

# The Early Purges - Seamus Heaney

This activity was developed by Val Blackburn at SEAL (Service for English as an Additional Language) in Brighton and Hove in 1998. SEAL will be putting an increasing number of their excellent activities on their own website shortly, and we will be providing a link from us to them. They will also be findable from the BECTA inclusion search engine. This poem was in the earlier GCSE anthology but the approach is a model that can be applied to other poems in order to promote discussion and provide access for all pupils. If you use this activity as it is you will need to find your own pictures of fluffy kittens and a handpump. If you have a group of pupils new to English you may want to add more pictures. If you use matrices to help access to other poems please send them to us plus any more ideas about using the vocabulary cards.

This activity was last updated 15th April 2002

The webaddress for this activity is <<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/earlypurges.pdf>>

## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

Supporting a cooperative network of teaching professionals throughout the European Union to develop and disseminate accessible teaching materials in all subject areas and for all ages.

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## BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project publishes a catalogue of activities plus lists in selected subject areas, and a newsletter available by post or internet: "PAPERCLIP".

\*These activities were influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in mixed classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of speaking and listening and other formative assessment.

\*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts and move them about physically they help to develop thinking skills.

\*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in mother tongue and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

\*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

\*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

\*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

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## Teachers' Notes

These materials have been developed to help students study the poem with a view to:

- general comprehension
- vocabulary and spelling
- rhyme and rhythm
- figures of speech

There are two comprehension/language grids and three vocabulary grids.

### **Suggested uses**

You can keep one grid sheet whole and cut the other up into cards, or cut both sheets up. Pupils can work together to match the cards to the text on the grid, or find pairs of cards. You can simplify this process by printing the grids in two different colours. When complete some of the joined up cards become sentences that can be sorted into short paragraphs. These can be written up, edited and added to. You will need to find pictures or if you prefer definitions for the kittens and handpump. You can of course add more information or encourage pupils to do so.

The vocabulary grids can be used whole for dictionary work ,or cut up to be used as games. You or the pupils could provide definitions and pupils could match them etc.

Please send back to us any ideas you may have on using the grids and any new grids for other poems.

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<p>This poem has a rhyme scheme</p>	<p>(picture here of three kittens)</p>	<p>These words mean thrown casually or carelessly.</p>	<p>'Soft paws scraping like mad.'</p>
<p>When the poet was six, he was frightened when....</p>	<p>'on the snout of the pump'</p>	<p>"Sure isn't it better for them now?"</p>	<p>'Like wet gloves'</p>
<p>'bobbed'</p>	<p>When the poet was an adult, he understood why....</p>	<p>(picture here of a hand pump and bucket)</p>	<p>'glossy'</p>
<p>'the three sogged remains'</p>	<p>false</p>	<p>"Bloody pups"</p>	<p>This means to have an effect on people who live in towns and cities.</p>

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Yes	These are kittens.	'pitched' 'slung'	This is an example of alliteration.
....he watched Dan kill the kittens.	This is a metaphor.	This is an example of Irish dialect.	This is a simile.
This describes how the kittens moved in the water.	....the kittens had to be killed.	This is an old water pump.	This describes the wet kittens' fur.
This is how the poet describes the dead wet kittens.	This means 'not true'.	This is how the poet refers to unwanted animals on the farm.	'cuts ice'

## The Early Purges - Seamus Heaney Verbs in the poem

saw	drown	pitched	scraping
soused	slung	bobbed	shone
sluiced	hung	watching	snared
tugged	prodded	shrug	consider

## The Early Purges - Seamus Heaney Nouns in the poem.

purges	kittens	bucket	sound
remains	din	snout	dunghill
paws	fear	crows	tug
sentiments	prevention	cruelty	pests

## The Early Purges - Seamus Heaney Adjectives in the poem.

early	scraggy	frail	soft
tiny	wet	glossy	dead
frightened	sogged	mealy	crisp
sickening	false	shrill	well-run