

## WHAT'S UP WITH POETRY?

**“We should run glittering like a brook in the open sunshine, or we are unblest.”**

**William Wordsworth**

Do you want to know what the greatest poem ever written is? The greatest poem ever written is the one *you* think is the greatest. Poetry is a great module for a student to enjoy (i.e. because you can never be wrong!) If you think a poem is excellent, then it is excellent. If you think a poem is terrible, then it is terrible. After a while, you might find yourself saying: “Well, it doesn’t do anything for me, but I understand what the poet was trying to do.....”

Congratulations. You are now a critic.

It is interesting that the word ‘criticise’ originally meant ‘to evaluate’ (i.e. to weigh up the merits of). When you are criticising a poem, try to see both the demerits and merits of it.

Some writers think that the meaning of a poem is its most important feature. Others think its mood should be explored first. This would include how it makes you feel. Quite a few consider that the techniques the poet used deserve a mention. This is important also. All of the above can be pared down to three simple questions.

1. What is the central message (i.e. **theme**) of the poem?
2. How does it make me feel (i.e. **tone**)?
3. How did the poet get his/her message across (i.e. **techniques**)?

These are the three most important questions in poetry. Three is the magic number when it comes to studying a poem. There is a formula to help you understand poetry later in the book.

Some poems can be epics. This means that they are very long. The classic example of this is ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Others can be very short and simple but still leave an impression. We shall look at ‘Invitation’ by Shel Silverstein as our first poem. It is a short poem. In the meantime, why not write down what you think of poetry? What is poetry? Use these metaphors if you wish and try to think of some more.

1. Poetry is a window to a hidden world.
2. Poetry is the mood music of English.
3. Poetry is what sad people with too much time on their hands do when they are lonely.
4. Poetry is dragonblood for the heart.
5. Poetry is what made Eminem, Shakira, The Beatles, and even The Spice Girls, zillionaires.
6. Poetry is the language of the soul and caviar for the mind.
7. Poetry is simply lyrics without the music.
8. Poetry is the sigh of the sea, the cry of the me, the dying of the bee.
9. Poetry is manna for the soul.
10. Poetry is wild, sad, funny, energetic, thoughtful, loud, fragile and zesty and has something everyone can enjoy.

### **‘Invitation’ by Shel Silverstein**

“If you are a dreamer come in.  
If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,  
A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic-bean-buyer...  
If you’re a pretender come sit by my fire,  
For we have some flax golden tales to spin.  
Come in!  
Come in!”

Did you like this poem? Read it again and write down the first words that come into your head.

Now read it again and try to get into the rhythm of it by waving a finger in the air like a composer. Treat it like a song rather than a poem. Can you sing it to yourself? If you can, you have a high degree of musical intelligence.

Do you agree that it has got the rhythm of a child rocking in its cot for the first 4 lines? Then the rhythm takes on a serious, I-am-your-friend-now tone for the 5<sup>th</sup> line. For the final two lines you can almost see someone beckoning you in to his/her house. There, the two of you can spin “flax golden” tales and probably lie to each other about your adventures! Make up an adventure you would tell to someone who loves listening to stories and read it to the class.

Did you find that there is a special type of magic in the lines of this poem?

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A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic-bean-buyer...  
If you’re a pretender come sit by my fire,  
For we have some flax golden tales to spin.  
Come in, come in, come in!”

Do you think the poem is improved by rewriting the last two lines? Say why or why not.

Count up how many times words are repeated. We know that this is called repetition and that it is a very effective technique. Can we add ‘The Rule of Three’ to repetition? This means that saying something three times (or in groups of three) is the perfect technique in a speech or poem. It makes the poem more memorable and it is the classic mnemonic device. How many times does Shel Silverstein use ‘The Rule of Three’ in his poem? Do lines two and three qualify for this rule?

Did you know? Psychologists believe that you can be seen to be a good listener by facing your feet towards the person talking. As they are making their point, nod your head three times slowly. They will then think highly of you because you value their opinion.

## THE OLDEST SURVIVING POEM

The oldest surviving poem has not been discovered yet. It is locked away underground in a dusty vault waiting for someone to discover it. Maybe, one day, that someone will be you. Until then, the oldest, known surviving poem is called 'The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor'. It comes from the Middle Egyptian period and it is approx. 4,200 years old, giving it a date of 2,200 B.C.

The oldest known writing is a source of dispute. Many cultures used symbols. Even cave art, which is approx. 35,000 years old, had 26 separate symbols and they were used for 20,000 years! It is interesting that our English alphabet today contains 26 letters also. Contenders for the earliest form of writing include:

1. Chinese dating to 7,000 B.C.
2. Writing from Pakistan dating to 3,000 B.C.
3. Writing from Mexico dating from 3,000 B.C.

Most experts believe that writing dated from the use of farming, however, and comes from Sumer in Mesopotamia (i.e. the borders of Iraq, Iran and Syria) around 3,400 B.C. Counting tokens dating to 9,000 years old are probably the oldest form of symbol discovered and came from this area also. The Akkadian language from Sumer is considered the oldest at the moment but that may change. When grain began to be harvested and converted into bread (and beer!), many different cultures around the world gave up their hunter-gatherer ways. They needed a system to count animals, their plots of land and bushels of grain. Symbols written on small, clay tablets were used and then language began to be written down.

Poetry then developed as a form of mnemonic device so that people could remember stories of their ancestors and entertain each other with tales of courage and sorrow. When we began to domesticate animals, this became more important. Everyone had more time on their hands as there was a constant supply of food. Artists such as painters, poets, writers and skilled craftsmen were in high demand and could get paid for their work. Underneath is the reason why 'leisure time' overtook hunting and gathering and why people could settle in one place.

