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## Introduction

*There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
 The earth, and every common sight,  
 To me did seem  
 Apparell'd in celestial light,  
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
 It is not now as it hath been of yore;—  
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
 By night or day,  
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.*  
 ~ William Wordsworth

### Poetry

The word poetry comes from the ancient Greek ποιέω (poieo), a verb meaning “I create”. The poet is the “creator”, and the poem is the “created”. It is an art form where language is appreciated both for its aesthetic and semantic qualities. The increased emphasis on sound and form, as well as figures, nominally distinguishes poetry from prose.

Prose writing aims to convey meaning by use of more literal and logical means. Poetry is often created from the desire to transcend the logical and combine feelings, sentiments, ideas, and the spiritual into an ethereal whole that relies on all that man is, not just on rational thought.

Vital to all poetry is a sense of rhythm. English poetry is built on meter and often also on rhyme.

Most modern poetry avoids traditional rhyme schemes. Nor did Classical Greek and Latin poetry use rhyme. Rhyme became part of European poetry in the Middle Ages, inherited from Arabic traditions. Instead, early English and Germanic poetry was characterized by alliteration, as we shall see in this volume when we work with the old Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf*. The meter helped the listener anticipate the instances of alliteration.

### History

Poetry as an art form predates literacy. Poetry was employed as a means of storytelling (epic poetry) and of recording oral history, genealogy, and law. Poetry is often closely identified with liturgy in pre-literate societies. Many of the poems surviving from the ancient world are a form of recorded cultural information about the people of the past; their poems are prayers or stories about religious subject matter, histories about their politics and wars, and important organizing myths of their societies.

### Contents of this Book

This book picks up where *Poetry for Beginners* leaves off. In each section, we review the concepts learned in the first book and add concepts, analysis, and imitation techniques.

## A Word to the Teacher

*This book is equivalent to twelve to fifteen weeks' worth of language arts study for a student 8th grade and up. Double lessons on days when the lesson only asks the student to read a background passage. Otherwise do one lesson per day, five days per week.*

*My 8th grade recommendation is not because a mature 5th or 6th grader cannot master the technical skills needed to complete the lessons in this book. Rather, it is because the content matter that inevitably surfaces in Romantic poetry, and to some extent also in Anglo-Saxon poetry, may not be suitable for a younger mind.*

*Anglo-Saxon poetry is violent, and Grendel's devouring of Beowulf's men is rather graphic, but worse than direct description of violence, some messages in Romantic poetry, the other focus of this book, are elusive and (however subtle) are not all "good" messages.*

*On the surface, Romantic poetry tends to emit a sort of wholesome "back-to-nature" flavor, seemingly delightful and safe. But underneath this return to nature, in many of the poets, we eventually find Wordsworth's (at times) myopic focus on himself and his own experiences, rather than others, or we end up with Percy Bysshe Shelley's (seeming) inability to find meaning in existence. The Romantic era, for all that its ideals included a return to childhood and a much needed higher view of each child, it also brought with it crises of faith, insecurity regarding the meaning of life, and out and out despair. Some of that is expressed subversively through the medium of poetry. Caveat lector\*!*

*Nothing included in this book is subversive, no message of hopelessness will be found. The poems we read here are "above" board and "safe", even though they do challenge the student to think. The closest we come to despair is Ozymandias, but it stays at the level of pondering what the purpose of Ramses the Great's "greatness" was ... What was his purpose?? As you add to your studies poems from our lists of additional poems, choose carefully.*

*In several lessons we ask that the student researches the background on the lives of the poets who authored the works we study. Some of those poets lived difficult, perhaps even immoral, and often despairing lives. You as the teacher be the judge of what is appropriate for your student. If your student is not ready to face a person who either committed suicide or had a spouse or close relative who did, cut out some of the background research lessons, or at least preview the poet's life in an encyclopedia to decide whether this life is one that your student would benefit from studying. This would be an especially strong consideration for younger students or for students who themselves are sensitive or perhaps have experienced some sort of personal trauma. -- You can safely forego background analysis on some of the more despairing authors, and your students will still gain a lot by studying the rest of this book.*

*Enjoy!*

*\*Let the reader beware!*

# Lesson 1 – Creating a Commonplace Book

## Goal

Turn a bound composition notebook into a commonplace book.

