment and the gate has been locked. The park has been closed. I thought about the park before the lockdown, about how different it was now without the children enjoying themselves.

I also thought about the changes in the houses where many children were now doing their schoolwork, or not, with their family.

The world will get back to normal and we will all go to play in the park again.

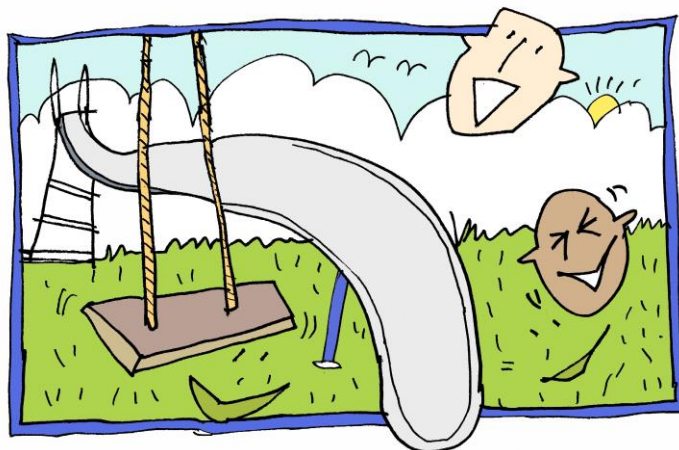
My list poem tries to share some of my thoughts and feelings about the lockdown and the changes. I have called it Lockdown Park.

Now let's read my poem ...

You can listen to an audio recording of this poem here:
<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/lockdown/s-BWLqMEakDip>

Lockdown Park

Cawston Park watches
and waits.
Suddenly, squealing
children enter, laughing.
The rope swing giggles
The slide smiles.
The trampoline **tenses**.
A child **clutches** the
thick, **frayed** rope and
swings and sways over the soft sand, shrieking.



Another child skids down the slide, grinding to a sudden halt.
The gentle thump, thump, thump of a distant trampoline
provides a steady heartbeat.
Steel springs squeak in **rhythm**, providing a welcome tune.
Cawston Park sighs and smiles.

Lockdown Park watches and waits.
Suddenly, a sign arrives with **shackles**.
No squeals. No laughter. No children.
The rope swing stares.
The slide glares.
The trampoline **slackens**.
No one clutches the thick, frayed rope.
No one swings and sways over the soft, yellow
sand.
No steady heartbeat. No squeaky tune.
Empty, Lockdown Park **scowls** and **frowns**.



The house watches and waits.
Suddenly, a child enters squealing and laughing.
The TV stares.
The mat smiles.
The table **awaits**.
A child stretches and strains, watching TV PE.
Weekly street clapping provides a new heartbeat.

Steel saucepans and wooden spoons provide a new clanging
tune.
A child clutches an **array** of thick, coloured crayons and
creates.
Red. Orange. Yellow. Green...
Something to display in the window of hope.



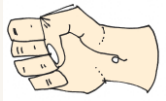





Lockdown Park



watches and waits.

What do the words mean?

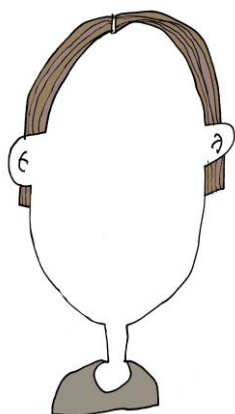
- ★ Re-read *Lockdown Park*. The words below are in bold. See if you can match the word to similar words. **I have done one for you.**
- ★ If you are stuck, you could ask someone else in your home, use a dictionary or the internet.

Target Word	Similar matching words 'synonyms'	Picture clue
tenses	worn tatty ragged	
clutches	'dirty look' grimace glare glower	
frayed	becomes edgy/jumpy	
shackles	relaxes loosen	
rhythm	beat pattern	
slackens	grabs grip grasp	
scowls frowns	selection group of collection	
awaits	waits for expects	
array	chains locked	

What words and ideas do you remember?

★ *Listen again to the poem being read aloud a few times using this link.*

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/lockdown/s-BWLqMEakDip>



Try and picture the park and the house in your head.

Tip: Try closing your eyes when you listen.

Without reading the poem again, quickly say out loud any words or ideas that you can remember. Now write them down or draw some pictures.

When I listen to the poem, these are the words and ideas I remember ...



.....

.....

.....



When I listen to the poem, these are the ideas that came into my head about what lockdown has meant to me:

.....

.....

.....

What did the poem make you think about?

Tip: Try and use the word because to develop your ideas.

1. What did you like about the poem?

I liked the part where ...

because ...

2. What surprised you?

I was surprised when ...

because

...

3. What did the poem make you think about?

The poem made me think about...

because

...

What do think this poem is really about?

Underline the answer that you think is the best fit.

Playing in the park.
How our world has changed.

A lonely, miserable park.
Happy TVs and mats.

Even closer reading!

- ★ For those up for a challenge, let's really slow it down and re-read the poem and play...

The sound game

I tried to choose some of the words carefully thinking about the sound they make when I read them aloud.

Read the poem out loud and listen very carefully to the sounds the words make. You could also listen again to me reading the poem out loud as you trace the poem with your finger.

Activity - Spot the alliteration!

When words that are close together start with the same sound, it's called alliteration. It helps make images stand out. For example,

The **s**lide **s**miles.

The '**s**' sound is used at the start of both words – **s**lide and **s**miles.



Underline the alliteration (words that are close together that have the same sound at the start) in the first two verses below:

Lockdown Park

Before

Cawston Park watches and waits.

Suddenly, squealing, children enter, laughing.

The rope swing giggles.

The slide smiles.

