

# Reading Comprehension

## Sea Fever, by John Masefield

Year 5/6

HIAS English Team  
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Final version

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# Using the Home Learning Materials

## The materials

- Each reading booklet contains a key text and suggested activities that can be used to develop comprehension and understanding.
- The sequence should take no more than 1 hour to complete.
- Reading for pleasure, fluency and stamina should be developed through regular sustained reading using the books identified by the school.

## How to use

- Read the instructions carefully before you start a task.
- Each sequence contains simple explanations and examples to help you.

## How can parents, carers and siblings help?

- Read the extracts aloud with your child
- Check your child understands any new or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Adapt any of the resources and materials as you feel necessary to support your child's needs

# 5 day reading sequence

This sequence is developed around the poem *Sea Fever* by John Masefield.

## Teaching sequence:

- 1) Read with enjoyment and expression
- 2) Respond and clarify
- 3) Explore effect on the reader
- 4) Get creative!
- 5) Quick quiz

## Sea Fever by John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;  
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,  
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide  
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;  
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,  
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,  
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;  
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,  
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

# 1. Read aloud and enjoy together

This is probably John Masefield's most famous poem. It was written at the start of the twentieth century.

Enjoy reading the poem aloud, paying attention to its rhythm and rhyme. Read it several times to get the feel of the poem.

If you can, try alternating reading aloud with another person. You could perhaps read a line or a verse in turn.

Discuss any tricky vocabulary in the poem.

## 2. Respond to poetry

Read the poem again and discuss the following questions to help you respond to it:

- **Do you like the poem? Why?**
- **How does the poem make you feel? Why?**
- **Does the poem make sense to you?**
- **Does the poem have a story or a message? What is it?**
- **Have you read a poem like this before? How are they similar and different?**
- **Can you think of another title for the poem?**

Questions drawn from James Carter, *Let's Do Poetry in Primary Schools*, 2012

## 2. Clarify vocabulary

*Think about the vocabulary that could be tricky in the poem. You may already have discussed some of these words, but it is useful to carry out exercises like the example below to help fix the words in your memory.*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Use in a sentence</b>	

rover	A person who spends their time wandering
The rover strolled through the town without a care in the world.	

### 3. Language for effect

John Masefield makes effective use of figurative language in the poem. He uses **personification** when referring to nature: “*the sea’s face*” and “*the wind’s song*”, for example.

What is the effect of this personification? What does it tell us about how the narrator views the sea and the natural world around it?

Can you find an example of **alliteration**? (Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds in quick succession.)

Can you find an example of **repetition** in the poem? What effect does this have on the reader?

Are there any other examples of figurative language? Annotate your copy of the poem to show where figurative language has been used.



## 4. Get creative!



Create a poetry mood board for *Sea Fever*, using images from the Internet or your own drawings. For each image, annotate the section of the poem that it relates to.



## 5. Quick quiz

Using the poem, explore these questions and encourage your child to respond using evidence from the text to back up their answers.

- 1) What is the narrator's opinion of the sea?
- 2) John Masefield appeals to the reader's senses in *Sea Fever*. Use quotes from the poem and link them to the senses.
- 3) Who do you think the narrator of the poem is and what might he have done in his life? What age do you think he is and why?
- 4) If you were to write a poem about the natural world, which place would you choose and why?

## HIAS English team

The HIAS English team offer a wide range of high-quality services to support schools in improving outcomes for learners, including courses, bespoke consultancy and in-house training.

**During the current school closures, we are still offering school support in a variety of ways such as video conferencing, phone calls and bespoke creation of resources remotely. Coming soon will be teacher training via virtual classrooms. We would be happy to discuss your needs.**

For further details referring to English, please contact:  
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