

Celebrate

Poetry Month

with the

Shel Silverstein
Poetry
Workshop
Kit



HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks

www.shelsilverstein.com

Shel Silverstein Poetry Workshop Kit

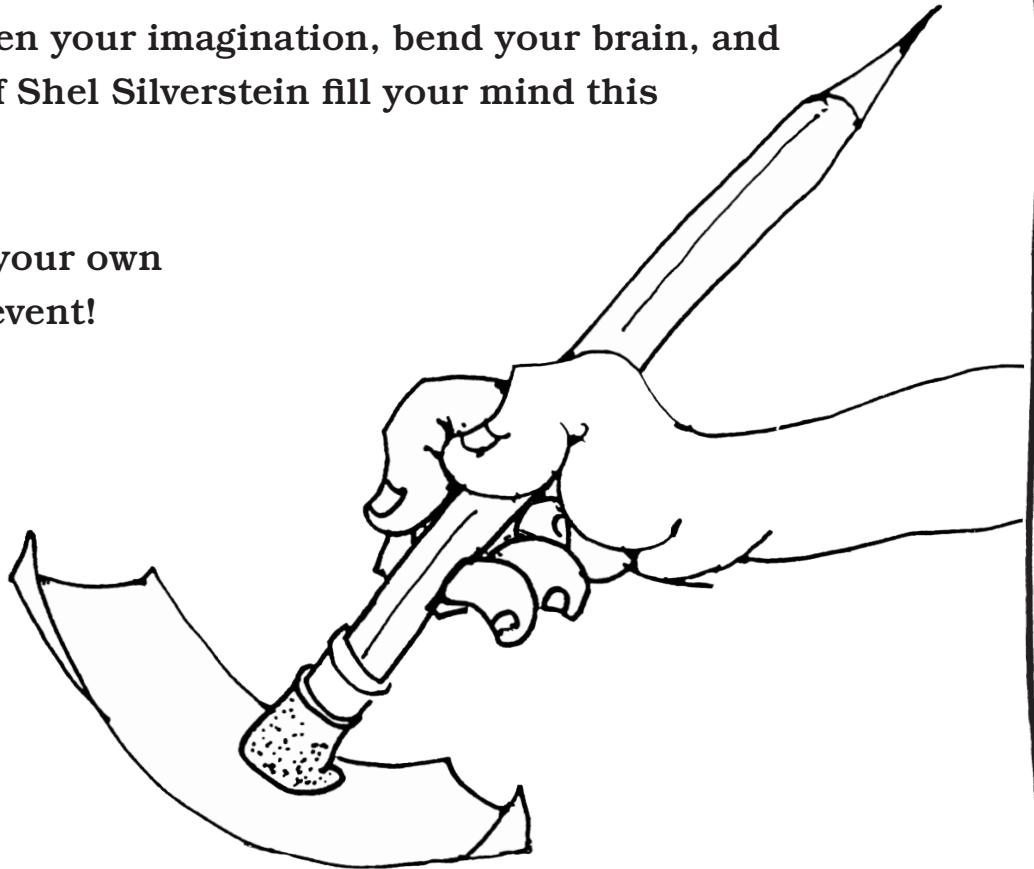


Dear Reader,

In celebration of Poetry Month, we've drawn upon poems from across Shel Silverstein's classic poetry books—*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, *A Light in the Attic*, *Falling Up*, and *Every Thing On It*—to create a brand-new poetry experience. In this kit, children will learn about many different types of poetry, gain clever tips to write their own, and compile their own poetry portfolio, all while having some fun along the way. Perfect for use in the classroom, in a bookstore, or at home, the Poetry Workshop Kit will give both children and adults renewed appreciation for poetry and the work of Shel Silverstein.

So come in, open your imagination, bend your brain, and let the magic of Shel Silverstein fill your mind this Poetry Month!

Enjoy hosting your own
Shelebration® event!



Rhyming Poetry

Rhyming poetry is one of the most common types of poetry—and sometimes the most fun! Rhymes can happen in many different patterns within a poem, such as every line, every first and third line, or every second and fourth line. Most of Shel Silverstein's poems use rhyme, and a great example is "I Don't Know" from *Every Thing On It*. Read the excerpt below. What kind of rhyming pattern do you notice? How does Shel use repetition in this poem?

