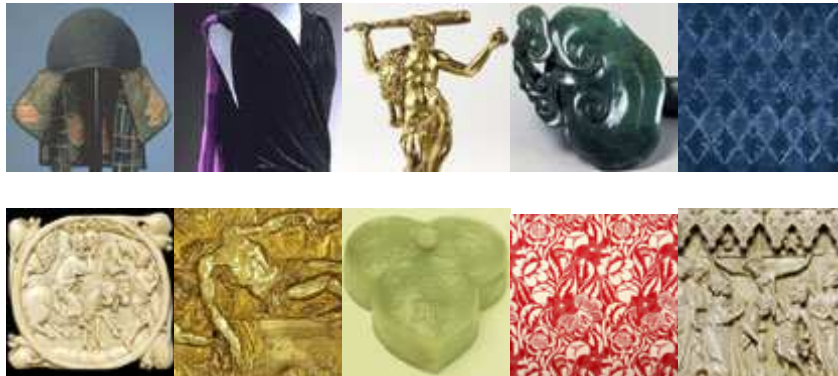


## Simplifying an Object

**Aim of the exercise:**  
**Learning to look in a different way**

You can use the same object as you used for the first exercise, or choose a new one from below.



Try and simplify the object you have chosen to a single quality: colour, shape, texture, material.

## Colour

Perhaps you have chosen colour. Here are a few examples:

- jade
- indigo
- ivory
- gilt
- vermilion

How can you best describe your object's colour, or colours? Think of similes and metaphors you can use. Examples: for a piece of blue Delft you might write: 'like an open cornflower on a white field'; for Chinese lacquer: 'a glossy drop of blood.' Use these verbal images as the basis for a poem.

## Similes and metaphors

A **simile** is a comparison. It contains the words 'like' or 'as':

- 'the blue glaze, like an open cornflower'
- 'the glaze as blue as a cornflower'

A **metaphor** does not draw a direct comparison. Instead, it implies an identity between two similar things:

- 'the blue glaze, an open cornflower'

## **Shape**

Instead of colour, you can use shape. Here's a suggestion you might like to try:

Find words to convey the shape of the object. Again, think of similes and/or metaphors you can use. Then try and represent the object visually using the words on the page. For example, if your object is a vase, you can play with irregular line lengths until you have made a rounded poem that conveys its shape before the reader has read a word.

You can make the poem purely about shape. Alternatively, once you have explored the possibilities of writing about the object's shape, you can introduce other qualities: texture, colour, decoration, etc.

## **Texture**

The texture of an object is always a useful thing to focus on, whatever your subject. Imagine how it might feel against your skin. Is it smooth or rough? Hard or soft? Is it scratchy? waxy? silky? What words will best describe it?

## **Material**

You can write about the material the object is made of. If you were only going to describe this, and nothing else, you'd need to look really closely, noting any changes in colour and texture, and any marks or imperfections. Suppose you choose a wood-carving: can you make out the marks left by the carver's gouge? Are there knots or wormholes in the wood? Is it chipped or scarred? Can you see stains in the wood? Can you describe them?

## **Abstraction**

Whatever quality you select to write about, you can, if you choose, move away from the physical presence of the object to explore that quality alone, writing quite an abstract poem that focuses purely on a particular colour (or colour combination), texture or shape.