These are all approximate dates for when the animals were domesticated:

1. Dog-20,000 B.C.      Man and dog lethal at clearing areas of predators and protecting homes. Still vital for lions/tigers/wolves etc. in rural areas today as an early warning system.
2. Sheep-11,000 B.C.    Enabled bigger communities to prosper with woollen clothing.
3. Pig-9,000 B.C.        A very important source of food and led humans to mushrooms etc.
4. Goat-8,000 B.C.      A valuable source of milk and cheese and a permanent food source.
5. Cattle-8,000 B.C.     Humans could now plough fields and get cattle to carry large items.
6. Cat-8,000 B.C.        Great for keeping rodent numbers down if you were storing food.

7. Chicken-6,000 B.C. An estimated 50 billion chickens alive today tells its own story.
8. Donkey-5,000 B.C. Became a very adaptable beast of burden. Survives hostile climates.
9. Horse-4,000 B.C. \*The domestication of the horse probably coincided with the start of writing as we know it today. Humans could travel vast distances overland and trade their goods, both grain and luxury items. Writing started to become a crucial means of communication, first with math symbols, then with a common language. Art takes off.
10. Silkworm-3,000 B.C. The export of silk from China led to major international trading.
11. Pigeon-3,000 B.C. Written messages could now be carried vast distances.
12. Turkey-180 A.D. Christmas could be invented and celebrated properly!

This is considered the first poem written to be in existence today. It is 'The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor'. It is a story about a sailor who is announcing his return from a failed expedition. He is nervous of meeting his king, so the sailor's servant tells of how he (i.e. the servant) had overcome a previous disaster and that all will be well.

### **The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor**

May your heart prosper, my master.

Behold, we have reached home.

The mallet having been taken, the mooring post is driven in.

The bow-rope having been placed on land, thanksgiving and praise to God are given.

Everyone is embracing his companions.

Our crew returned safely;

there was no loss to our army.

We have reached the end of Wawat;

we have passed Senmut.

Do you like this poem? Write down your first impressions of the poem in a few words. Do you like the fact that internet technology makes all these poems available at our fingertips?

Look up the words you don't understand on Google and see if the place names in the last two lines still exist today. The full text of the poem can be read at: [ancient.eu.com](http://ancient.eu.com).

The first epic tale written is thought to be 'The Epic of Gilgamesh'. It was written approx. 2,600 B.C. This is an extract from it and the author is describing Gilgamesh, king of Uruk. Although it is older than 'The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor', it is more of a tale than a poem. Therefore, 'The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor' is considered the oldest poem.

### **The Epic of Gilgamesh**

Supreme over other kings, lordly in appearance

he is the hero, born of Uruk, the goring wild bull.

He walks out in front, the leader

and walks at the rear, trusted by his companions.

Mighty net, protector of his people,

raging flood-wave who destroys even walls of stone!

Offspring of Lugalbanda, Gilgamesh, is strong to perfection,

son of the august cow, Rimat-Ninsun.....Gilgamesh is awesome to perfection.

It was he who opened the mountain passes,

who dug wells on the flank of the mountain.

It is he who crossed the ocean, the vast seas, to the rising sun,

who explored the world regions, seeking life.

Write down the first words that come to mind after the first reading.

Do you think this is a better poem than 'The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor'?

Who do you think Gilgamesh is? Is he a man, a god or something else?

Are you surprised at the quality of language from poems 4,000 years old? Do you think you would enjoy listening to these poems and tales if they were accompanied by music?

Of course, there is no evidence that these poems would have been accompanied by music. The earliest evidence of a poem accompanied to music dates from 1,400 B.C. Remarkably, you can listen to it on YouTube. It is called 'The Hurrian Hymn no.6' and it was discovered in Syria in the 1950's as part of a collection of clay tablets. Musical instructions came with the song and it would have been accompanied by a lyre, a stringed instrument used before the guitar. It is well worth listening to and the finish to the song may surprise you.

Did you know? The earliest message in a bottle comes from 1784. A man called Chunosuke Matsuyama asked for rescue after he was shipwrecked. Alas for him, it was found in 1935.

**Extract from The Poem Voted the Best Song of all Time in Ireland**

**‘Hallelujah’ by Jeff Buckley**

“Well I heard there was a secret chord  
that David played and it pleased the Lord  
But you don’t really care for music, do you?

Well it goes like this:

The Fourth, The Fifth,  
The minor fall and the major lift  
The baffled king composing Hallelujah.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah  
Hallelujah.....

