

## What to do today

*IMPORTANT! Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and with any weblinks or use of the Internet required.*

### 1. Reading time

Read the short poem *Four Ducks on a Pond* by William Allingham.

- In what ways is the poem like *Sam's Duck*?
- The poet says, 'to remember with tears'. Do you think he means tears of joy or sadness?
- What could make him so happy about what he saw? What could make him so sad?

### 2. Comparing poems

Read *Night Cat* by Helen Dunmore, a poem about an animal – like Sam's duck – that goes away and leaves a person behind.

- Answer the *Questions* about the poem.

### 3. Writing time

Where do you think the cat in *Night Cat* went to after it vanished? What sort of things did it do? Who did it meet and play with – or fight?!

On *The Further Adventures of the Night Cat*, write all about what it got up to before dawn.

### Now try this Fun-Time Extra

Have you ever got close to a shy or nervous animal? Maybe in a zoo or a safari park? Maybe in school when someone brought an animal in? Maybe it was just in your garden?!

- On *My Animal Experience* draw the creature and say what happened.

## Four Ducks on a Pond



Four ducks on a pond,  
A grass bank beyond,  
A blue sky of Spring,  
White clouds on the wing\*;  
What a little thing  
To remember for years –  
To remember with tears.

*by William Allingham*

From *Read Me First, Poems for Younger Readers for Every Day of the Year*,  
Louise Bolongaro,  
Macmillan Children's Books, 2003

\* **on the wing** – flying past in the breeze, as if they were birds

## The Night Cat



She's there by the fence  
but you mustn't call out,  
like a scoop of night  
or a water shadow  
tense for flight  
she'll twist and go,  
don't open your mouth –  
the moon's so close  
that the stars blow out –  
you turn she's gone  
leaving that patch  
where the moon shone  
leaving the empty dress of night  
with the stars picked out  
and you alone.

*by Helen Dunmore*

From *Read Me First, Poems for Younger Readers for Every Day of the Year*,  
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## Questions about The Night Cat

1. Which of the words below describe the cat in the poem?  
Circle any of the words that you think describe the cat well.

*bold*   *cautious*   *wary*   *boisterous*   *excited*   *timid*

2. What colour do *a scoop of night* and *a water shadow* make you think of?

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3. Why is that a very appropriate colour for this poem?

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4. **Rhyming verse** features sets of words at the end of lines that rhyme with one another and has a strong, singsong rhythm when you say it out loud.

**Free verse** is poetry where there are no or very few rhymes and where the rhythm is not so regular.

Which term best describes *The Night Cat*, **rhyming verse** or **free verse**?

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5. The gap between *you turn* and *she's gone* on line 10 is not a mistake. The poet deliberately put it there. Why do you think she wanted a gap between those words?

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6. How does the person in the poem feel at the start of the poem? How do they feel at the end? What has caused the change?

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## The Further Adventures of the Night Cat

A writing template for 'The Further Adventures of the Night Cat'. The page is framed by a decorative border of colorful puzzle pieces in shades of red, yellow, blue, green, and orange. The central area is a large white rectangle with ten horizontal lines, providing space for writing.

## My Animal Experience



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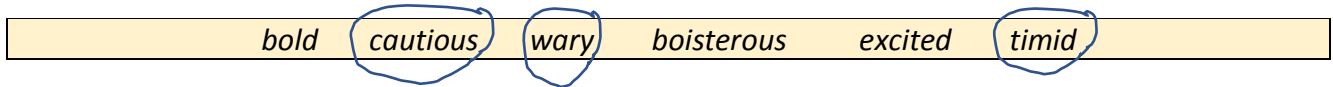
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## Answers - Questions about The Night Cat

1. Which of the words below describe the cat in the poem?  
Circle any of the words that you think describe the cat well.



2. What colour do *a scoop of night* and *a water shadow* make you think of?

Answers may vary – maybe dark blue or another dark colour

3. Why is that a very appropriate colour for this poem?

Answer should reflect what the children said above, e.g. dark blue because the sky is very dark blue at night-time.

4. **Rhyming verse** features sets of words at the end of lines that rhyme with one another and has a strong, singsong rhythm when you say it out loud.

**Free verse** is poetry where there are no or very few rhymes and where the rhythm is not so regular.

Which term best describes *The Night Cat*, **rhyming verse** or **free verse**?

Free verse, there are some rhymes but there isn't a regular rhythm.

5. The gap between *you turn* and *she's gone* on line 10 is not a mistake. The poet deliberately put it there. Why do you think she wanted a gap between those words?

Answers will vary but might indicate something like: to show that there's a pause as the watcher of the cat turns round very slowly.

6. How does the person in the poem feel at the start of the poem? How do they feel at the end?  
What has caused the change?

At the beginning the person is fascinated by the cat and excited to see it. At the end they seem to be sad and lonely. They might be feeling like this because the cat has gone.