

A blue wooden picket fence stands in a grassy field. Behind the fence, there are dense green bushes and trees. In the background, a rolling landscape of green fields and a few distant trees is visible under a clear sky. The text 'Writing Descriptive poems' is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

# Writing Descriptive poems

**Aims: Students will understand poetic techniques and how to use them in creating a poem about the natural world.**

**Objectives: Students will create a poem using the poetic techniques learned.**

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**Previous Learning:**

**Some awareness of basic poetic techniques (imagery etc)**

**Tips for parents and students:**

**Take your time using this workbook - little and often.**

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# Starter

Acrostic poems

Have a bit of fun!

Acrostic poem generator:

<https://www.poem-generator.org.uk/acrostic/>

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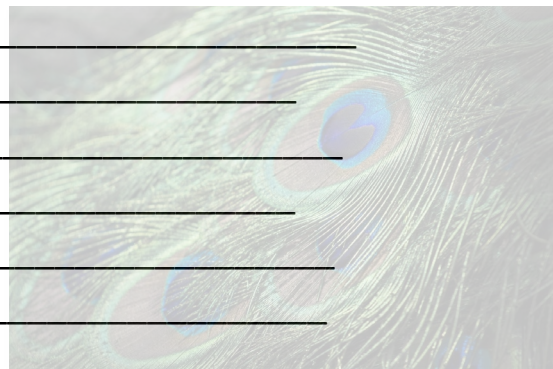
# Alliteration

Task: Fill in the alliterative phrases with a noun (what the adjectives are describing). For example: Twenty terrific toddlers.

1. One optimistic \_\_\_\_\_
2. Two tiny \_\_\_\_\_
3. Three theatrical \_\_\_\_\_
4. Four feathered \_\_\_\_\_
5. Five flammable \_\_\_\_\_
6. Six slow \_\_\_\_\_
7. Seven severed \_\_\_\_\_
8. Eight evil \_\_\_\_\_
9. Nine napping \_\_\_\_\_
10. Ten truculent \_\_\_\_\_

Task: Fill in the alliterative phrases with a noun and a verb (what the noun is doing). For example: Twenty terrific toddlers tap danced.

1. One optimistic \_\_\_\_\_
2. Two tiny \_\_\_\_\_
3. Three theatrical \_\_\_\_\_
4. Four feathered \_\_\_\_\_
5. Five flammable \_\_\_\_\_
6. Six slow \_\_\_\_\_
7. Seven severed \_\_\_\_\_
8. Eight evil \_\_\_\_\_
9. Nine napping \_\_\_\_\_
10. Ten truculent \_\_\_\_\_



Task: Continue describing with alliterative words.  
For example: Verdant, Vibrant green.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ ferns
2. \_\_\_\_\_ houses
3. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
graveyards
4. \_\_\_\_\_ rabbit
5. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ stream
6. \_\_\_\_\_ hallway
7. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, duck
8. \_\_\_\_\_ bear
9. \_\_\_\_\_ sun
10. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ lions

Task: Use these in a sentence. For example: The hills were a verdant, vibrant green.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_



# Onomatopoeia

Task: write out the sentences, filling in the onomatopoeic word.

1. The old door \_\_\_\_\_ open.
2. The hooves of the horse \_\_\_\_\_ in the distance.
3. The cat \_\_\_\_\_ at the rat.
4. The ducks \_\_\_\_\_ as we threw them bread.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the birds was all around.
6. The hens \_\_\_\_\_ in the farmyard.
7. The birds \_\_\_\_\_ their wings gently.
8. The bee \_\_\_\_\_ around the garden.

Make a list of any other onomatopoeic words you can think of:

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Task: Describe the scene:

For example: *a birthday party*

The family chattered. The corks were popped, and the champagne fizzed. The music thudded, and below that boom, children giggled.

An overflowing river: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Enjambment

1. Task: Read <https://literaryterms.net/enjambment/>
  - a. Make notes on the different uses of the technique.
2. Task: Read the example below. Highlight where the lines run on (where enjambment is used).

When I see birches bend to left and right  
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,  
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay  
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them  
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
After a rain. They click upon themselves  
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored  
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.

