

Mary Atkinson
Poet and Writer for Children
www.maryatkinson.net



Let's write a poem!

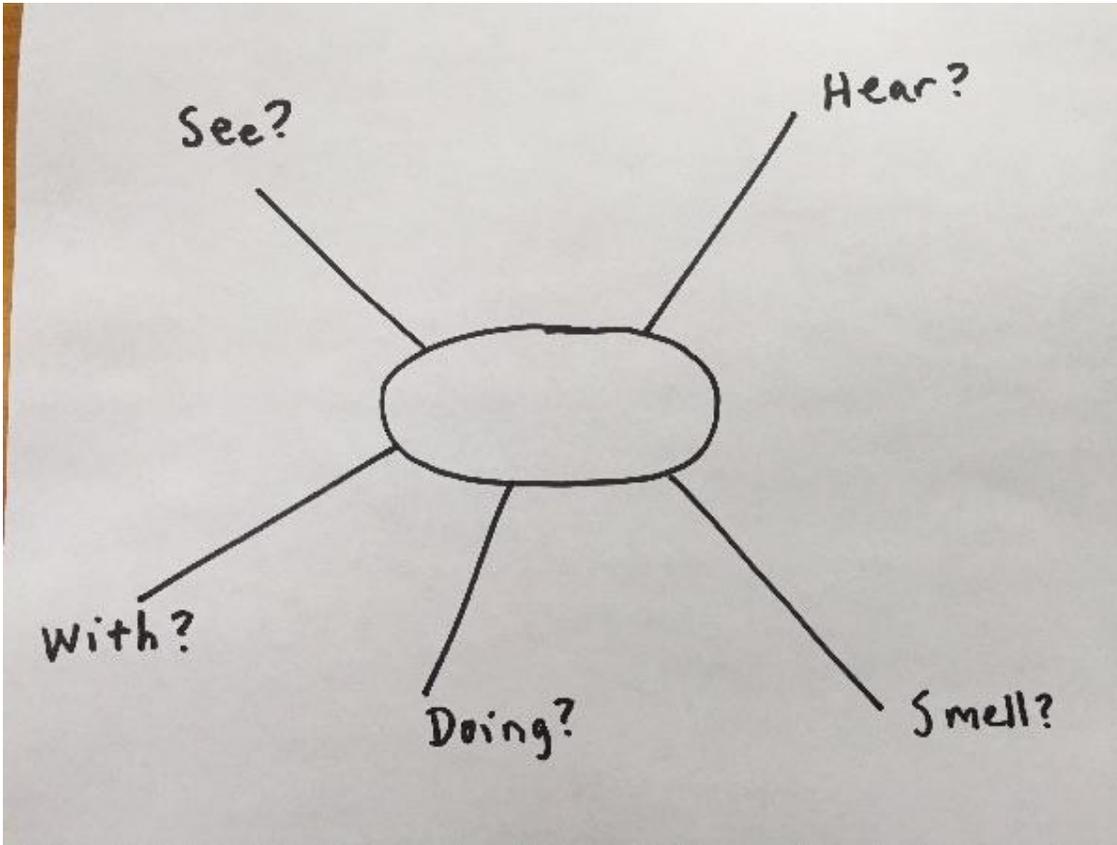
I've adapted my popular school and library poetry workshop "[My Special Place](#)" to help you write a poem. April is Poetry Month, but we can read and write poetry any time! Write this poem by yourself or do it with a friend or family member.

Give it a try! All you need is **your imagination, paper and pencil or pen.**

Step 1: Think of *your* special place. It can be anywhere! Beach, treehouse, candy store, kitchen, soccer field, city park, library, mountain top, a secret corner in your house. Take your time to think of a place you love.

Step 2: Close your eyes and daydream. Take an imaginary journey around your special place. What do you see? Hear? Smell? What are you doing? Who are you with?