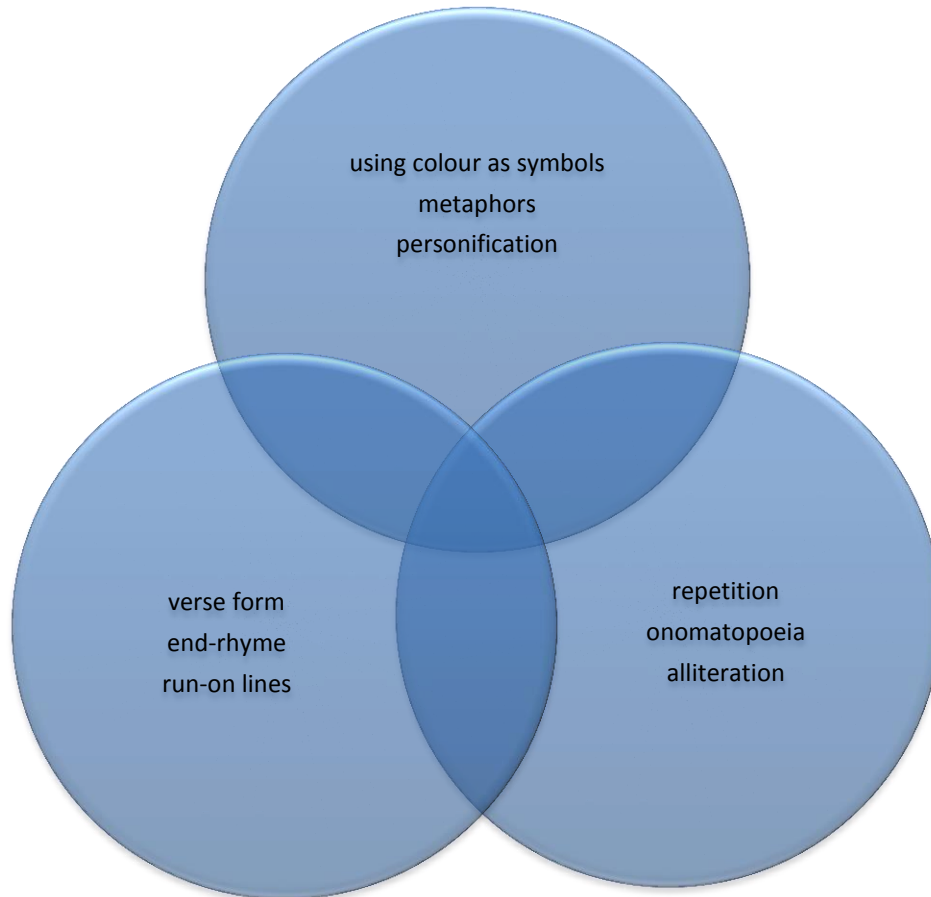
Your faith was strong but you needed proof  
You saw her bathing on the roof  
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you.  
She tied you to her kitchen chair  
She broke your throne and she cut your hair  
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah  
Hallelujah.....

Just like all poems, this song is better listened to rather than read on your own. You should write out the rest of the lyrics and then listen to the full song on YouTube.

You might find it interesting that the lines of the song are written out in groups of 3. This makes it a very mnemonic poem for the listener. Similarly, the refrain (i.e. chorus) of Hallelujah is sung 3 times. Then it is repeated once in a much longer way. The repetition of the word is catchy and this helps the listener to absorb the song. The next page has a diagram that shows how ‘The Rule of Three’ can make poetry very easy to understand and appreciate.

# THE SECRET TO GREAT POETRY: THE RULE OF THREE

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE



## MECHANICAL DEVICES

## MNEMONIC TECHNIQUES

The only question is to figure out where to put the following:

- a) imagery
- b) rhythm
- c) theme
- d) tone.

Put the most important of the three into the centre circle. Then put the other three carefully into the intersecting circles.

We've already discussed what the greatest poem ever written was. It is the one you think is the greatest. The most *successful* poems of all time are easier to talk about. The third most successful poem of all time is called 'Auld Lang Syne'. It was written by the poet Robert Burns in 1788. It is usually sung on New Year's Eve and at funerals and graduations. The title means 'For Old Times (Sake)'.

Interestingly, Robert Burns said the following of his poem:

**“The following song is an old song of the olden times, and which had never been in print, nor even in a manuscript, until I took it down from an old man.”**

This means the poem was probably in existence for hundreds of years before Burns got it from the old man. The chorus also follows 'The Rule of Three', making it easier to remember as a poem. These are the words, although Burns admits he changed them slightly:

“Should Old Acquaintance be forgot,  
and never thought upon;  
The flames of Love extinguished,  
and fully past and gone;  
Is thy sweet Heart now grown so cold,  
that loving Breast of thine;  
That thou canst never once reflect  
On Old long syne.

***Chorus:***

*On Old long syne my Jo,  
On Old long syne,  
That thou canst never once reflect,  
On Old long syne.*

You should look up the song on YouTube and listen to the melody. Although it is a catchy song, the secret of its success is simpler. The chorus (i.e. the words *Old long syne*) is repeated three times. This would have made it a very mnemonic song for different generations of Scots people to remember. The old man and his people before him would have had the words burned into their minds before ironically Robert Burns came along and wrote it down. You should see how long it takes to learn the poem by singing it to yourself.



The second most popular poem in history is called 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow'. It was written the night after the Battle of Malplaquet in France in 1709. Marie Antoinette then made it popular after she heard a maid singing it. By the 1850's it was being sung in the United Kingdom and it reached America in 1862. Like 'Auld Lang Syne', its genius lies in its simplicity and the rule of three.

These are the words used in the United Kingdom:

For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow

For he's a jolly good fellow (pause), and so say all of us

And so say all of us, and so say all of us

For he's a jolly good fellow, for he's a jolly good fellow

For he's a jolly good fellow (pause), and so say all of us

As you can see, it is a simple poem. The same two phrases are repeated three times and the poem finishes with an extra repetition of: "and so say all of us." This balances the lines very well. The question students may ask is if the last two examples are poems, melodies or songs? The answer is that they are all three.

Music and poetry have been best friends since man first sang. If you are singing, you need something to sing about. The lines must be written in verse form or else the poem/song will lack rhythm. Most musicians write the lyrics before composing the song. This means that musicians are poets before they become singers.