Robert Frost, "Birches"





Task: Take the paragraph of description and turn it into poetry, using enjambment to highlight words and ideas that you think are important or interesting.

Example: *Jamaica Inn*, Daphne du Maurier: "It was a cold grey day in late November. The weather had changed overnight, when a backing wind brought a granite sky and a mizzling rain with it, and although it was now only a little after two o'clock in the afternoon the pallor of a winter evening seemed to have closed upon the hills, cloaking them in mist."

*Cold grey and late*

*in November. Overnight*

*weather changed, a backing*

*wind brought a granite Sky. A mizzling rain*

*With it. Only a little the pallor of a winter*

*Evening seemed*

*Closed upon the hills. Cloaking*

*mist.*

"The road ahead tapered to infinity, in stages. Hill led to hill led to hill, and at each summit the road abruptly shrank to half its width, then half its width again, until it became a hairline crack in the land, then a faint wobble in the haze, then nothing." *Bad Land*, Jonathan Rabban.

Now, edit a second draft, cutting at least 50%

# Similes

## Using 'like'

1. The moon glowed like....
2. Raindrops dripped from the trees like....
3. Smoke floated on the air like....
4. Dewdrops glistened on the grass like....
5. The fog covered the lake like....
6. The road wound its way up the mountain like....
7. The waterfall rushed downward like....
8. Snow drifted downward like....

## Using 'as'

1. The rose petals were as delicate as....
2. The water is as smooth as....
3. The clouds are as fluffy as....
4. The choir sang as sweetly as....
5. The water moved as slowly as....
6. The rain tapped on the roof as loudly as....
7. The wind rushed through the trees as ferociously as....
8. The winter was as fearsome as....

# Improving your similes

- If you want to say a child is very *happy* you can say:
  - *She was as happy as a May-Pole.*
  - We can improve this by thinking of something even happier than a May-Pole. A *gathering of May-Poles on a summer's day*. And so a better simile might be:  
*She was as happy as a gathering of May-Poles on a summer's day.*

Task: Take 6 of your best similes, and improve them

1. ..
2. ..
3. ..
4. ..
5. ..
6. ..



# Metaphors

*'Metaphors are a way to compare to by saying that one thing is another thing. For example, we say somebody is a fool. In the past in Europe, a fool was a person who entertained the king or queen by doing silly things. The fool was a kind of clown. He often did crazy or stupid things to make people laugh. So when we call somebody a fool we really mean that he or she is doing something silly or stupid. We don't really mean that they are somebody who entertains the king or queen. We are using a metaphor.'* Coursehero.com

When we call someone an rock, we really mean that \_\_\_\_\_

If we say someone is a lion, we really mean that \_\_\_\_\_

When we call a man an ogre, we really mean \_\_\_\_\_

When someone's eyes are pure ice they are \_\_\_\_\_

If we say that somebody is a volcano ready to explode, we really mean that \_\_\_\_\_

When we say somebody is an open book, we mean that \_\_\_\_\_

What is each metaphor saying about the place or situation?

- “Mr. Neck storms into class, a bull chasing thirty-three red flags.” —  
Speak, Laurie Anderson
  - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- They found themselves in a coffin of a room.
  - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- “Delia was an overbearing cake with condescending frosting, and frankly, I was on a diet.” —Lament: The Faerie Queen's Deception, Maggie Stiefvater
  - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The pathway as a minefield of holes and traps.
  - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the following using metaphors:

A large field

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A dark sky

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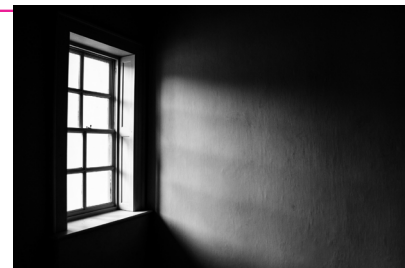
A bright morning

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An impressive mountain

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A small stream



Personification: a figurative language technique where an object or idea is given human traits or characteristics.

