

Limericks

Limericks are a type of short poem that date back over 500 years. They were made popular in the 1800's by the poet Edward Lear, who he wrote The Owl and the Pussycat. He wrote a book called, 'The Book Of Nonsense' full of limericks. Lear is now often referred to as the father of limericks.

Limericks are often funny and follow a formal rhyming pattern.

There are 5 lines - the first, second and fifth lines have the same rhythm and rhyme as each other.

The third and fourth lines rhyme with each other too and tend to be shorter than the other lines.

Here are some examples of well known limericks:

There was an old man in a tree,
Who was horribly bored by a bee,
When they said, "Does it buzz?"
He replied "Yes it does!"
It's a regular brute of a bee
By Edward Lear



There was an old man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared! -
Two owls and a hen,
Four larks and a wren,
Have all built their nests in my
beard."
By Edward Lear



There was an old man of Peru
Who dreamt he was eating his shoe.
He awoke in the night,
In a terrible fright,
And found it was perfectly true

By Spike Milligan



Activities

Can you find the missing words for these limericks from the box below?

There once was a young man from Crewe
Who found a bug in his _____,
Said the waiter, "Don't shout
And wave it _____,
Or the rest will be wanting some _____.



There once was a boy named Joe
Who dropped a brick on his _____,
He asked, with a frown,
"Will the swelling go _____?"
And the doctor said, "Yes, I think _____."

about	Down	stew	so
	toe	too	

Edward Lear wrote hundreds of limericks which often started with the lines:

There was a
or
There once was a

He also liked the last line to be a repeat of the end of the first line. More recently the last line has changed and this often makes the poem even more fun.

Can you try to change the last lines of these limericks.
We have done the first one for you.

Original

There was an **old man in a barge**,
Whose nose was exceedingly large;
But in fishing by night,
It supported a light,
Which helped that **old man in a barge**.

New

There was an **old man in a barge**,
Whose nose was exceedingly large;
But in fishing by night,
It supported a light,
Which helped that **old man feel in charge**.

There once was a princess called Pea
Who invited her friends round for tea
They ate cupcakes and fruit
While she played on the flute

_____.



There was an old man from Dumbree
Who taught little owls to drink tea,
For he said, "To eat mice -
Is not proper or nice,"

_____.

There was an old person Dean
Who dined on one pea and one bean;
For he said, "More than that,
Would make me too fat,"

_____.



There once was a lady called Tilly,
Whose favourite supper was Chilli;
She ate it with jam,
Green onions and ham,

_____.

Write your own limerick.

Follow the rules and pattern we have looked at:

- Start your poem writing by brainstorming some fun rhyming words.
- The limerick should have 5 lines
- Lines 1, 2 and 5 rhyme and are longer (8-9 syllables).
- Line 3 and 4 rhyme and are shorter (5-6 syllables).
- Start with - There was a or There once was
- Read your limerick out loud and clap along to be sure you have the right number of syllables and the right rhythm.

There once was a monster called Drew
Who kicked up a hullabaloo.
“I’ve mislaid my head
Must have left it in bed!
I think I will need super-glue!”

