

These tasks will help you prepare a piece of writing to enter the Orwell Youth Prize, on the theme 'Coming Up for Air: Writing the Climate Crisis'



LESSON 1 - Wonder Walk: Seeing the World in a Pond

I wondered why it is that we're all such bloody fools. Why don't people, instead of the idiocies they do spend their time on, just walk round looking at things? That pool, for instance—all the stuff that's in it. Newts, water-snails, water-beetles, caddis-flies, leeches, and God knows how many other things that you can only see with a microscope. The mystery of their lives, down there under water. You could spend a lifetime watching them, ten lifetimes, and still you wouldn't have got to the end even of that one pool. And all the while the sort of feeling of wonder, the peculiar flame inside you. It's the only thing worth having, and we don't want it.

But I do want it.

George Orwell, *Coming Up for Air*, 1939

1) **Reading:** get inspiration from one or more of these three articles about walking:

- <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-8756431/15-minute-awe-walks-nature-boost-emotional-being.html>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/sep/21/lets-bring-back-the-dignity-of-walking-being-on-foot-in-your-city>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/nov/14/the-dutch-cities-using-walking-to-tackle-issues-from-vandalism-to-broken-streetlights>

2) **Walking:** do a 15-minute 'Wonder Walk' in your area. Or longer, if you fancy.

3) **Sharing:** bring or send one 'wonderful' photograph of something that you found inspiring on your walk, ready to explain it to the class. (Or you can bring the thing itself, if that's safe and legal!)

4) **Thinking:** always the trickiest part! You should link one thing you have seen to material about the climate crisis. For instance, if you have seen a pond like Orwell's, you might find an article about the importance of snails to garden life. Or, if it's a man-made wonder, you could research the environmental advantages of building it out of particular materials.

5) **Talking:** be ready to talk about your thoughts. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers – just your experience.

6) **Writing:** 'The World in My ... Street/Garden/Backyard/Pond/Village/Town/City' Write a short article for the school magazine or a local newspaper. Describe your wonder walk and explain how something in your local area relates to our global climate crisis.