## Introduction

"A **COMMONPLACE BOOK** is a book in which 'commonplaces' or passages important for reference are collected, usually under general headings; a book in which one records passages or matters to be especially remembered or referred to, with or without arrangement." ~ *Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.*

The copybook gives way to the commonplace book. Commonplace books are hand-written compilations of striking passages garnered from one's reading. Keeping a commonplace book has long been a fashionable habit among educated men and women. It was an especially important and frequent practice during the 16th and 17th centuries.

"Commonplacing" is the act or art of selecting important phrases, lines, and/or passages from texts and writing them down; the commonplace book is the notebook in which a reader has collected quotations from works he or she has read; they are frequently indexed so that the reader can locate quotations related to particular topics or authors.

Like copybook, the act of copying selected passages into a commonplace book is time well spent interacting with that author's ideas and expressions. It is a time to note his choices of words, turns of phrase and sentences, his use of rhyme and meter, as well as his physical divisions of the poem into stanzas. Both the structure and the content of the poem is impressed on your mind during the act of copying. A commonplace book will aid you as you commit a poem to memory. It helps you retain a storehouse of internalized phrases and sentence constructions, which will be useful when you attempt your own independent compositions of poetry or prose.

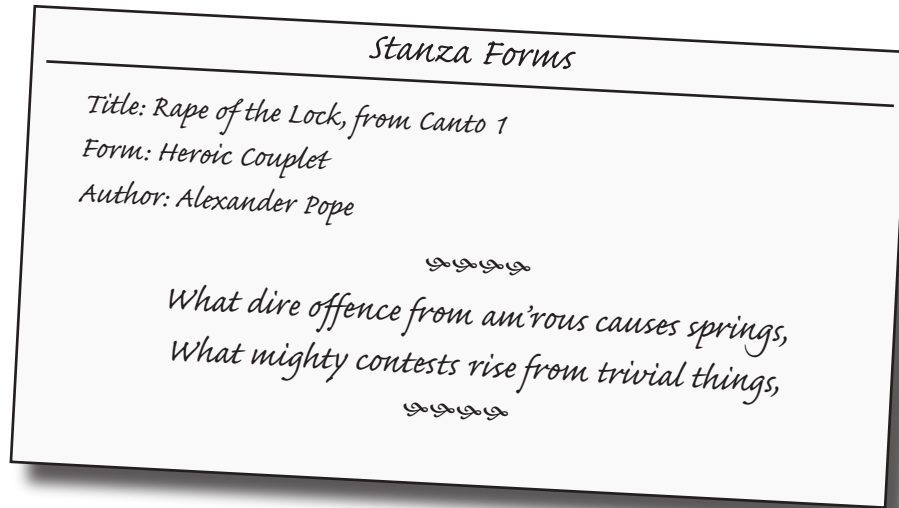
## Instructions

The commonplace book can be made from a bound composition notebook. Usually commonplace books are divided into subheadings which vary according to the interests of their writers. For purposes of this curriculum we recommend using headings which encourage you to look for and find more examples of the types of poetry, as well as the figures and special stanza forms, which are studied in this book. Use the following five divisions:

1. Types of Meter
2. Narrative Poems
3. Lyrical Poems
4. Figures of Speech
5. Special Stanza Forms

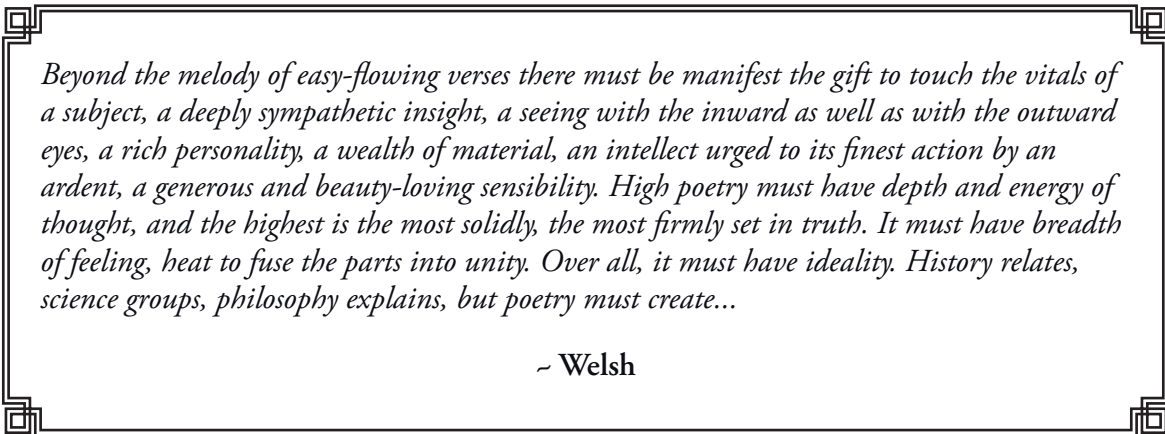
Leave the first page in your commonplace book blank to insert your introductory quote (see box below). Leave the second page of the book for a table of contents. Number all the pages. Divide the rest of the pages among the five headers.