**Task: In each sentence, an object or idea is personified. Identify the object or idea that is being personified and explain which human trait or action is applied to the object or idea.**

**The wind whispered through the dark and gloomy forest.**

- **What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_ Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_**

**I watched as the lightning danced across the sky.**

- **What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_ Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_**

**Time crawled as Tim sat in the hot detention room painfully listening to the tick of the clock.**

- **What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_ Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_**

**The moon was sleeping in the midnight sky.**

- **What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_ Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_**

**The wind whistled happily through the cracks in the window.**

- **What is being personified? \_\_\_\_\_ Which human trait or quality is given? \_\_\_\_\_**

# What scene will your poem capture?

Your aim is to create an engaging/inspiring/imaginative atmosphere.



# The Hawthorn





# The Birch Tree





# The Alder



## The ancient Oak Tree





## Trees in winter

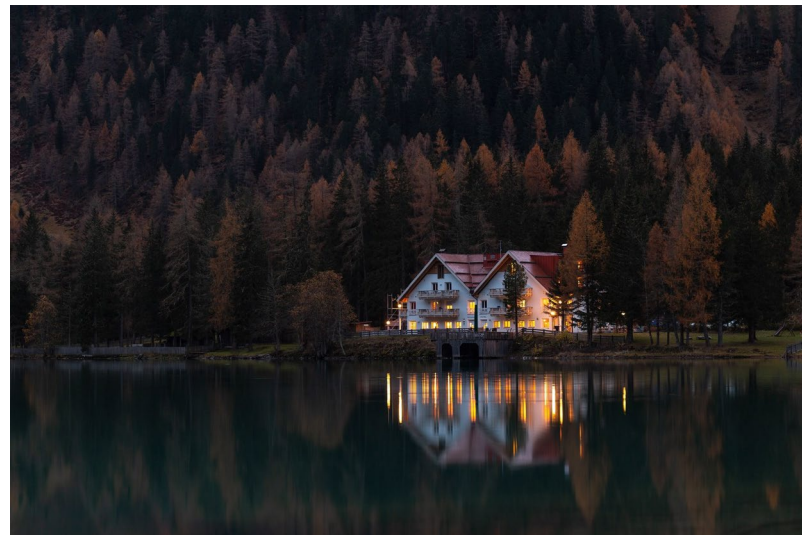


## The tree(s) on the moor





## The trees and the moonlight





- Choose an image
- Copy out the table below and fill in:
  - Note the first things you **see** in the picture - look at everything: the tree, leaves, flowers, the sky, the background, landscape, pathways, fences, water...
  - Now describe it
  - What is it doing?
  - How is it doing it?
  - Images

*Example:*

*What do you see: Branches.*

*Describe it: Twisted. Strong.*

*What is it doing: Tangling. Stretching.*

*How is it doing it: Outwards. Lovingly.*

*Image: Like fingers. Nails*

Task: Think of synonyms. Use a Thesaurus for extra help.

*Example:*

*What do you see: Branches, bough, fork, limbs, arms*

*Describe it: Twisted, gnarled, serpentine. Strong, firm, stout, sinewy, mighty.*

*What is it doing: Tangling. Stretching, pulling, widening, swelling. Coiling. Extending.*

*How is it doing it: Outwardly. Lovingly, zealously, passionately.*

*Image: Like fingers. Like finger nails. Like claws*



1

What do you see: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe it: \_\_\_\_\_

What is it doing: \_\_\_\_\_

How is it doing it: \_\_\_\_\_

Image: \_\_\_\_\_

2

What do you see: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe it: \_\_\_\_\_

What is it doing: \_\_\_\_\_

How is it doing it: \_\_\_\_\_

Image: \_\_\_\_\_

3

What do you see: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe it: \_\_\_\_\_

What is it doing: \_\_\_\_\_

How is it doing it: \_\_\_\_\_

Image: \_\_\_\_\_

4

What do you see: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe it: \_\_\_\_\_

What is it doing: \_\_\_\_\_

How is it doing it: \_\_\_\_\_

Image: \_\_\_\_\_

5

What do you see: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe it: \_\_\_\_\_

What is it doing: \_\_\_\_\_

How is it doing it: \_\_\_\_\_

Image: \_\_\_\_\_

6

What do you see: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe it: \_\_\_\_\_

What is it doing: \_\_\_\_\_

How is it doing it: \_\_\_\_\_

Image: \_\_\_\_\_

# Writing your poem

- Now create a stanza for each noun that you identify (what you see)
- In each stanza use at least one of each:
  - Alliteration
  - Onomatopoeia
  - Enjambment
  - Metaphor
  - Simile
  - Personification
  - Assonance
- Be confident about the Tense you use. Feel free to change the tense.
- Looking at your tables what themes emerge? Pick phrases that are thematically cohesive (is your tree strong? It is beautiful?)

