Onomatopoeia – Poetry

Onomatopoeia
The use of a word or words which sound like what they are describing. E.g. crash, buzz, smash, woof.

Onomatopoeia is often used in poetry because it is so descriptive and helps us to imagine what is happening in the story or scene of the poem.

Types of onomatopoeia
- **Words related to air**: flutter, whisper, gasp, swish, swoosh, whoosh, whizz, whip.
- **Words related to animals**: baa, cheep, woof, purr, buzz, chirp, cluck, cock-a-doodle-doo, hiss, meow, moo, neigh, oink, quack, ribbit, tweet.
- **Words related to collisions**: bam, bang, clang, clank, clap, clatter, click, clink, ding, slam, screech, slap, thud, thump.
- **Words related to the voice**: chatter, blurt, giggle, growl, grunt, gurgle, mumble, murmur, belch.
- **Words related to water**: splash, spray, sprinkle, squirt, drip, drizzle, sloshes, plop.

Poems and poem extracts
Underline the onomatopoeia words in each of the following poems or poem extracts.

Meeting at Night (by Robert Browning)
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match...

Gathering Leaves (by Robert Frost)
Spades take up leaves
No better than spoons
And bags full of leaves
Are light as balloons.

Fossils (by Ogden Nash)
At midnight in the museum hall
The fossils gathered for a ball
There were no dreams or saxophones,
But just the clatter of their bones...

I make a great noise
Of rustling all day
Like rabbit and deer
Running away.
**Wind and Rain (by Lee Emmett)**

Westerly whips up waves  
Shloshes, splashes on shore  
Seagull winging bravely  
Slipstreams, flaps some more  

Rain patters and splatters  
Drops, plops on windscreen  
Meditative silence shatters  
Fresh gust wakes from daydream

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**Running Water (by Lee Emmett)**

Water plops into pond  
Splish-splash downhill  
Warbling magpies in tree  
Trilling, melodic thrill  

Whoosh, passing breeze  
Flags flutter and flap  
Frog croaks, bird whistles  
Babbling bubbling from tap

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**Your turn!**

Have a go at writing some of your own poems using onomatopoeia. You might like to use some of the words on this sheet or some of the words that we brainstormed as a class.

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