In order to understand poetry fully, it should be seen from the point of view of music first. This brings us to the most successful poem of all time. It was written in 1893 by two sisters who were teaching in Lexington, America. Everyone knows the lyrics and they go like this:

Happy Birthday to you.

Happy Birthday to you.

Happy Birthday dear.....

Happy Birthday to you.

Once again, the line 'Happy Birthday to you' is repeated three times. The 3<sup>rd</sup> line balances the rhythm beautifully in between. Looking at poetry from the point of view of having three basic parts is a good start. After that, it gets a bit more complicated! Did you know that Warner-Chappell Music Ltd. own the copyright to Happy Birthday? Technically, you should be paying them a fee whenever you sing it. As it is, the song brings in \$5,000 a day for them in royalties. Every time it is used in a film, they charge the producers up to \$50,000.

## NURSERY RHYMES

The link between music and poetry is at its most obvious with nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes are the most successful, long-lasting poems ever written.

They lasted hundreds of years without being written down and became even more popular when they *were* written down. Even in this computer age, children still learn them easily and remember them.

Is it because they are mnemonic poems? That is the main reason but there are others also. Let's test our formula for great poetry on one of the more famous: Ring-a-ring o' Roses.

Ring-a-ring o' roses

A pocket full of posies,

A-tishoo! A-tishoo!

We all fall down!

Figurative language:

Using colour as symbols: The rose-coloured rings on line 1 are the bright red circles people used to get from the Black Death in England. The white handkerchiefs (or posies) on line 2 may refer to the scented handkerchiefs rich people tied around their mouths to hide the smell of death. Poor people also carried sweet-smelling flowers in their pockets to mask the smell.

Red: A symbol of d\_a\_h.

White: A symbol of in\_oc\_n\_e.

Metaphors: The nursery rhyme is a metaphor for the Black Death. It is possible that peasants believed sneezing was a symptom of the disease. The 3<sup>rd</sup>/ 4<sup>th</sup> lines mean that if you sneezed, you were going to get the disease and "fall down" dead. "Fall down" is a metaphor for death.

Personification: Personification is giving things human terms. By singing about death as a constant companion, people were trying to cope with the horror of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Death and disease are personified as something that could strike at any time. In modern times, a funeral mass and a burial give people a lot of comfort. Unfortunately, people back then didn't have that luxury. The bodies were burned or just left there in many villages if there weren't enough people left to bury them. That's why death is personified as an imaginary friend in this rhyme.

We can see that all three figurative devices are present in this nursery rhyme. The use of colour as symbols, the use of metaphors and the use of personification helped to make the poem memorable. Let us look at the other two circles in the formula next.

Mechanical techniques:

A simple verse form: The verse form chosen is as simple as it can get.

End-rhyme: Children sing it as ‘rosies’ instead of ‘roses’. This makes it rhyme perfectly with ‘posies’. This in turn adds to the mnemonic effect.

Run-on lines: The lines run into each other fluently. It gives the rhyme its breathless and energetic effect.

All three mechanical techniques are present. Poems that have end-rhyme and run-on lines are catchier than those that don’t. That is one reason why nursery rhymes survived for so long.

Mnemonic techniques:

Repetition: It is used twice. The word ‘ring’ is repeated, as is ‘A-tishoo’. This makes it simpler for children to remember.

Onomatopoeia: It is used with the words ‘a-tishoo’. This helps the children to act out the sneezing. In this case, it is a form of ‘active learning’ where a child can act out the event.

Alliteration: The 3 r’s, the 2 p’s and the 2 t’s make this the ultimate mnemonic rhyme for a child. There is nothing complicated to this nursery rhyme.

All three mnemonic devices are present. These make this rhyme a pumping, pulsing mnemonic poem. It proves the old adage: “In simplicity lies genius.”

‘Ring-a-ring o’ Roses’ has a timeless appeal that has survived disease, war, famine, drought, and floods. There is a debate ongoing about whether it is actually about the Black Death or not. Occam’s razor would lead most people to conclude that it is. It first appeared in written form in Kate Greenaway’s book of nursery rhymes in 1881. To this day, children love its sense of rhythm, its simple structure and its plain language. Does all great poetry have to use the techniques shown here? The answer is no. All *memorable* poetry does, however. Most of the poems we would consider classics use these simple devices and many others besides. It makes sense that a poem you find easy to recite will be favoured over one you don’t find easy.

A lot of great poems may not use all of these techniques. They rely instead on a powerful theme or message which brings meaning to peoples’ lives. Before we look at a poem like that, try to apply the formula of great poetry to the nursery rhyme ‘Baa-baa black sheep’. The rhyme was invented as a protest against woollen taxes by Edward 1 of England in 1275. This makes it nearly 1,000 years old. Edward put a tax of 66% on all wool and the original verse had the little boy down the lane crying! The crying boy was a metaphor for the sheep farmers.

## Baa-baa black sheep

Baa-baa black sheep,

Have you any wool?

Yes sir, yes sir,

Three bags full.

One for the master

And one for the dame

And one for the little boy

Crying down the lane.

Figurative language:

Using colour as symbols:

Metaphors:

Personification:

Mechanical techniques:

A simple verse form:

End-rhyme:

Run-on lines:

Mnemonic techniques:

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

In simplicity lies genius. The answer is that it uses all of the 9 techniques that mega-successful poems have in common. It also has a regular rhythm. In fact, if you think about it carefully, it has the same tune as two other highly successful mnemonics.

These are ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star’ and ‘The Alphabet song’. Can you spot the similarities by humming out the two nursery rhymes?

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are.  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.

Now try it for ‘The Alphabet song’.