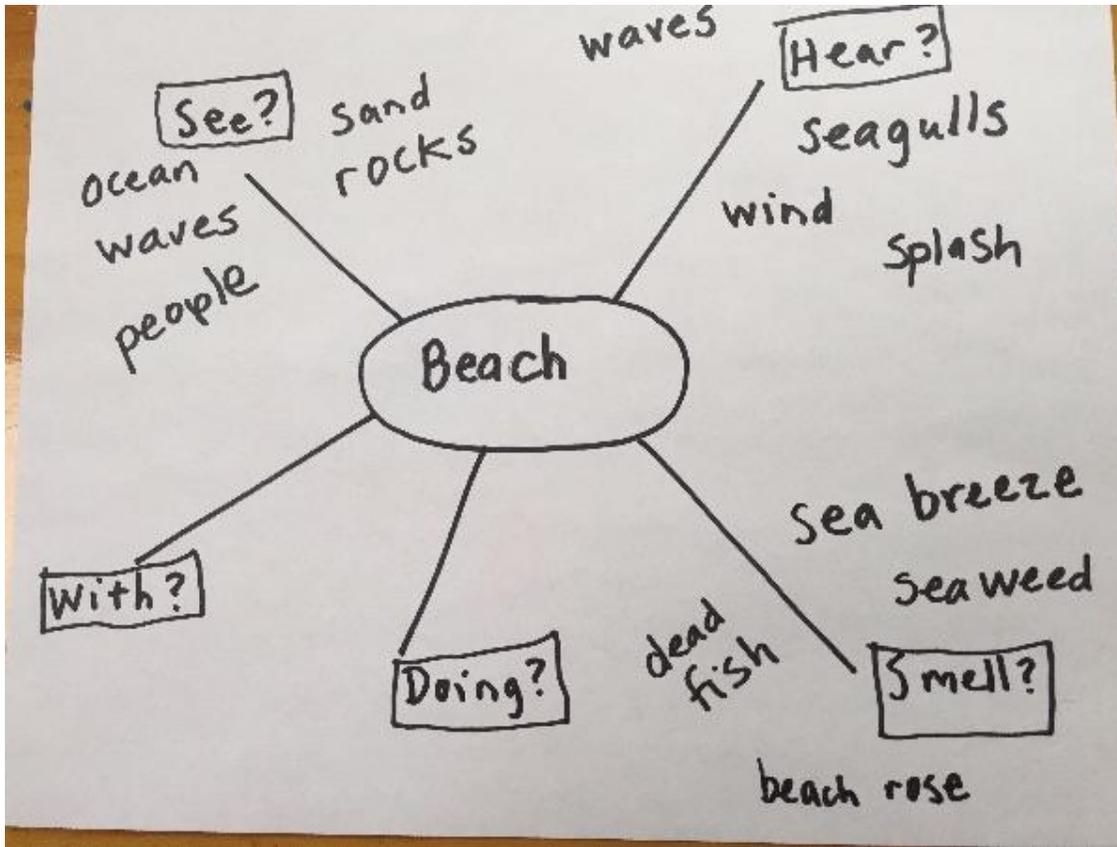
Step 3: Come out of your dream and make a graphic organizer. Draw this out on a sheet of paper.



Step 5: Write the name of your place in the center. I chose the beach because I love the beach!

Step 6: Write down what you see, hear, and smell. Write quickly, just a few words.

