Onomatopoeia
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Onomatopoeia

The word **onomatopoeia** comes from two Greek words. It literally translates as 'name I make'.

Does this give you a clue as to what onomatopoeia means?

Onomatopoeia are words that **imitate** or copy the sound they describe.

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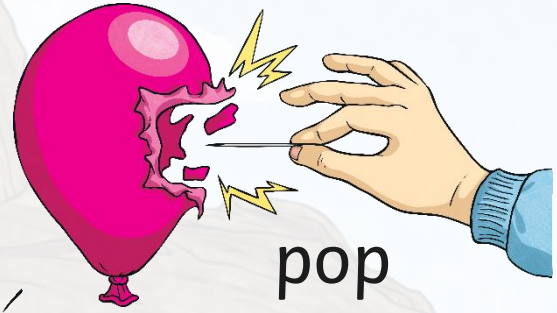
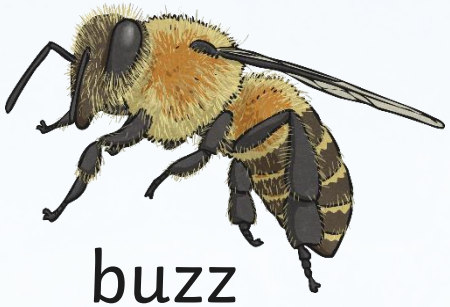
Examples of Onomatopoeia

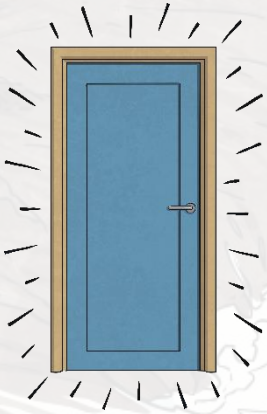
Say these examples out loud.
Can you hear how they copy the sound they are describing?



pop



buzz



bang

hiss

drip

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Common Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeic words are often seen when they are describing the noises made by:

drizzle

water

splash drip

giggle

voices

growl chatter

cheep

animals

oink miaow

crash

collisions

clink thud

swoosh

air

swish gasp

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Match the Onomatopoeia

Match these onomatopoeic words to the thing they are most likely to describe.

Click to Sort Answers

water	animals	voices

purr

splish

baa

grumble

babble

neigh

dribble

Do you agree?

Are there any words that could have gone in more than one category?

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Identifying Onomatopoeia

Can you spot the onomatopoeic words in these sentences?
Click each phrase to reveal.

The train **spluttered** to a halt.

The **ribbits** of the frog could be heard from the pond.

Birds **chirped** merrily in the trees.

A breeze **wafted** by as we sat by the **crashing** waves.

Rebecca **gasped** with horror.

We heard the bells **jingle** on the roof on Christmas Eve.

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Why Use It?

Using onomatopoeia can add meaning or dramatic effect to your writing. For example, think about the different image you get in your head for the following sentences:

The car hit the wall with a **bump**.

The car hit the wall with a **crunch**.

The car hit the wall with a **bang**.

The car hit the wall with a **whack**.

The same action happens every time but the use of onomatopoeia makes some sentences sound like the crash was more severe. You can almost hear the sound made by the car in each example.

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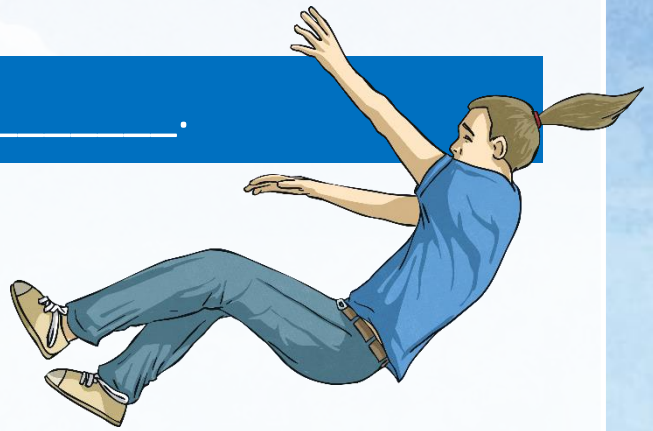
Using Onomatopoeia for Effect

Let's explore the different effects that onomatopoeic words have on the meaning of this sentence:

I fell to the floor with a _____.