*Example:*

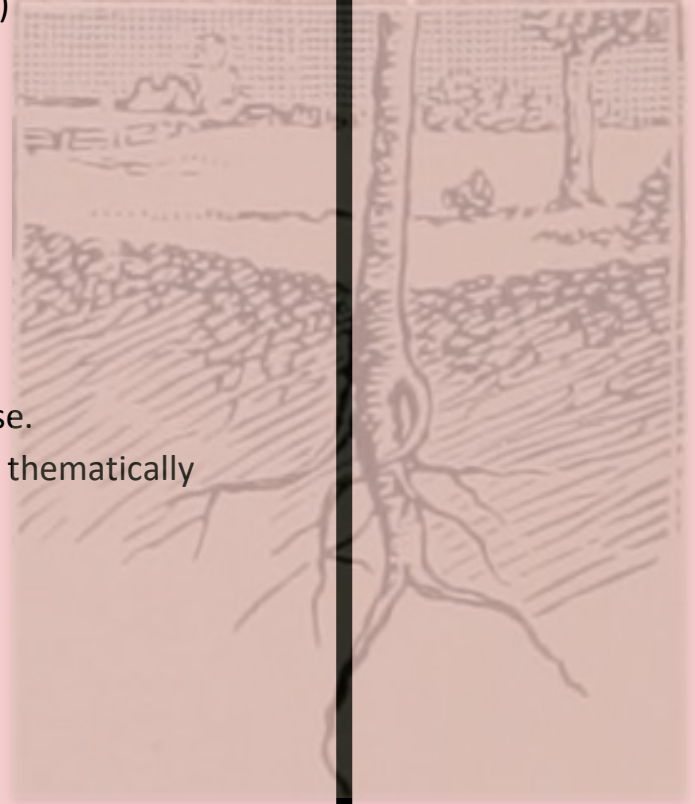
*Like gnarled, creative fingers, the bough is twisted.*

*But it is an arm that stretches and pulls.*

*Outward. It is a Loving claw over the earth.*

*Its love is zealous and tangled.*

*It swells and coils.*



# Editing

Cut what you've written by 50%

- Go away and leave the poem for 2 or 3 days.
- Cut again, another 20%
- Edit:
  - Your punctuation choice.
  - Repetition
  - Short phrases
  - Alliteration
  - Added Imagery
  - Assonance
  - Onomatopoeia

