

Immersed Texts

This technique probably works best as an activity undertaken after students have seen the original poem, possibly even as a revision task. With other poems, the text might be presented and students asked to suggest which words and phrases they think formed part of a poem. The more modern and conversational the poem, the easier it is to immerse and the harder to disentangle.

A development from this is to ask students to immerse a text themselves, either a whole poem of up to 12 lines, or a verse or two from a longer work. This necessarily involves a close engagement with the poem in an enjoyable way.

To introduce the technique, I use a well-known rhyme. For example:

We've been having some problems with a boy in Y5 called Georgie Porgie. He's a great pudding of a lad and most of the time he's as nice as pie. Last week, though, during playtime, he kissed several of the Y3 and 4 girls. One or two took it as a joke but, well, Janice Jones and Cynthia Smith – you can imagine - it made them cry. When the boys came out, they heard what had happened and instead of going to play they started looking for Georgie. Luckily young Porgie ran away before they could find him. The following day....

Here's a more demanding example, Blake's *Little Boy Lost*. You might tell students that there's a poem hidden here somewhere. Can they find it? All the words are in the original order. You could print it out and ask them to highlight the original lines. Better still, you could present it to them as an electronic text. They could then mark the words which form the poem – and then delete the ones which have not been marked. Can they then put the remaining words into a form or structure?

It was a horrible night - foggy and damp. As I walked down by the river bank I heard a faint voice calling, 'Father, father, where are you going?'. I didn't take much notice until I rounded the bend and heard it again. 'Oh do not walk so fast!' It was a pathetic sound to hear on a night like that. Again it came, louder and more desperate: 'Speak, father, speak to your little boy or else I shall be lost.' I peered through the gloom and caught sight of a small figure. The night was very dark but I could just see his outline. There was no father to be seen. No one else was there. As I got closer I could see that the child was wet with dew. Perhaps he had fallen. I warned him to be careful, for the mire was deep and dangerous. He began to sob. 'Don't cry,' I said, but the child did weep - and who could blame it? Then, as I was wondering how to see the poor youngster to safety he set off at a run and was away before I could see where he'd gone. The night vapour flew in my face and the fog came down thick as I struggled to my lodging place, anxious about the lad's fate.

There are other examples among these resources, including *Ozymandias*.