Commonplace books should be kept in neat handwriting, written in ink. Each entry should include the name of the poem and its author, its meter and rhyme scheme, and when applicable, the type of figure or stanza. An entry might look like this:



Exercise

Copy the following quote onto the first page of your commonplace book.



Anywhere in this book where this symbol is found, you are invited to copy the poem (part or all) or the definition into your commonplace book.

## Lesson 2 - Introduction to Paraphrase

### Goal

Learn the importance of paraphrasing.

### Instructions

Read the passage below.



## Paraphrasing

Following dictation, the next step in imitation is paraphrasing. This exercise allows some freedom of expression, since word choice and formatting is up to your own sense of organization and style. A paraphrase of a text is a rewording of that text.

A paraphrase is really a translation from one form into another form, in this case from poetry to prose. When paraphrasing, we translate someone else's words into our own. We alter the wording of the passage while retaining its meaning, its basic logic, its sequence of ideas, and even the examples used. Most importantly, a paraphrase accurately conveys the author's message and opinions.

<i>Paraphrase</i>	
<b>What is the purpose of a paraphrase?</b>	Rewriting of a text or passage in other words. The goal is clarity.
<b>What is the length compared with the original?</b>	As long as needed, usually comparable with the original or longer, especially for dense or antiquated works.
<b>What is the order of presentation of the material?</b>	Same as that of the passage.
<b>What vocabulary and phraseology may I use?</b>	Rarely words from the passage. Use synonyms.
<b>What type of information is included?</b>	All of the passage should be reworded. The original message should be retained.
<b>May I include examples from passage?</b>	Yes, always.

Poems, especially lyrical poems, are loaded with meaning. Lyrical poems communicate how a person, thing, idea, concept, or scene appears to the five senses, to the intellect, to a sense of morality, or to spirituality. Often you will have to read a poem many times and use the dictionary to unravel the ideas expressed in the poem word by word. A paraphrase will help clarify the subject of the poem, as you retell the poem in your own words.

## Lesson 3 - Paraphrase a Narrative Poem



### *Ozymandias*

*I met a traveler from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:  
Look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

~ Percy Bysshe Shelley

### **Goal**

Paraphrase "Ozymandias".

### **Instructions**

1. Read the poem aloud twice and discuss its meaning with your teacher. Narrate the poem to your teacher without looking at the text. Have your teacher check to see if you are missing any parts of the narrative.
2. Now, start with the title. "Ozymandias" refers to Ramses the Great, Pharaoh of the Nineteenth dynasty of Egypt. It is a transliteration into Greek of a part of Ramses' full name, *User-maat-re Setep-en-re*<sup>1</sup>.
3. Identify the first complete sentence of the poem. Locate the first end mark. That will indicate the end of the first sentence in the stanza. Paraphrase it in your own words.
4. Continue paraphrasing the poem working sentence by sentence.

<sup>1</sup>[www.reference.com](http://www.reference.com)

To paraphrase, use the paraphrase procedure in the box below.

### **PARAPHRASE PROCEDURE**

Step 1 – Parse and/or diagram to identify the subject and verb in the sentence. Substitute synonyms for those terms.

Step 2- Likewise identify adverbs and adjectives, and replace those with their synonyms.

Step 3 – Start some of the sentences differently from the author’s sentences to produce clear, readable prose.

Step 4 – Where the author uses a figure of speech, a cliché, or a phrase, replace with single words when possible. In other cases replace single words with phrases.