A-B-C-D-E-F-G

H-I-J-K-LMNO-P

Q-R-S; T-U-V,

W; X, Y and Z.

Now I know my ABC;

Next time won’t you sing with me?!

Hopefully, you can now see that all great poems may have something in common with each other. They have a regular rhythm, they use end-rhyme and they use the techniques in the circle. Sometimes, a poem of genius can spring up without using these techniques, however...

**‘THE FOG’** by Carl Sandburg (1878-1967)

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.

It sits looking  
over harbour and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


The poem has a magical quality that seems to affect everyone who reads it. It is a very simple poem but it may have layers of meaning. Answer the following questions in your copybook once you have read it three times.

1. Do you like this poem? Why? Why not?
2. Is there a message in this poem? What do you think it might be?
3. What do you think the cat in the poem represents?
4. Do you think this poem is about fog or something else? What might the fog represent?
5. Write down, or draw if you are able, the main image that this poem gives you.

This poem is an example of ‘free verse’. It does not rhyme and does not have a regular rhythm. Write a poem called ‘The fog cat’ in free verse or rhyme. Try to do it in 50 words or less. If you find yourself stuck for a rhyming word, look up [rhymmer.com](http://rhymmer.com).

**Figurative language:** Finish the sentences in the grids. A symbol is an object that can represent something else like an idea, an emotion or a quality. Fill in the blank grids where necessary.

Example: The dove is a symbol of peace.

Using colour as symbols: The grey fog is a symbol of m\_s\_e\_y and d\_n\_er.

Metaphors: The fog is a metaphor for how qu\_c\_ly our l\_v\_s start and end.

Personification: The fog is personified because it is given “li\_t\_e cat f\_et.”

**Mechanical language:**

A simple verse form: It is written in a simple, free v\_r\_e form.

End-rhyme:

Run on lines: There are 6 run on lines as there are only two f\_ll st\_ps but there are six l\_n\_s.

**Mnemonic language:**

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

Count up how many of the above techniques Carl Sandburg used. Are you impressed with the skill it takes to write a simple poem like this? Make a list of the 6 assonance words and see if the ‘o’s’ rhyme or if they are half-rhymes. You may be surprised at the result!

Assonance


## WRITING A POEM

Writing a poem is great fun. The simplest form of poetry is called a haiku (pronounced high-kuu). This is a Japanese term meaning 'amusement'. Haikus are usually written about nature or the seasons but they are also written as jokes. Most modern haikus have a structure of 5-7-5. This means there are 5 syllables on the first line, 7 syllables on the second line and 5 syllables on the third line. This is not a golden rule, however. Do you think the haiku underneath has a 5-7-5 structure?

Haiku's are easy  
Don't even have to make sense  
Hippopotamus

Write down one reason why you liked this haiku. Did it make you smile or laugh?

Here are some of the most famous haikus:

An old silent pond....  
A frog jumps into the pond  
Splash! Silence again. Basho Matsuo

Do you like this haiku? Does it conjure up a specific image in your mind? Write down, or draw if you can, the image given to you by this poem. Then write down some reasons why you did or did not like the haiku. Would you prefer a haiku like these?

Over the wintry  
forest, winds howl in rage  
with no leaves to blow. Natsume Soseki

I kill an ant  
and realise my three children  
have been watching. Kato Shuson

Which was the best haiku, in your opinion? Write down why you feel it is the best and explain whether it gives you a certain image or feeling, or both.



Hai	ku's	are	ea	sy
-----	------	-----	----	----

Don't	ev	en	have	to	make	sense
-------	----	----	------	----	------	-------

Hipp	o	pot	a	mus
------	---	-----	---	-----

If you were to take a photograph of your back garden every day of the year, you would have a lot of photographs. That is how the brain works also. Every image we see is put away into a bundle for storage. What if you were to select only one photograph to represent each season, however? This is what we might call a 'snapshot' of the season. That is what a haiku is; a snapshot of a season or nature. Follow these easy steps to build your haiku's for the seasons:

1. Pick the best **word-bundle** (i.e. word-grid) from your brain that represents spring. Write out the entire list. It may include lambs, frog spawn, daffodils, nesting birds etc.
2. Pick two nouns that you think represent spring the best. Then pick two verbs to link your images to each other. These may be lambs **leaping**, daffodils **growing** etc.
3. Try to create a scene where the two nouns and verbs have a link to each other. Practise until you're happy the syllable structure of 5-7-5 will fit into the grids. Read it to a classmate.

### SPRING


### SUMMER


### AUTUMN


### WINTER


## HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN POEM

Making up your own poem is both easy and enjoyable. It helps if you can think of one phrase/metaphor or short sentence that is unique to you. The whole poem should then spring up around this one, meaningful phrase. **Observe** the world around you and it will provide it!

Then try to get your end-rhyme words if you want to make it a mnemonic poem. Make a list of 8-10 words that fit in with the theme of your poem. Type in ‘**Word Families**’ to: [enchantlearning.com](http://enchantlearning.com) for the best sets of end-rhymes.

Finally, try experimenting with the length of the sentences until they seem right to you. You may decide to have a poem that has balance and rhythm. If so, use the syllable grid below to help you. Try to keep the poem simple at first with a maximum of 12 syllables.

As you develop your craft as a poet, you will find yourself delighted with your ability to write great poetry. If you want to make a sad poem, look at the assonance words in this book.

