

Description and Writing a Poem

ACTIVITIES:

1.

The poet, Seamus Heaney, translated a 13th Century text describing the hare. The following are some of the phrases he used:

“The jumper / the racer / Beat-the-pad / white-face / the messer / the skidaddler / the nibbler / the grass-biter / the starrer / the skulker / the bleary-eyed / the wall-eyed / the glance-aside / the hedge-springer / The long lugs / the frisky legs / the wild one / the skipper / the hug-the-ground / the race-the-wind / the sit-tight / the grass-bounder / the jig-foot / the light-foot / The creep-along / the sitter-still / the sudden start / the belly-white.”

Share these with the class.

2.

Discuss each of these and their meanings with the class and talk about how each one is either describing the hare's appearance or its actions.

3.

Game: In pairs or small groups, they decide on an animal and without saying it's name, create a list like the above that describes its appearance and/or its actions. Then see if others can guess what the animal is from what they have written.

4.

Look again at pictures of Dandy. Ask them to imagine that he comes to life at night and prowls around.

Discuss:

How he might move?

What he might do?

Where he might go?

How you would describe him if you saw him?

Use this discussion and Seamus Heaney's descriptions of the hare for inspiration.

5.

Creating a poem

Working alone now, ask them to make a list of at least 10 phrases that describe Dandy's appearance and actions/movement without mentioning the word dog.

Arrange them to form a poem.

SUBJECTS: English