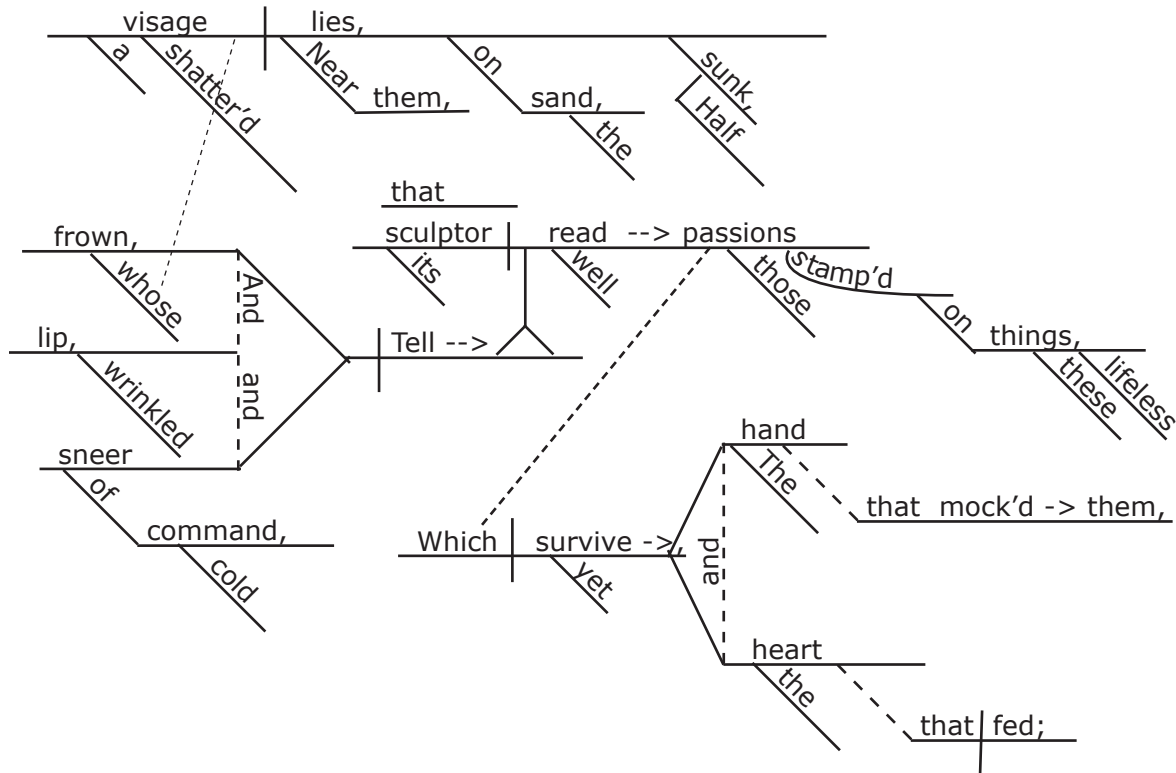
Step 5 – Read the original sentence; read your paraphrase to see if they both convey the same basic message. Correct as needed.

Step 6 - When finished paraphrasing, read your version, then read the original again. Compare and correct. You need to capture the sense of the whole poem as well as that of each sentence.

### ***Helps***

This is a difficult poem to paraphrase. The first sentence begins: “I met a traveler from an antique land who said:” and then what follows, is what the traveler said. The first sentence of what the traveler said is: “Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert”. In other words, he is describing what he saw in the desert, which is two enormous legs of stone without an upper body attached, standing in the middle of the desert. He continues: “Near them...” meaning near the legs, and then he goes on to describe the other debris from this, once magnificent, statue. When making sense of this sentence, look for body parts and facial descriptions. A diagram might help you see which phrases and clauses modify what.





### Sample Paraphrase of Ozymandias

*A man from an ancient country told me that somewhere, two enormous legs of stone appear in the desert sand. Nearby is a broken face with a frown and a curved lip, which show the face of a chillingly arrogant person. The sculptor captured and mocked the passions of this person in these stone fragments. The hand and heart of the sculptor saw the anger and the arrogance. On the foundation of the statue is written: "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings. Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair". There is nothing else there. Around that enormous shattered statue there is only bare sand stretching on forever.*

# Lesson 4 - Background Information on Percy Bysshe Shelley

## Goal

Research and write up background information on the author of *Ozymandias*.

## Introduction

While learning to use background information, you will be introduced to some basic types of research. Use any narrative or lyrical poem as your model, but choose preferably poems written by well-known poets, so that it will be easy to find information about them.

In this lesson, try to find as much information about the author of your poem as possible. With the model *Ozymandias*, the poet is well known, and much information is available. As you return to this lesson, seeking background information on other poets, keep in mind that some poets are relatively obscure. If you cannot find information on a given poet from any of your sources, perhaps little or none is available.