### SYLLABLE GRID FOR AN 8-LINE POEM


### END-RHYME GRID

attack	bad	ail	brain	blame	bright	bin	fog	core	bump
back	clad	fail	chain	fame	delight	din	bog	fore	clump
black	dad	hail	grain	flame	fight	fin	flog	gore	dump
crack	glad	mail	main	frame	fright	gin	grog	lore	grump
knack	had	nail	pain	game	height	grin	hog	ore	jump
lack	lad	pail	plain	lame	light	kin	jog	pore	lump
pack	mad	rail	rain	name	night	pin	log	score	slump
sack	pad	sail	slain	same	sight	sin	slog	shore	stump
stack	sad	tail	strain	shame	slight	thin	smog	wore	thump
whack	tad	wail	train	tame	tonight	win	tog	yore	trump

### MAKE YOUR OWN RHYMING GRID


**‘THE EAGLE’** by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
close to the sun in lonely lands,  
ring’d with the azure world he stands.  
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
he watches from his mountain walls,  
and like a thunderbolt he falls.

\* A crag is a rocky ledge.

\* Azure is a deep sea-blue.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


**CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS**

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme (i.e. central message) of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? A sub-theme is not the main theme but it is still important.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. Write a short descriptive passage on what the eagle sees from the mountain top. Include as much micro-detail as possible. He has eagle-vision, after all!
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?

You are the world's greatest poetry detective. Find one example for each technique.

**Figurative language:**

Using colour as symbols:

Metaphors:

Personification:

**Mechanical language:**

Verse form:

End-rhyme:

Run on lines:

**Mnemonic language:**

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

**‘THE SPLENDOUR FALLS’** by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story:  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!  
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying!  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
They faint on hill or field or river.  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying.  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.




You are the world's greatest poetry detective. Find one example for each technique.

**Figurative language:**

Using colour as symbols:

Metaphors:

Personification:

**Mechanical language:**

Verse form:

End-rhyme:

Run on lines:

**Mnemonic language:**

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

**'THE STOLEN CHILD'** by W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Where dips the rocky highland

Of Sleuth Wood in the lake

There lies a leafy island

Where flapping herons wake

The drowsy water rats;

There we've hid our faery vats

Full of berries

And of reddest stolen cherries.

**REFRAIN:** *Come away, O human child!*

*To the waters and the wild*

*With a faery hand in hand.*

*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wave of moonlight glosses

The dim gray sands with light

Far off by furthest Rosses

We foot it all the night,

Weaving olden dances

Mingling hands and mingling glances

Till the moon has taken flight;

To and fro we leap

And chase the frothy bubbles,

When the world is full of troubles

And is anxious in its sleep

**REFRAIN:** *Come away, O human child! etc.*



Where the wandering water gushes  
From the hills above Glencar,  
In pools among the rushes  
That scarce could bathe a star,  
We seek for slumbering trout  
And whispering in their ears  
Give them unquiet dreams;  
Leaning softly out  
From ferns that drop their tears  
Over the young streams.

**REFRAIN:** *Come away, O human child! etc.*

Away with us he's going,  
The solemn-eyed:  
He'll hear no more the lowing  
Of the calves on the warm hillside  
Or the kettle on the hob  
Sing peace into his breast,  
Or see the brown mice bob  
Round and round the oatmeal chest.

*For he comes, the human child!*

*To the waters and the wild*

*With a faery hand in hand.*

*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


### CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. If you were asked to rewrite one word or line from the poem, which would it be?
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?
7. Ask your teacher to play the YouTube video on the poem. Type in: 'The Waterboys The Stolen Child by Mick Wilbury'. It flashes up images of an Ireland long gone.
8. Has your opinion of the poem changed after watching the video? Do you like the poem more or less after watching it?
9. Learn off any verse from the poem. Some have 8 lines, some have 11. Pick the one you like the most. You may find it easier to act out the lines while you are learning it. For example, verse one gives you the opportunity to do the following:
  1. ....“dips the rocky highland.” Make a hand motion from shoulder height to knee height when you are reciting the word “dips”.
  2. ....“lies a leafy island.” Make a swirling motion with your hand when you are reciting the word “leafy”. You can lie on the desk for the word “lies” if you are confident enough!
  3. ....“flapping.” You can clap or you can make a flapping motion.
  4. ....“drowsy water rats.” Put two hands to your cheek in the universal sign of sleeping.

These are just examples. The teacher can agree with the class which movements are the best for each line. Active learning helps you to remember poetry in a fun and long-term way. You'll be able to recite the lines many years from now. You'll also smile at the memory of this class when you do.

You are the world's greatest poetry detective. Find one example for each technique.

**Figurative language:**

Using colour as symbols:

Metaphors:

Personification:

**Mechanical language:**

Verse form:

End-rhyme:

Run on lines:

**Mnemonic language:**

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

**‘THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE’** by W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;  
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight’s all a-glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet’s wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on pavements gray,  
I hear it in the deep heart’s core.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


## CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. If you were asked to rewrite one word or line from the poem, which would it be? Write out the word or line.
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?
7. Write a description of the island and the lake (Lough Gill) using the images the poet has provided.

## FILL IN THE BLANKS

**STANZA 1:** This is a poem written in 1893 about escaping from city life. Yeats says he will build a small cabin on the uninhabited island of Innisfree in Co. Sligo. He will make it from mud and sticks and he will grow beans to live on. He will also keep bees and live a simple existence. In his mind, it is a form of heaven to live off the land. It is obvious he does not want to depend on anyone and would prefer to live alone. He shows that he is a dreamer because it is not a very realistic plan. The tone of the first stanza is both dreamy and musical. The repetition of the ‘b’ sound in “bean/bee/bee” gives it a humming quality also. The repetition of the lilting and soft ‘i’ sound in “nine/I/hive/live” adds to the musical effect.