*Example:*

*Like a gnarled finger, the bough is creative.*

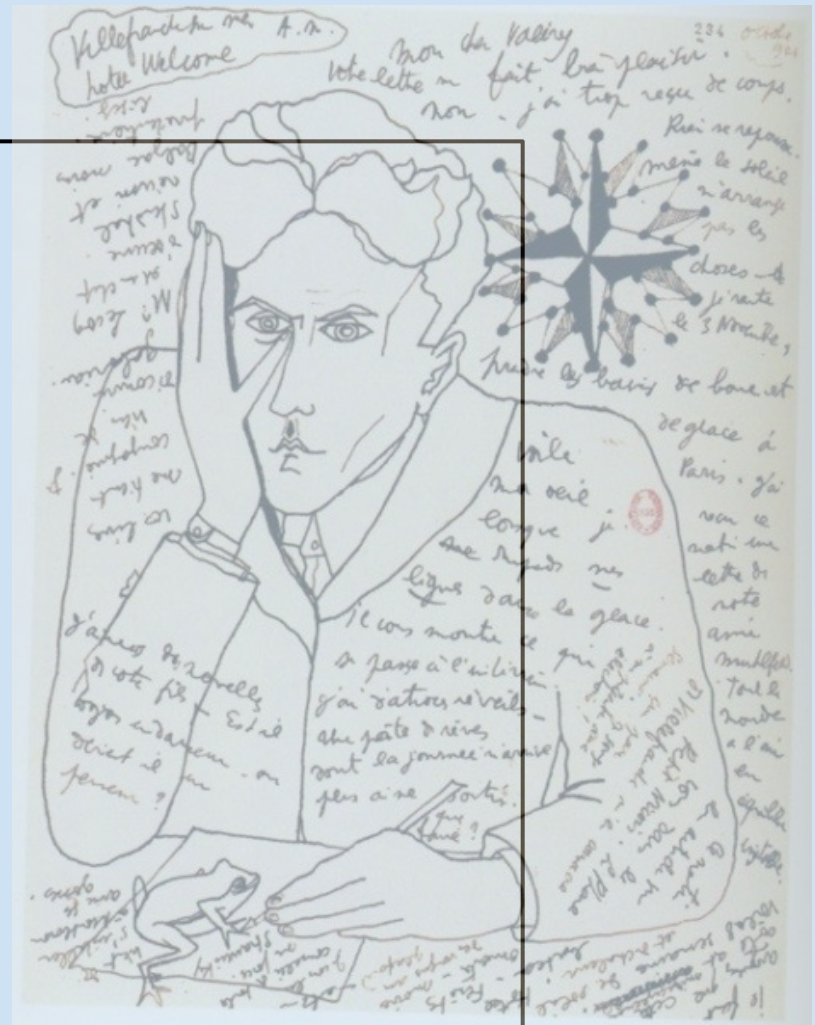
*It's a twisted*

*beauty that stretches*

*Outward, a creative claw*

*over the earth whose love is zealous and tangled.*

*Swells and coils.*



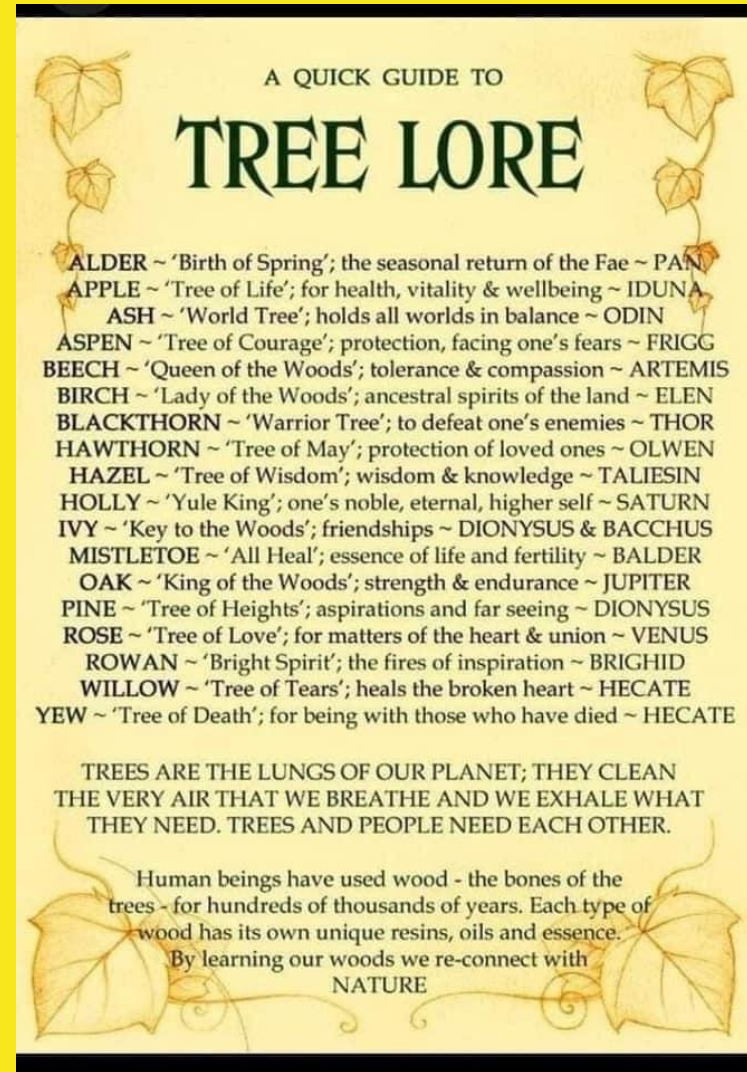
# Follow on work

Task: Character description

Read the guide opposite.

