

# Cows on the Beach

by Matthew Sweeney

Two cows,  
 fed-up with grass, field, farmer,  
 barged through barbed wire\*  
 and found the beach.  
 Each mooed to each:  
*This is a better place to be,  
 a stretch of sand next to the sea,  
 this is the place for me.*  
 And they stayed there all day,  
 strayed this way, that way,  
 over to rocks,  
 past discarded socks,  
 ignoring the few people they met  
 (it wasn't high season\* yet).  
 They dipped hooves in the sea,  
 got wet up to the knee,  
 they swallowed pebbles and sand,  
 found them a bit bland,  
 washed them down with sea-water,  
 decided they really ought to  
 rest for an hour.  
 Both were sure  
 they'd never leave here.  
 Imagine, they'd lived so near  
 and never knew!  
 With a swapped moo  
 they sank into sleep,  
 woke to the yellow jeep\*  
 of the farmer  
 revving there  
 feet from the incoming sea.  
*This is no place for cows to be,*  
 he shouted, and slapped them  
 with seaweed, all the way home.

## Glossary

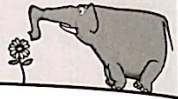
**barbed wire** — spiky wire used to make fences  
**high season** — the most popular time of year  
**jeep** — vehicle used to travel on rough land



Open the flap for the instructions.

Unfold these pages before you start

# Fact Retrieval Questions



*FACT RETRIEVAL* questions are all about picking out details from the poem. Use your fact-finding superpowers to uncover the answers to these questions.

1) Which of the following things were the cows **not** fed-up with?

Look at the very start of the poem.

the farmer

the grass

the sand

the field

Circle your answer.

1 mark

2) Read from '**This is a better place...**' to '**past discarded socks**'. How long did the cows spend on the beach?

half an hour

all day

one week

forever

Circle your answer.

1 mark

3) Read from '**They dipped...**' to '**...for an hour.**' Write down **one** thing that the cows ate at the beach.

.....

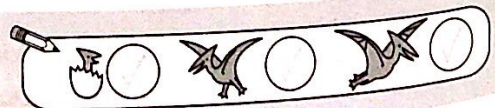
1 mark

4) Put a tick in the correct box to show whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
The cows didn't see any people at the beach.		
The sound of the farmer's jeep woke the cows up.		
The cows walked back home on their own.		

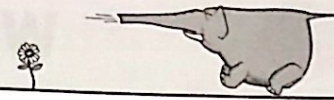
1 mark

*Poetrydactyls can retrieve facts until the cows come home. How did you find these questions?*



2d

# Inference Questions



For **INFERENCE** questions, you need to dig deeper to work out what the poet is suggesting. It's not always obvious, so look carefully for clues to help you answer the questions below.

- 1) Read from 'Each moored...' to '...place for me.'  
How do you think the cows felt when they first found the beach?

afraid

nervous

bored

happy

Circle your answer.

1 mark

- 2) 'washed them down with sea-water'  
What do you think the narrator means by this?

Tick **one** box.

The cows went swimming in the sea.

The cows drank from the sea.

The cows washed themselves in the sea.

The cows washed pebbles in the sea.

Look at what else is happening in this part of the poem.

1 mark

- 3) Read from 'Both were sure' to '...never knew!'  
How do you know that the cows liked the beach?

Look carefully at what the cows thought.

.....  
.....

1 mark

- 4) What evidence is there that the farmer was angry with the cows?  
Give **one** example.

.....

1 mark

Poetrydactyls love doing inference questions as much as they love eating cupcakes. Tick to show how you got on.



# Word Meaning Questions



For **WORD MEANING** questions, you need to show that you understand what certain words in the poem mean. If you're not sure, reading around a word can sometimes give you a clue.

- 1) **'barged through barbed wire'**

The word **'barged'** is closest in meaning to

Think about how cows would get through barbed wire.

cut

dug

pushed

climbed

Circle your answer.

1 mark

- 2) Read from **'And they stayed...'** to **'over to rocks'**.

Which word in this section means 'wandered'?

.....

1 mark

- 3) **'past discarded socks'**

What does the word **'discarded'** tell you about the socks?

Tick **one** box.

They've got holes in them.

They've been left behind.

The sand has made them dirty.

1 mark

- 4) **'feet from the incoming sea.'**

What does the word **'incoming'** mean in this line?

choppy

approaching

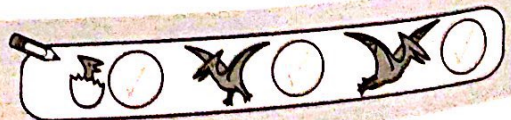
distant

shallow

Circle your answer.

1 mark

Poetrydactyls dream about word meaning questions every night. How did you get on with these questions?





2c

# Summary Questions

*SUMMARY questions ask you to think about what the main ideas and themes in the poem are. Read 'Cows on the Beach' again and then have a go at answering the questions below.*

- 1) Read from 'Each mooded to each' to '(it wasn't high season yet).'  
Which sentence best summarises this section of the poem?

Tick one box.

- The cows explore a beach.
- The cows eat some grass.
- The cows return home.
- The cows sit on a beach.

1 mark

- 2) The title of this poem is 'Cows on the Beach'.  
Suggest a different title you could use for the poem.

.....

1 mark

2e

# Prediction Question



*For PREDICTION questions, you need to look into the future. Don't worry, you don't need magical powers to do this — you just need to use the information you're given in the poem.*

- 1) Do you think the cows will try to escape again?  
Use evidence from the poem to explain your answer.

Try to give as much detail as you can.

.....  
.....  
.....

2 marks

*When it comes to summary and prediction questions, Poetrydactyls win gold every time. How did you do?*