The trampoline tense

Another child skids down the slide, grinding to a sudden halt.

The gentle thump, thump, thump of a distant trampoline
provides a steady heartbeat.

Steel springs squeak in rhythm, providing a welcome tune.

Cawston Park sighs and smiles.

Let's get creative! The personification game

In the poem objects in the park have been brought to life by giving them human emotions and actions. This is called **personification**. For example,

The *slide smiles*.

The slide is not really smiling. The writer has made the slide *seem* like it is alive by making it do what the people do – people smile!

Let's make two lists. Try and add in at least 5 more examples.

1. List things you find in a playground or park (nouns)	2. List things you do (verbs) Tip: try words for 'look' or 'said'
<i>swing</i> <i>slide</i> <i>trampoline</i> <i>grass</i> <i>bench</i> <i>see-saw</i> <i>climbing frame</i> <i>?</i>	<i>laugh</i> <i>giggle</i> <i>dance</i> <i>sing</i> <i>moan</i> <i>scream</i> <i>whisper</i> <i>chant</i> <i>stare</i> <i>?</i>

Now choose one word from each list and put them together to make a sentence that brings the park to life!

For example,

The swings *giggled*.

The trampoline *chanted* a bouncy tune.

The grass *whispered* secrets.



Let's innovate!

- ★ Let's write a list about somewhere you know well before and after the Lockdown. Try and bring the place alive and show how it has changed.

Underlying structure	New Ideas
Decide on a favourite place or activity to describe.	
Before the lockdown <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe different things you saw there.• What were the things that you did?• How did you feel there?• What's your best memory?	
After the lockdown <p>How does it feel now?</p> <p>Describe how the mood or feeling has changed.</p> <p>What do you now do or not do?</p>	

Innovation ideas!

- ★ Let's have a go at writing a list poem to describe a different favourite place and how lockdown has changed it.

Pick a place or activity that you want to write about. There are hundreds of possibilities. Here are just a few:

classroom school playground sport club park
grandparent's house friend's house picnic
birthday party swimming pool football club

My turn

I decided on a place and named it: Cawston Park

Writing Tip: If your place has got a name, name it!

Then I thought about how I felt about the place before and after the lockdown: I felt happy then sad. So I jotted down a few words that went with these moods:

What would I see? <i>Cawston Park</i> (nouns)	List things you do when you feel: happy (verbs)	List things you do for a <u>different</u> mood when you feel: sad (verbs)
slide trampoline swing trees picnic bench zip-wire see-saw	dance squeal giggle sing laugh jump chuckle	sulk moan sleep tremble shake cry sob

My turn:

I had a go at drafting my poem.

Before, in Cawston Park –
I saw a soaring slide giggle,
a quivering trampoline dance
And a smiling swing sing.

After, in Lockdown Park –
I saw a lonely slide sulk.
A gloomy trampoline tremble.
And a grinning swing groan.

When I read it through I decided to change some of the words to make it more powerful. Have a read through. Are the underlined words that I changed more effective?

Before, in Cawston Park –
I noticed a soaring slide giggle,
a quivering trampoline dance
And a grinning swing sing.

After, in Lockdown Park –
I spotted a lonely slide sulk.
A gloomy trampoline tremble.
And a shivering swing groan.

Writing Tip: Always read your work through and see how it sounds. Try altering key words to get just the right mood but don't add in too many descriptive words. One powerful word normally does the trick.

Your turn

Decide on your favourite place or activity. Think about what you do there and how you felt **before** and **after** the lockdown?

Writing Tip: Make your mood or feelings opposite. For example,

happy/sad; excited/bored; confident/scared

Here are some opposite mood/feelings posters to help you get started.

Poster A		Poster B	
excited	bored	confident	scared
jump	sigh	march	shake
scream	frown	stomp	shiver
run	yawn	stride	whisper
bounce	shuffle	strut	cry
squeal	moan	swagger	stare
shout	groan	boast	sob

What would you see in your favourite place/activity? (nouns)	List things you do when you feel positive e.g. happy (actions – verbs)	List things you do when you feel negative e.g. sad (actions – verbs)

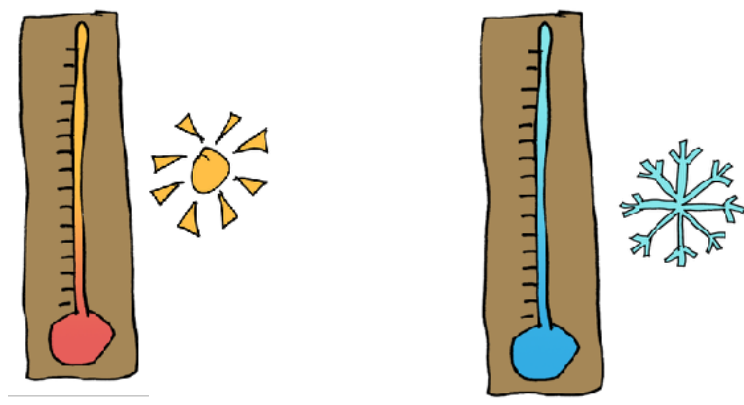
Draft your poem carefully and keep on reading it aloud and altering it until it sounds just right. Help the reader understand exactly how you were feeling.

Afterwards, You might want to add in a bit of prose about why you chose to write about the things you chose, to introduce your poem: just like I told you about walking past Cawston Park on page 14 before giving you the poem.

Creative Challenge: Record a performance of your poem and send it to members of your family you haven't been able to see for a bit.

We've reached the end of our journey. I hope you've had fun!

I would rate my journey through this booklet (tick hot or cold):



I really enjoyed ...



This workbook has helped me learn ...



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