I DON'T KNOW

I don't know how *anything's* done.
Does the earth turn or is it the sun?
Is electricity made by a kite?
Are star twinkles just the reflection of light?
How thunder is made and how engines run—
I don't know how *anything's* done.

Shel was an expert with rhyme, but how polished are **YOUR** skills? See how many rhyming words you can make for each of the words in the list below and write them in the space provided. After you brainstorm, choose one group of words and compose a rhyming poem that would make Shel proud!

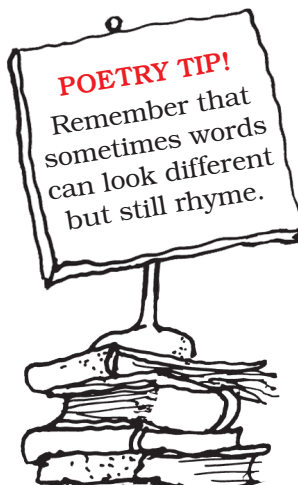
CAKE _____

CAT _____

GREEN _____

SHOP _____

SHARK _____



MY RHYMING POEM

Epigram Poetry

An **epigram** is a short and witty poem typically written as a couplet or a simple one-line phrase. Shel often uses this succinct but powerful type of poetry, usually accompanied by art. Read “Stone Airplane” from *Falling Up*. How do the words and illustration work together to create a humorous poem?

Now it's your turn! Use your imagination to write another two-line epigram on the lines below that continues the story of “Stone Airplane.” Then think of two additional epigrams about topics of your choice and add them to this page. Don't forget to include illustrations!



STONE AIRPLANE

I made an airplane out of stone . . .
I always did like staying home.

STONE AIRPLANE (continued)

MY EPIGRAMS

POETRY TIP!

Use an epigram
to give funny
advice or make
an ironic
statement.



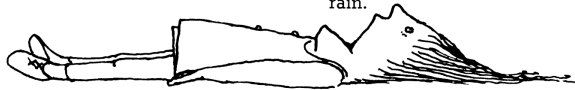
Visual Poetry

Visual poetry uses text, images, or symbols to help convey the meaning of the poem. With this type of poetry, the visual arrangement of the elements of the poem is more important than the words in conveying its meaning. Read the poem “Lazy Jane” from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. How is the way the poem is displayed on the page key to the meaning of poem? Would the poem be as funny without the illustration? Why or why not?

Come up with a new way to depict the poem in the box to the right, with either an illustration or a clever arrangement of the text. Does your drawing or arrangement change its meaning? How?

LAZY JANE

Lazy
lazy
lazy
lazy
lazy
Jane,
she
wants
a
drink
of
water
so
she
waits
and
waits
and
waits
and
waits
and
waits
for
it
to
rain.



LAZY JANE

POETRY TIP!

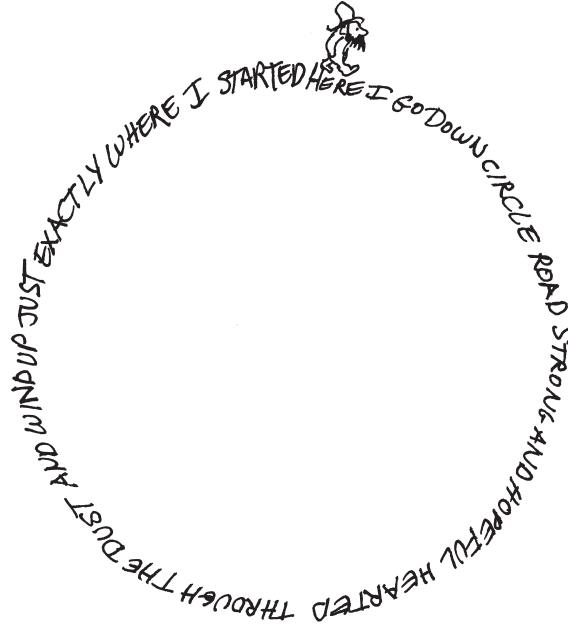
Use the descriptions in a poem as a guide when you decide how to display it on the page.



Concrete Poetry

Concrete poetry (also called shape poetry) is similar to visual poetry, but instead of using visual clues to reinforce meaning, it uses the actual arrangement of the words in a shape or other design to convey the subject or idea of the poem. For example, read “Circle Road” from *Every Thing On It* below. You’ll notice that the poem itself is displayed as a circle. How does this placement help you better understand the poem?

Would the poem make sense if it was displayed as a square?



Try your hand at a concrete poem! Write about something you know (and can draw), such as a favorite food or sport. Using a pencil, in the space below sketch an outline of your object as a guide when writing. Then compose your poem in the space of the drawing. When your poem is complete, erase the outline—your poem should represent the thing you are writing about! Add extra details in or around the poem the way Shel does in “Circle Road” to help convey its meaning.

POETRY TIP!

Use descriptive words in your poem without mentioning what you are writing about—your drawing should work with the text to tell the reader its topic.



List Poetry

List poetry is comprised of a list of things, places, people, or events, and it can be any length, rhymed or unrhymed. Take a look at “A Closet Full of Shoes” from *Falling Up* below—Shel takes an ordinary list of items (in his case, shoes) and makes it extraordinary by adding humor, rhymes, descriptive words, and even illustrations.

What other types of lists would make funny poems?

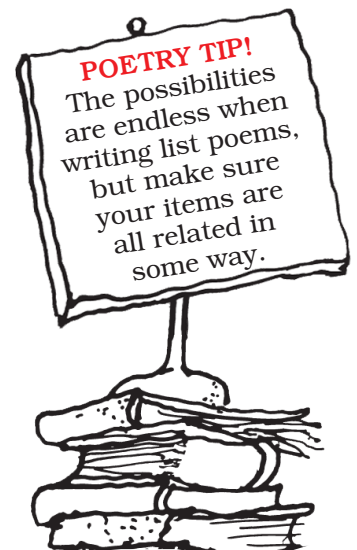
On a piece of scrap paper, write ten items that would be on your family’s grocery list, such as apples, bread, or eggs. Then in the space to the right, turn your list into a poem. Using the words you wrote, describe the items you see in the grocery store, being as silly and creative as you can. Read your finished poem the next time you go food shopping with your family—you won’t forget a thing!

A CLOSET FULL OF SHOES

Party shoes with frills and bows,
Workin’ shoes with steel toes,
Sneakers, flip-flops, and galoshes,
Boots to wear with mackintoshes,
Brogans, oxfords, satin pumps,
Dancin’ taps and wooden clumps,
Shoes for climbin’, shoes for hikes,
Football cleats and baseball spikes,
Shoes of shiny patent leather,
Woolly shoes for winter weather,
Loafers, rough-outs, sandals, spats,
High heels, low heels, platforms, flats,
Moccasins and fins and flippers,
Shower clogs and ballet slippers . . .
A zillion shoes and just one missin’—
That’s the one that matches this’n.



A Store Full of Food



Rebus Poetry

A **rebus** is a poem that uses pictures or symbols in place of actual words. Rebuses are helpful (and clever!) ways to build reading and writing skills and incorporate art into a poem. In “Deaf Donald” from *A Light in the Attic*, Shel uses a drawing in place of an idea to create a humorous story about a boy who can’t hear or speak.

How does the drawing lend meaning to the poem?

Turn the poem below from *A Light in the Attic* into a rebus! Use the list of words above the poem to fill in the blanks, but draw a picture in place of the actual word. (Hint: the words that rhyme go together—except for one!)

LOG

BEE

SWATTER

SNAKE

PIG

FEATHER

HITTING

Use a _____ to hit a hog.