**STANZA 2:** This stanza gives us both colour and the suggestion of colour. He starts with the metaphor for mist, the “veils of the morning”. You are given an image of grey lake-mist just above the water and creeping over to the island. On the island the green grasshopper “sings” by rubbing his legs. “Midnight’s all a-glimmer” tell us that parts of the island are dark and mysterious. It gives us a sense of how wild and lonely this island with black shadows is. “Noon a purple glow” shows how deep the colours are around this island. It suggests that they are lodged deep in his memory also. Finally, the fawn-coloured linnet flaps his wings. The only sounds so far are the bees, the cricket and the linnet on this island. These are all soft sounds and emphasise how isolated the island is.

**STANZA 3:** The last stanza has a very mellow and sad tone in the first two lines. The 5 words with ‘l’ in them (will/always/lake/lapping/low) try to recreate the sound of lake water lapping against the shore. The long ‘o’ sounds (go/now/low/shore) ensure that the lines have to be read slowly. Yeats is trying to show how the lake island has a grip on his mind, his memory and his soul. He calls it the “deep heart’s core.” Even when he is on the “pavement” of big cities like London, the water laps slowly like a heartbeat. Someday he will go back.

You are the world's greatest poetry detective. Find one example for each technique.

**Figurative language:**

Using colour as symbols:

Metaphors:

Personification:

**Mechanical language:**

Verse form:

End-rhyme:

Run on lines:

**Mnemonic language:**

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

**'THE ROAD NOT TAKEN'** by Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I-  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


### CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. If you were asked to rewrite one word or line from the poem, which would it be? Write out the word or line.
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?
7. Look up the comments and how it is rated on the net by typing in: 'The Road Not Taken' to [poemhunter.com](http://poemhunter.com)

### FILL IN THE BLANKS

This is what is known as a cryptic poem. A cryptic poem can be difficult to understand at first. It has a simple theme for everyone once you consider it carefully.

Everyone has two paths in life they can travel on. You can 'go with the herd' or you can strike out by yourself. If you decide to achieve all the things in life that you dream of, you are a rare person. You are taking the road less travelled. It is difficult to 'break the mould' and be yourself. Frost has the same dilemma.

He sees two roads in the forest. One looks less well-worn because very few people have travelled on it. This is a metaphor for the choices we all face in life. Do we take the road everyone else takes even when we know it is wrong for us?

Frost decides to take the road less travelled. He doesn't say whether it was a success or not. The good news is that if you take the road less travelled, you will meet other extraordinary people along the way. Whether you want to be a poet, a pilot, a politician or a pop star-do it!



**‘STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING’** by Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep.

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


### CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. If you were asked to rewrite one word or line from the poem, which would it be? Write out the word or line.
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?

### FILL IN THE BLANKS

This poem is based on a real incident in Robert Frost's life. He was returning home one evening from a failed business trip to the market. It was snowing heavily in New Hampshire, America. New Hampshire is 212 miles from New York and is close to the border with Canada.

Frost could not sell his goods and it occurred to him that he could not buy Christmas presents for his children. He had a sleigh attached to the horse in order to transport his goods. He came to a bend in the road and stopped the horse. Then he began to cry uncontrollably. After a few minutes, the horse shook his harness. The bells on the harness had an effect on Frost. He snapped out of his depression. Then he moved towards home even though he had bad news for his family. He wrote this poem in one night at a later date.

Frost himself said that this poem is over-analysed. Its genius lies in the simple language, its simple rhythm and its simple message. It has a universal theme that everyone can relate to. Sometimes in life we are going to face great challenges. We can bow down to them or we can rise to meet them. In this poem, Frost uses the woods as a symbol of his depression. He struggled with it a lot in life.

Like depression, they are "dark and deep" and want to lure him in. That is why he calls them "lovely" also. Depression can creep up on adults without them being aware of it. In this case, he sees it as a choice. He decides to beat his depression by going home and facing up to his responsibilities. This time Frost wins. He has "many miles to go" before he sleeps. In this case, sleep is probably a metaphor for death or suicide. It is a very powerful poem.

**‘THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER’ by Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834)**

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
The furrow followed free;  
We were the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
‘Twas sad as sad could be;  
And we did speak only to break  
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,  
The bloody sun, at noon,  
Right up above the mast did stand,  
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water, everywhere,  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


### CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?

### FILL IN THE BLANKS

In the spring of 1798, three people were walking in the hills of Somerset. One of them was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was an up-and-coming poet. William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy were the others. The conversation turned to a book that Wordsworth was reading, 'A Voyage Round the World by Way of the Great South Sea'. It was written in 1726 by Captain George Shelvocke. In the book, a sailor shot an albatross and the ship suffered bad luck afterwards.

Coleridge had also read James Cook's second voyage of exploration (1772-1775). Coleridge's tutor had served on Cook's ship and he was fascinated by the tales of trying to break through the ice. These were probably the biggest influence on Coleridge's poem. The plot is this:

It starts with a mariner who meets someone on the way to a wedding party. The mariner is cursed to forever roam the earth telling his story. He was on board a ship in Antarctica which hit a storm. An albatross leads them out of the storm but for no reason the mariner shoots it. The weather improves at first and the crew praise him. Then the ship sails to a place where there is no wind and the sun burns them terribly. The crew force the mariner to wear the dead albatross around his neck. One by one, they all die, leaving the mariner alone. After many adventures, the mariner's curse is lifted when the albatross falls off his neck. As his penance, the mariner is forced to wander the earth telling his tale of woe.

