

The Wonderful Words

Imagine a world without language. All humans speak at least one language. The words we speak bring out our thoughts. Read the following poem on words.

*Never let a thought shrivel and die
For want of a way to say it
For English is a wonderful game
And all of you can play it.
All that you do is match the words
To the brightest thoughts in your head
So that they come out clear and true
And handsomely groomed and fed—
For many of the loveliest things
Have never yet been said.*

*Words are the food and dress of thought
They give it its body and swing
And everyone's longing today to hear
Some fresh and beautiful thing;
But only words can free a thought
From its prison behind your eyes
May be your mind is holding now
A marvellous new surprise!*

MARY O'NEILL

WORKING WITH THE POEM

1. With your partner, complete the following sentences in your own words using the ideas in the poem.
 - (i) Do not let a thought shrivel and die because _____

 - (ii) English is a _____ with words that everyone can play.
 - (iii) One has to match _____
 - (iv) Words are the _____ of thought.
2. In groups of four discuss the following lines and their meanings.
 - (i) All that you do is match the words
To the brightest thoughts in your head
 - (ii) For many of the loveliest things
Have never yet been said
 - (iii) And everyone's longing today to hear
Some fresh and beautiful thing
 - (iv) But only words can free a thought
From its prison behind your eyes