

Limericks



The limerick takes its name from the city of Limerick, Ireland, although no one really knows how or where the form originated. The limerick is a humorous, nonsense verse consisting of five lines. It uses the AABBA pattern of rhyming. This means that the first, second, and fifth lines rhyme with each other. The third and fourth lines rhyme with each other. All the A lines rhyme and all the B lines rhyme. Its rhythm is three stresses each in lines 1, 2, and 5 and two stresses each in lines 3 and 4. The first line often begins with “There once was ...” or “There was a...” and ends with the name of a person. I will show you a brief slide show about limericks (on class page). Here are some famous limericks by Edward Lear who is credited with popularizing limericks. Notice the rhyme and rhythm.

There was a young lady of Bute
 Who played on a silver-glit flute
 She played several jugs
 To her uncle’s white pigs
 That amusing young lady of Bute



There was a Young Lady whose chin
 Resembled the point of a pin;
 So she had it made sharp, and purchased a harp,
 And played several tunes with her chin.

There was an old person of Ware
 Who rode on the back of a bear
 When they asked, “Does it trot?”
 He said, “Certainly not.
 He’s a Moppiskon Floppiskon bear.”

Here are a few later limericks:

A bottle of perfume that Willie sent
 Was highly displeasing to Millicent
 Her thanks were so cold
 That they quarreled, I’m told
 Through that sill scent Willie sent Millicent.



*A pungent old man from Clontarf
 Refused to take a hot bath
 "Tis cold sure, but free
 To bathe in the sea!"
 Said that briny old man with a laugh.*

A rocket explorer named Wright
 Once traveled much faster than light
 He set out one day
 In a relative way
 And returned on the previous night.

To set the sense of rhyme, use these words to finish the following limerick (dressed, do, blue, depressed, rest)

Sometimes when you’re mad and _____
 And too lazy to even get _____
 Try not to feel _____
 Who’ll care if you _____
 Get up ‘cause you’ve had enough _____

Here’s an easy one to complete to practice rhythm:

There once was a man named _____
 Who loved to eat green eggs and _____
 He went to the _____
 But they had no _____
 So instead he bought some _____

Now, if you wish, you can play around with the Dollar Bill limerick and/or write one relating to your zine focus.