Read the article: <http://www.ancientwisdom.com/treelore.htm>

- Take one tree and write a brief outline of the 'character' of that tree.
- What is its role? (Healer? King? Provide strength?)
  - What is the character's role in their society/world?
- Research the tree. What does it look like?
  - Write a description of what that character looks like based on the tree, eg: a strong tall Oak might be a physically strong King, long, with powerful arms to wield a sword.
- What is the human connection with it?





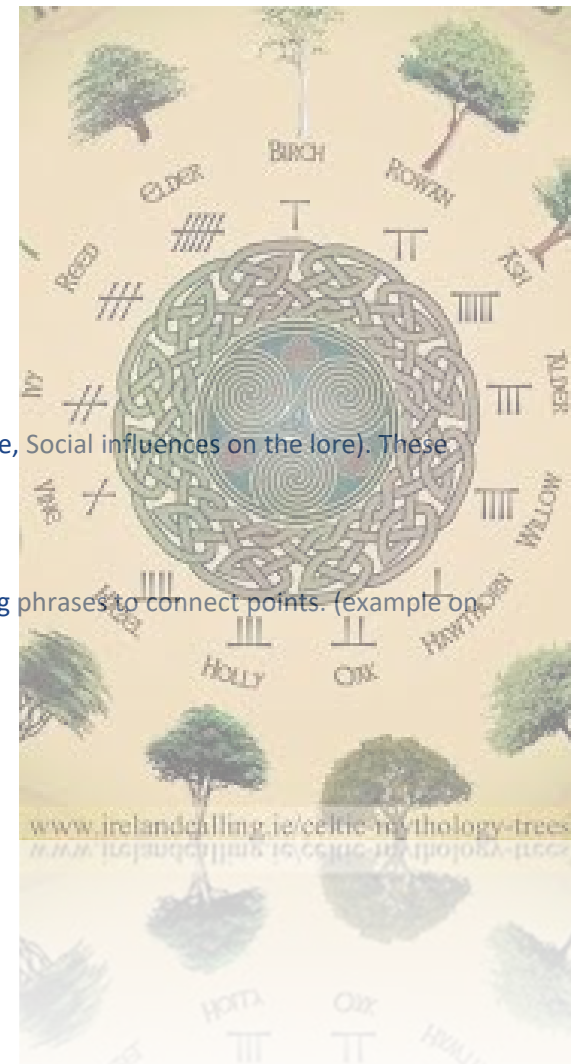
More on Tree lore:

<https://www.earthstoriez.com/tree-lore/>

<https://druidry.org/druid-way/teaching-and-practice/druid-tree-lore>

### Task: Informative Essay

1. Look at the links above.
2. Find and read 1 other source, online.
3. Note down interesting headings that emerge from your reading (for example Religion and Tree lore, Social influences on the lore). These will be your paragraph topics.
4. Write down in note form at least 3 points for each heading.
  - a. Add additional Facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, figures to each point.
5. Now edit your notes into prose form using topic sentences to introduce each paragraph and linking phrases to connect points. (example on next slide).
6. Re-Drafting:
  1. Read over your draft.
  2. Fix spelling, grammar typo mistakes.
  3. Improve your expression:
    - Vocabulary, sentence structure, linking phrases.
    - Sentence structure:
    - Short sentences.
    - Repeated sentence structure
    - Semi colons
    - Lists



## Links to more resources and activities:

- Journeys into the Literary Landscape:
  - <http://www.centreforstewardship.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Journeys-into-the-Literary-Landscape-Resource-Pack.pdf>
- Poetry Class:
  - <https://resources.poetrysociety.org.uk>
- Some easy, quick steps:
  - <https://www.motherearthliving.com/health-and-wellness/how-to-write-nature-poetry>
- For more challenges:
  - <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/create-your-own-metaphors-1277717>
- Found poetry:
  - <https://examples.yourdictionary.com/found-poem-examples.html>

Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art—  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like nature's patient, sleepless Diemide,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablutions round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen masses  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
—  
Follow'd upon my fair bones ripening breast  
To feel for ever its soft swell and fall,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live <sup>ever</sup> ~~over~~ or else swoon to death.