

Michael Rosen's Pocket Shakespeare: A Beginner's Guide to the Best Bits of The Bard By Michael Rosen, illustrated by Chris Riddell

POETRY WRITING

In all of Shakespeare's plays and poems, he uses words, rhythm and rhyme to paint pictures. In *Michael Rosen's Pocket Shakespeare: A Beginner's Guide to the Best Bits of The Bard* there are two wonderful examples of this from Caliban (*The Tempest*) and the witches (*Macbeth*). In this writing project you will look more closely at the language used in the witches' spell and then have a go at writing your own version of their spell.

Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake
In the cauldron boil and bake.
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blindworm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

The Witches – Macbeth, Act 4 Scene 1

ORACY!

With a partner, read the spell through very carefully. Then discuss your answers to these questions:

- Do you think this is a spell to help or harm Macbeth? What makes you think this?
- What do you notice about the rhythm of the speech?
- Talk about any examples you can find of rhyme, repetition or alliteration.

Now practise performing the spell with your partner. Think about your expression, the rhythm of the speech and whether you will take it in turns or read together.

ADDING THE INGREDIENTS

The horrible ingredients the witches use in their spell reflects the fact that this spell is to curse Macbeth. The first thing you need to do is decide what kind of things you want to use in your spell. Write them in the box on the next page.

Ideas!

- Maybe your spell will have a futuristic feel and include bits of old machines or technology such as car wheels or bike bells.
- Instead of a curse, maybe your spell will be to help someone and the ingredients will show this, for example fluffy clouds and sun beams.

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Ingredients List

MIXING IT TOGETHER

Shakespeare wrote this spell with rhyming couplets (that means the first two lines rhyme, then the next two lines and so on). He also used alliteration to help the poem flow and put more emphasis on certain parts. Look at the ingredients you have already listed and write down some rhyming words and alliterative phrases in the space below.

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FIND THE RHYTHM

Did you notice there is a very clear rhythm to a lot of the lines? Many of them have two ingredients, and each ingredient is something of something else (like wool **of** bat **and** tongue **of** frog) and is a four-beat pattern. Look at the ideas you have come up with so far, can you write some of them in the same structure? For example, *fluff of cloud and beam of sun* or *wheel of car and bell of bike*.

CREATE YOUR SPELL!

Now it's time to create your spell! Use your rhymes, alliteration and line structure to help you.

You could use Shakespeare's lines to start you off:

Double, double, toil and trouble,

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Make sure you read your work through carefully when you have finished.

HAVE YOU...

- Used 4 beats in a line?
- Followed the 'something of something' structure?
- Got rhyming couplets?
- Included alliterative phrases?



CAST YOUR SPELL

Once you have written and edited your spell, it is time to cast it! Practise reading your spell out loud and then perform it to an audience. Think carefully about how you use your voice and how you want your audience to respond to your performance.