Spin

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Have a Go!

How could you use an onomatopoeic word to complete this sentence?
Write as many different ways as possible in two minutes.

The farmyard was alive with the sound of _____.

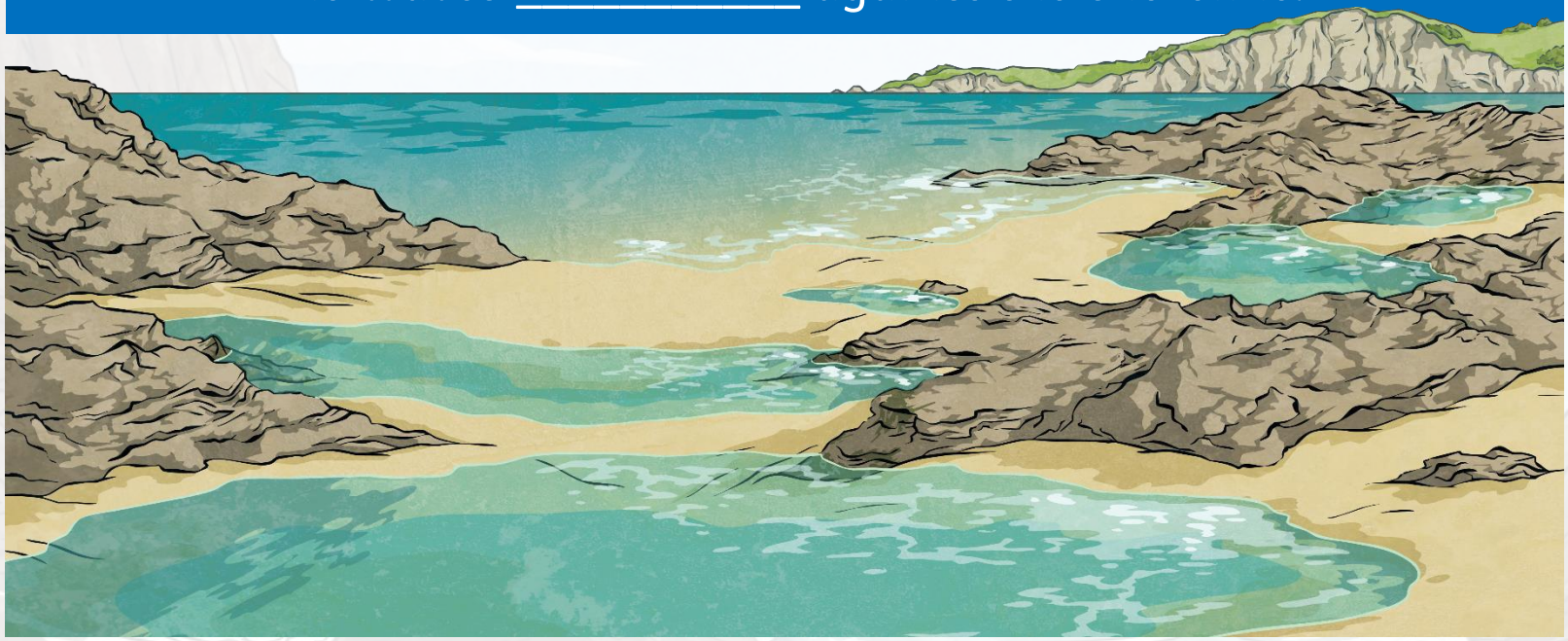
Start

End

Have a Go!

How could you use an onomatopoeic word to complete this sentence?
Write as many different ways as possible in two minutes.

The waves _____ against the shoreline.



Start

End

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