

# Poetry

## The Peacock

### Assessment Task 8

#### Teacher notes: *The Peacock*

**Curriculum references:** Years 5–6

**Programme of study:** Reading comprehension

Children should be taught to:

- maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:
  - continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
  - making comparisons within and across books
- understand what they read by:
  - checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context
  - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
  - summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas
- discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader
- provide reasoned justifications for their views.

#### Running the task

- Cover the title and first line of the poem, and read it to the class.
- Ask the children what or who they think the poem is about. Ask them to give reasons for their suggestions. If the class are struggling, read the poem again and explain that much of the poem focuses on the most prominent part of this bird's body – the tail.
- Working in pairs, ask the children to explain the meaning of the words "*adoration*", "*gloriously*", "*iridescent*" and "*sumptuous*" by using dictionaries. This will support their understanding when answering the questions.
- Now ask them to complete the questions independently.
- When the children have had time to answer the questions, ask them to use their dictionaries again to look up the meaning of the words in the final question – "*eerie*" and "*plaintive*" – to check and clarify their understanding of these words.

#### Assessment guidance

Use the list below to identify the content domains that the children are working on in this task.

Typically, children working at the expected standard will:

- show an understanding of the meaning of vocabulary in context **2a**
- accurately and selectively summarise main ideas, events, characters and information in fiction and non-fiction texts **2c**
- make developed inferences drawing on evidence from the text **2d**
- explain and justify inferences, providing evidence from the text to support reasoning **2d**
- make accurate and appropriate comparisons within texts. **2h**

## What to expect

1. **At the start of the poem, why is the peacock described as being “*overdressed*”? Tick the best answer.** (2d)

This is quite a challenging question for the children to answer. Children working towards the expected standard are likely to answer “*He is wearing lots of clothes*”. Most children working at greater depth within the expected standard should answer this question correctly.

2. **Write *two* things we know about the peacock’s tail from verse 3.** (2d)

Most children working at the expected standard should be able to say that his tail has “*jewels*” on it. Some will be able to identify one of the other features from the text. Children working at greater depth within the expected standard will be able to identify other features. Children working towards the expected standard may struggle to explain features of his tail without copying words from the text.

3. **Draw lines to match what each verse is about.** (2c)

This is a straightforward question that most children should be able to answer correctly. Some children working towards the expected standard may confuse the relevant comments from verse 2 and verse 3.

4. **What image does the poem give you of the peacock at the start, and how does this change at the end of the poem?** (2h)

Children working at greater depth within the expected standard will be able to clearly explain how the image of the peacock changes from the start to the end of the poem. Most children working at the expected standard should also be able to explain this.

5. **Using the poem, tick one box in each row to show whether the statement is true or false.** (2d)

This is a straightforward question that most children working at the expected standard should be able to answer correctly.

6. **“*An eerie, plaintive wail rings out.*”** (2a)

**Give *two* other words that the poet could have used instead of “*eerie, plaintive*”.**

This is a challenging question. Support the children further by suggesting that they read the whole sentence, since the end of the sentence (“... *wail rings out*”) may help their understanding. Children working towards the expected standard may simply offer words such as noisy or loud. Most children working at the expected standard should be able to correctly give the word “*strange*” (or a similar alternative).

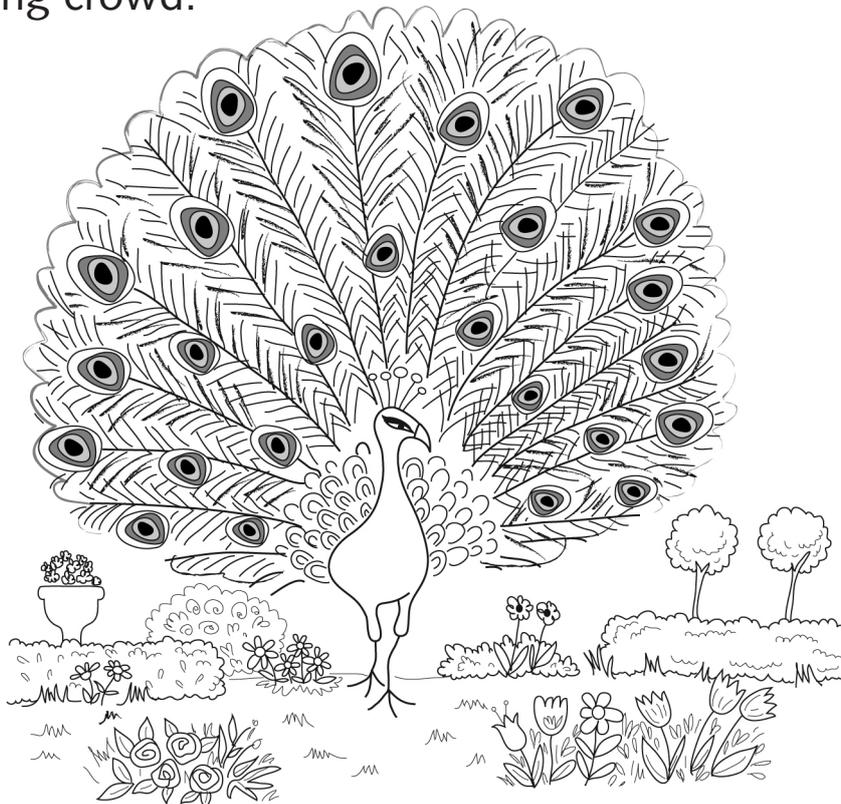
## The Peacock by Cynthia Ryder

The peacock,  
somewhat overdressed  
for an ordinary day,  
comes rainbow shimmering  
across the ordered lawns.

His sweeping tail  
brushes the close-cropped  
grass,  
as, with the merest bow,  
he accepts the adoration  
of the gaping crowd.

With regal pomp  
he gloriously unfurls  
the iridescent splendour  
of his jewelled tail  
and, emperor-like, stands proud.

But then, he goes too far;  
he tries to sing.  
An eerie, plaintive wail rings out.  
A noise not fitting in the least,  
for such a sumptuous king.



Name:

Date:

## Read the text, then answer the questions.

1. At the start of the poem, why is the peacock described as being "overdressed"? Tick the best answer.

He is wearing lots of clothes.

His clothes are very colourful.

His clothes are very fancy for a normal day.

He is going to show off.

2. Write **two** things we know about the peacock's tail from verse 3.

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3. Draw lines to match what each verse is about.

Verse 1                      The peacock makes a noise.

Verse 2                      The peacock appears.

Verse 3                      Everyone stares at the peacock.

Verse 4                      The peacock opens his tail.

4. What image does the poem give you of the peacock at the start, and how does this change at the end of the poem?

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5. Using the poem, tick one box in each row to show whether the statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
The peacock is on a well-kept and tidy lawn.		
The peacock does not like lots of people.		
The peacock keeps his tail feathers hidden.		
The peacock does not have a good singing voice.		

6. "An eerie, plaintive wail rings out."

Give **two** other words that the poet could have used instead of "eerie, plaintive".

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