## Instructions

1. Establish when and where the poet lived.

The first thing to do when investigating the background of a poet or poem is to establish some basic places and dates. Use the Internet, a poetry reference book, or an encyclopedia to find out when and where the poet lived. Write down his nationality and the important dates of his life's events.

Below are two of our favorite web sites which have extensive lists of poets from early Anglo-Saxon times to modern times:

<http://www.geocities.com/~spanoudi/poems/authors.html>

<http://www.newtrix.com/poems/poetindex.htm>

2. Find and read a short biographical sketch of the poet.

- What were the major events in his life?
- What special people, events, or experiences (wars, travels, sicknesses, deaths, births, loves, hatreds, places) most affected him?
- What were his major concerns and interests?
- Is there any indication of what his poetry was about, generally?

Summarize the poet's life. If it helps, divide your research into three parts: his youth and education, his middle years, and his later years.

3. Next, turn from general information to this particular poem. First, find out the year(s) during which it was written. If you can find a time line of the poet's life, locate the poem on the time line. What was happening in his personal life or in the political world around him when he wrote the poem?

- What do you know about this time and place in history?
- Step back from the poet himself, and look to the broader history of his times. What was happening in the world at

that time and place (or elsewhere in the world that the poet would know about?) Make a list of any special events.

### Exercise

Perform the three-step analysis above on the poem *Ozymandias* and its author. Once you have asked these basic background questions, use your answers to help you interpret the poem. What might the poet have had in mind while he was writing? Write this as a short two to three paragraph essay as shown below.

#### Background Research for *Ozymandias* by Percy Bysshe Shelley

*Percy Bysshe Shelley lived from 1792 to 1822. He was an English Romantic poet. As a youth, he was expelled from the University of Oxford because of his part in the writing of the pamphlet, "The Necessity of Atheism". In 1813 he published his first long work, Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem. In it, he expressed the socialist philosophies of his contemporary, William Godwin. In 1816, after his first wife's suicide, Shelley married Godwin's daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft. She later became famous for writing the novel "Frankenstein".*

*During the next four years Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote all his major works. Shortly before his 30th birthday in 1822, he was drowned in a storm while sailing.*

*Shelley wrote Ozymandias one year after the suicide of his first wife. One cannot but wonder if the despairing tone of the poem, his seeming attitude that great deeds wither and decay with time, was related to this horrible event in his own life. He was perhaps in some way reflecting his wife's despair.*

*1817 was a time of revolts, new ideas, and war in Europe. Napoleon, a major threat to England, had been defeated only two years before at Waterloo. The French Emperor had done much to bring Egyptology to the light of the world. The topic of Shelley's poem is an old statue of the Great Pharaoh Ramses II, about whom little was yet known in Shelley's time. While it would be taking liberties to say that there is a likeness between the conquests of Ozymandias and Napoleon, one wonders if Shelley also had Napoleon's conquests in mind when composing this poem. Shelley's conclusion in the poem is that given enough time, nothing remains but statues and the passions they display.*

Note 1 - It is extremely important neither to overestimate nor to underestimate the importance of background in the interpretation of poetry. Each writer is affected by his own private life history and by the history of his times. Each writer lives in a particular culture from which he draws his experience of people, places, habits, customs, and priorities. However, almost any writer of verse also seeks something eternal, something in his message or the way it is conveyed that rises above the ordinary. If he is a great poet who speaks to all ages, then he can speak directly to us, too. In a small way, we may be able to step back in time and into his shoes.

Note 2 - Specifically for this poem, note the fascination with Ancient Egypt that erupted in the 1800s after Napoleon's conquest of Egypt. Prior to Napoleon's interest in Egypt little scholarly work was done in this area. This is the setting into which Shelley was born, and this heightened interest in Egypt likely motivated Shelley to write this particular poem.

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## Lesson 4 - Introduction to Limericks

*What is a limerick, Mother?  
It's a form of a verse, said brother  
In which lines one and two  
Rhyme with five when it is through  
And three and four rhyme with each other.  
~ Unknown*

### Goal

Understand the background of limericks and their form.

### Instructions

1. Read the passage below to familiarize yourself with the history behind limericks.
2. Record the definition of a limerick in the commonplace book.



## Limericks

The name limerick has its origin in the Irish town of Limerick. These stanzas are often considered less serious poetry because the stanza form is simple, easy to create, and the content is often silly or humorous. Limericks first began to appear in fourteenth century England. They were used in nursery rhymes and other poetry for children in the 19th century. Soon after Edward Lear's limericks were in print, the working classes in the British Isles also began to compose limericks, some of questionable moral character. As a result limericks were often considered the poetry of rogues and drunkards.