You are the world's greatest poetry detective. Find one example for each technique.

**Figurative language:**

Using colour as symbols:

Metaphors:

Personification:

**Mechanical language:**

Verse form:

End-rhyme:

Run on lines:

**Mnemonic language:**

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

**'IF'** by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too:  
If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated don't give way to hating  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream-and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think-and not make thoughts your aim,  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same:  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,  
And never breathe a word about your loss:  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they have gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings-nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much:  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance done,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And-which is more-you'll be a Man, my son!

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


### CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What is the best advice given in the poem, in your opinion? Give an example from the poem.
5. If you were asked to rewrite one word or line from the poem, which would it be? Write out the word or line.
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?
7. What do you think are the main differences between this poem and the ones earlier in the book?

**'THE COTTAGE IN THE GROVE'** by Liam O' Flynn (Still alive)

The building's now a widow,  
grown old with ivy veil;  
and small things creep and shadows grow  
among the broken shale.

How the sunlight sweetly burns  
the walls with broken eyes;  
and lime-tears stretch towards the urns  
with silent, crumbling cries.

No robins sing, no song is heard,  
the cottage is forlorn.

The Titian-breasted Jesus bird  
will not announce the morn.

How the moonlight harpstring lanced  
inside the kitchen door;  
where songs were heard and children danced  
upon the flagstone floor.

How the starflame freely spilled  
upon the wellworn path;  
before the fields now untilled  
were wrinkle-clapped with wrath.



Whiskey flowed and candles glowed  
stout bonds of kinship made.

The fire danced low and turfy slow  
burning the path to jade.

Laughter rang and children sang  
with mouths raised to the thatch.

And how the starfire freely spilled  
upon the sumptuous grass.

No crack of snail, no thrush refined,  
shall this place ever hear.

Small birds know all about bloodlines;  
and why they disappear.

How the sunlight awful burns  
the cottage in the grove;  
where children laughed away concerns  
swirling in carefree cloaks.

Now the sunlight awful peeps  
where moonlight once shone hale;  
and shadows creep and halflings weep  
among the broken shale.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


### CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.
3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. If you were asked to rewrite one word or line from the poem, which would it be? Write out the word or line.
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?

### WRITE A 10-LINE POEM ON ANY SUBJECT OF YOUR CHOICE

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**‘DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP’** by Mary Elizabeth Frye (1905-2004)

Do not stand at my grave and weep:

I am not there; I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow,

I am the diamond glints on snow,

I am the sun on ripened grain,

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning’s hush

I am the swiftly uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circling flight

I am the soft starshine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry:

I am not there; I did not die.

Read this poem once. Write out the first word or phrase that springs to mind after reading it.


Now read it again aloud. Are there any other words or phrases that spring to mind?


**CREATIVE WRITING QUESTIONS**

1. Did you like this poem? Say why/why not giving examples from the poem.
2. What do you think is the theme of the poem? Are there sub-themes in it as well, in your opinion? Write down what you think they may be.

3. Try to write a 6-line poem with the same title.
4. What are the best images in the poem, in your opinion? Give examples from the poem.
5. If you were asked to rewrite one word or line from the poem, which would it be? Write out the word or line.
6. What is the mood of the poem, in your opinion?

### **THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF THIS POEM**

For over 60 years, nobody knew who wrote this poem. It was used at funerals and it was written on bereavement card for all that time in America. Nobody came forward to claim ownership of it. This was surprising as it would have made the poet a lot of money.

In 1995, the father of a British soldier killed in Northern Ireland read it on BBC radio. His son had it among his personal effects. That was the first time it had been introduced to the general public in Britain.

Later that year, 'The Bookworm' television programme decided to conduct a poll of Britain's favourite poems. Even though this poem wasn't even on the list of poems, it won hands down! Thirty thousand votes later, it was now officially Britain's favourite poem.

In 1998, the world's most famous female journalist was Abigail van Buren. She was the first global 'agony aunt' and had 110 million readers. She discovered who wrote the poem and the story went like this:

In 1932, Mary Frye and her husband kept a female lodger in their house. This lodger, named Margaret, was German. She was very upset that she could not visit her mother who was ill in Germany. Hitler was coming to power and there was a lot of unrest in Germany. When her mother died, Margaret was heartbroken. She said she never had the chance to "stand by my mother's grave and shed a tear."

Almost immediately, Mary Frye wrote out the poem on a brown shopping bag. She wrote it out in one quick movement exactly as it is seen today. Remarkably, she had never written a poem before. She said the words "just came to her." She gave it to some friends as a gesture of comfort but never sought publicity for it. It was so impactful that it gained in popularity over the next 60 years. In all that time, Mary Frye never claimed to own it. When she eventually did, she did not put a copyright on it. Because of that, it is free for anyone to use. That was her final gift before she died in 2005.

This poem, just like Robert Frost's and Rudyard Kipling's, proves one point. Although a lot of great poems use the rule of three, not all do. Just like painting and music, sometimes the message is enough to have an effect on people. When you are writing a poem, think of the message you want to convey first. If after that, you decide to add in onomatopoeia, metaphors and alliteration, well and good. They help, but they can never define a poem.

Spare grids which may be used for any poem.

**Figurative language:**

Using colour as symbols:

Metaphors:

Personification:

**Mechanical language:**

Verse form:

End-rhyme:

Run on lines:

**Mnemonic language:**

Repetition:

Onomatopoeia:

Alliteration:

