



For World Mental Health Day

Author inspiration by Joshua Seigal

Writing about emotions using poetry (suggested age 12-18)

We are all likely to be experiencing a wide range of emotions at the current time. This poetry workshop involves writing about these emotions in a creative, playful and perhaps humorous way.

Step 1

Jot down a list of emotions. Try to think of at least five, e.g. 'happiness'; 'fear'; 'anger'; 'disappointment'; 'relief'.

Step 2

Pick one of these emotions. This will be the emotion that you will write about. Now think: if your emotion was an animal, what would it be? For example, 'fear is a tiger'.

Step 3

Try to describe this animal in as much detail as you can, using your five senses. For example, 'The tiger is standing in a terrifying stance. She has terrible stripes on her back...' Try to use interesting and creative descriptions.

Option: You could draw a picture of the animal.

Option: You could describe different parts of the animal's body.

Step 4

Read Joshua Seigal's poem 'The Tiger' (on the following page). Using this as inspiration and using your own ideas that you have generated so far, write a poem about your animal or emotion. Here are some ideas to think about:

- What might it be like to meet your animal?
- Does anything unexpected happen when you meet it?
- How will you describe it?





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The Tiger
doesn't want you
to look into her eyes.

You can marvel at her stance
and the way her tongue flicks
across her fangs;

you can cower at her claws
and the stripes that streak
like poison down her back;

you can even draw up close
to catch her bitter breath
but the tiger doesn't want you
to look into her eyes

for should you do so
you might see nothing more
than another little housecat
blinking back at you.

About the author

Joshua Seigal is a London based poet and performer. He has visiting schools and festivals all over the world, and in 2020 was the recipient of the highly prestigious Laugh Out Loud Book Award. His books are published by Bloomsbury.

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