A **LIMERICK** is a five-line stanza.

Lines 1, 2, and 5 contain seven to ten syllables and rhyme with each other.

Lines 3 and 4 contain five to seven syllables and also rhyme with each other.

The meter of the limerick is one iamb followed two anapests, which yields the sound

*da-DUM, da-da-DUM, da-da-DUM (A)*

*da-DUM, da-da-DUM, da-da-DUM (A)*

*da-DUM, da-da-DUM (B)*

*da-DUM, da-da-DUM (B)*

*da-DUM, da-da-DUM, da-da-DUM (A)*

Limericks often contain hyperbole, onomatopoeia, idioms, and puns. They make fun of life, of logic, of language, of everything. The last line of a good limerick contains the punch line of the limerick and is meant to be funny.

## Lesson 5 - Edward Lear

### **Goal**

Read background information on Edward Lear.

### **Instructions**

Read the passage below to familiarize yourself with Edward Lear.



### **Edward Lear**



Edward Lear was born in England in 1812. He was the twentieth child of Jeremiah Lear, a London stockbroker.

Four years after his birth, his family lost their fortune and were forced to live less fashionably. Edward was brought up by his sister Ann, twenty-one years his senior.

During his childhood he suffered from epilepsy, and as he grew older, he experienced sudden changes of mood and bouts of acute depression.

In 1826, Edward began to earn his living as an artist and an illustrator. He spent most of his life in moderately ill health, drawing illustrations for books. He traveled much around Europe. In January 1888 he died in Italy.

Edward Lear is the best known writer of limericks. The first edition of Edward Lear's *Book of Nonsense* was published in 1846. It proved to be extremely popular in the nineteenth century and started a limerick-creating craze.

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## Lesson 6 - Scanning Limericks

### Goal

Scan limericks.

### Exercises

1. Note how each limerick starts. [There was a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ who(se) \_\_\_\_\_].
2. Note how the fifth line's end rhyme is usually the same word as the first line's end rhyme.
3. Note feet, meter, and rhyme scheme in the following limericks by Edward Lear. For other limericks or further study on limericks, check your library or the Internet at:

<http://www.csulb.edu/~csnider/edward.lear.html>

*There was a Young Lady whose nose  
Was so long that it reached to her toes;  
So she hired an old lady,  
Whose conduct was steady,  
To carry that wonderful nose.  
-Edward Lear*



*There was a Young Lady whose bonnet  
Came untied when the birds sat upon it;  
But she said, "I don't care!  
All the birds in the air  
Are welcome to sit on my bonnet!"  
-Edward Lear*



*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.*  
-Edward Lear



*There was an Old Man of Dundee  
Who frequented the top of a tree;  
When disturbed by the crows,  
He abruptly arose,  
And exclaimed, "I'll return to Dundee."*  
-Edward Lear



*There was an Old Person whose habits  
Induced him to feed upon rabbits;  
When he'd eaten eighteen  
He turned perfectly green,  
Upon which he relinquished those habits.*  
-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!"*  
-Edward Lear





## Lesson 7 - Imitation of Limericks

### Goal

Imitate Edward Lear's limericks.

### Introduction

We will choose a limerick from the previous lesson and reproduce it in content and structure.

### Instructions

1. Scan the limerick

*There was a Young Lady whose nose  
Was so long that it reached to her toes;  
So she hired an old lady  
Whose conduct was steady,  
To carry that wonderful nose.*

2. Write its iamb and anapests in the table below.

<i>Iamb/Anapest</i>	<i>Original Limerick</i>	<i>Substitution</i>
da-DUM	There WAS	
da-da-DUM	a young LA-	
da-da-DUM	-dy whose NOSE	*** rhyme
da-da-DUM	was so LONG	
da-da-DUM	that it REACHED	
da-da-DUM	to her TOES	*** rhyme
da-da-DUM	so she HIR'D	
da-da-DUM	and old LA-	
da-da-DUM	-dy whose CON-	**rhyme
da-da-DUM	-duct was STEA-	
da-da-DUM	-dy to CAR-	**rhyme
da-da-DUM	-ry that WON-	
da-da-DUM	-der-ful NOSE	*** rhyme

3. Fill in with substitute anapests.
4. Adjust for meter and rhyme and type your final version of your limerick.
5. Imitate two other limericks.