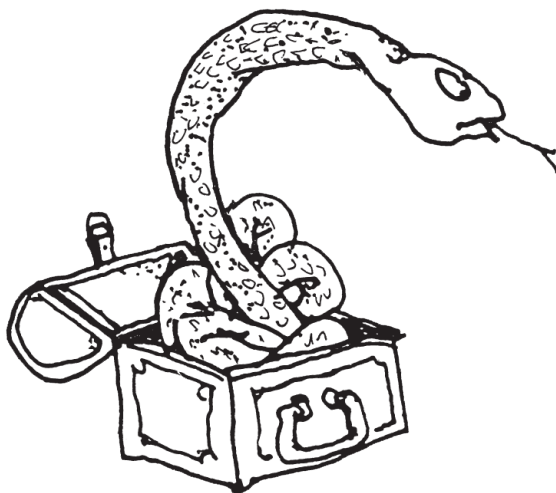
Use a twig to hit a _____.

Use a rake to hit a _____.

Use a _____ to hit an otter.

Use a ski to hit a _____.

And use a _____ when you hit me.



POETRY TIP!

Try writing a rebus using all pictures. Then challenge a friend to translate your poem into words.

Non-Rhyming Poetry

Did you know that a poem doesn't have to rhyme? **Non-rhyming poetry** focuses more on the other elements that make up a poem, such as pattern, rhythm, creativity, and tone. Read "Tell Me" from *Falling Up*. What kind of beat do you notice when you read the poem aloud? What factors make "Tell Me" a poem even though it doesn't rhyme?

TELL ME

Tell me I'm clever,
Tell me I'm kind,
Tell me I'm talented,
Tell me I'm cute,
Tell me I'm sensitive,
Graceful and wise,
Tell me I'm perfect—
But tell me the *truth*.

Are YOU up to the no-rhyme challenge?

Compose a poem about yourself in the style of "Tell Me," filling in the blanks below. Remember that rhyming words don't count!

POETRY TIP!

Be creative—
employ other tactics,
such as repetition or
alliteration, to make
your poem
unique without
rhyme.

Tell me I'm _____,

Tell me I'm _____,

Tell me I'm _____,

Tell me I'm _____,

Tell me I'm _____,

_____ and _____,

Tell me I'm _____ —

But tell me _____.

Acrostic Poetry

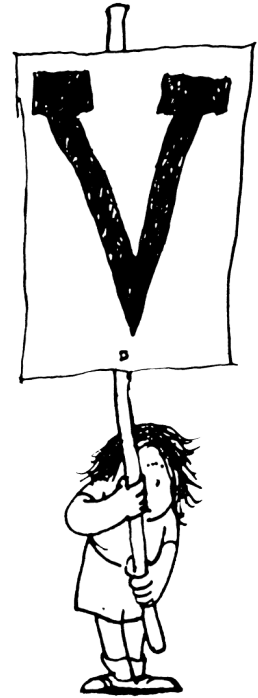
An **acrostic** poem uses the letters of a word or name to begin each line of the poem, and each line must in turn relate to the word. Anything goes when it comes to acrostics, and they're a fun way to add a personal touch to a poem. Study our original example below, which uses Shel as a subject, and then create your own acrostic masterpiece!

Shel was a talented writer

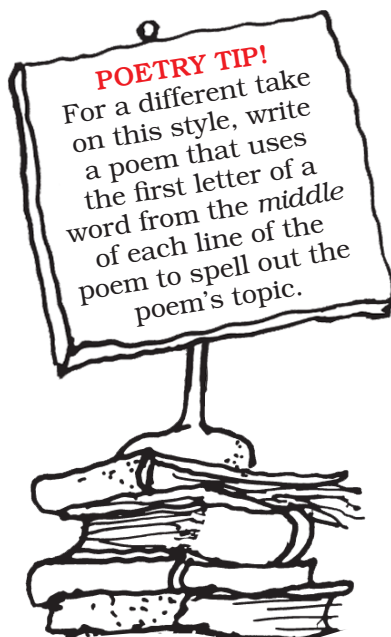
His work is admired by many

Every poem is so clever

Let's go read them together



In the box below, write an acrostic poem about a friend, family member, or teacher. Your poem can be full sentences or simply a couple of words about your topic. When you finish writing, color and decorate your poem and ask a grown-up to help you cut it out from the page. Give it to the person you wrote about as a gift!

A large rectangular area defined by a dashed line, intended for writing an acrostic poem. In the top-left corner of this area, there is a small icon of a pair of scissors, indicating where to cut out the poem.