



Limericks

8th Grade Language Arts



The Limerick

- A limerick is a five-line poem written with one couplet and one triplet. If a couplet is a two-line rhymed poem, then a triplet would be a three-line rhymed poem. The rhyme pattern is a a b b a with lines 1, 2 and 5 containing 3 beats and rhyming, and lines 3 and 4 having two beats and rhyming. Some people say that the limerick was invented by soldiers returning from France to the Irish town of Limerick in the 1700's.



The Limerick

- Limericks are meant to be funny. They often contain hyperbole, onomatopoeia, idioms, puns, and other figurative devices. The last line of a good limerick contains the PUNCH LINE or "heart of the joke." As you work with limericks, remember to have pun, I mean FUN! Say the following limericks out loud and clap to the rhythm.



The Limerick –Further Defined

- A light humorous, nonsensical, or bawdy verse of five anapestic lines usually with the rhyme scheme aabba.
- A metrical foot composed of two short syllables followed by one long one, as in the word seventeen.
- A line of verse using this meter; for example, “’Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house”

The Limerick – An Example

A flea and a fly in a flue
Were caught, so what could they do?
Said the fly, "Let us flee."
"Let us fly," said the flea.
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.





More Examples

There once was a fly on the wall
I wonder why didn't it fall
Because its feet stuck
Or was it just luck
Or does gravity miss things so small

There was a young belle of old Natchez
Whose garments were always in patchez.
When comment arose
On the state of her clothes,
She replied, When Ah itchez, Ah scratchez.



And some more...

There once was a man from Beijing.
All his life he hoped to be King .
So he put on a crown,
Which quickly fell down.
That small silly man from Beijing .

Imagine a skunk who proposes,
To his true love, surrounded by roses.
It may turn out just fine,
When she falls for his line,
But I wonder if flowers have noses?



The Limerick

- *You will soon hear the distinctive beat pattern of all limericks. The rhythm is just as important in a limerick as the rhyme. Try completing this limerick.*

There once was a pauper named Meg
Who accidentally broke her _____.
She slipped on the _____.
Not once, but thrice
Take no pity on her, I _____.



How about this one?

- I once met a _____ from _____.
Every day s/he _____.
But whenever s/he _____.
The _____.
That strange _____ from _____.



The Limerick -- Practice

1. Practice the rhythm of limericks by clapping you hands or snapping your fingers.
2. Think of some funny names, places, or situations.
3. Using the a a b b a 5-line form, write an original limerick.
4. How would you illustrate the page if your poem was published in a book of limericks? What types of art would you use?



The Assignment

- Create a limerick for Monday/Tuesday.
- You will “publish” the limerick.
 - Computer (Optional)
 - Format
 - Clip Art