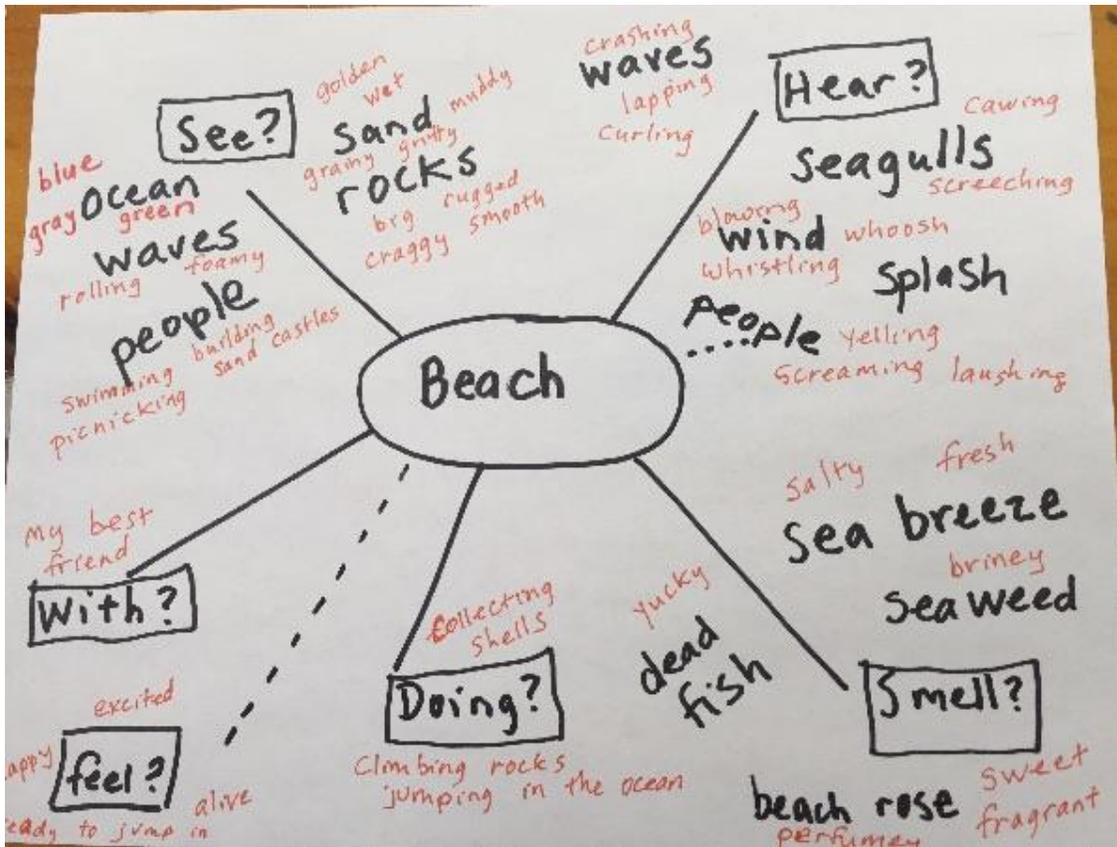
Here's mine:



Step 7: Say more about each word you wrote. Add words to describe.

Step 8: Finish up by writing what you're doing and who you're with. If you're alone, that's okay! Just write, "alone."

Here's mine: Notice I added a new category: How do you **feel**?



Now we've got a big mess! What's next?

Step 9: Write your first draft. Get another piece of paper. Where to start? Start with the title and just dig in. Skip around with the words on your graphic organizer. It's a first draft. If you're not happy with it, you can fix it later.

Here's my first attempt.

At the Beach

Ocean waves
 blue, gray and green
 Crashing against rocks
 Rolling onto sand
 Tickling my toes

Wind blowing
 Seagulls cawing
 soaring in the sky
 picking at a dead fish

yuck

*I'm collecting shells
and climbing rocks
big craggy rocks
with my best friend
Watch out for slippery seaweed!*

*We jump in the ocean
kicking and splashing
excited and happy
wet and wild
and free*

Step 10: Take a break. Maybe you're done. Maybe you want to revise it later. Maybe you want to draw a picture to go with your poem. Maybe you want to start a new poem.

Stay tuned! In my next post, we can write another poem together and I'll talk about revision.

"I see *revision* as a beautiful ray of hope. It's a new vision of something. It means you don't have to be perfect the first time. What a relief!"

Naomi Shihab Nye