

Limerick Workshop

Learning Objectives

- Identify the unique 5-line structure of a limerick.
- Understand and apply the AABBA rhyme scheme.
- Recognize the specific bouncy rhythm (meter) of a limerick.
- Practice counting syllables to create lines of the correct length.
- Draft, revise, and share an original humorous poem.

Materials Needed

- Whiteboard/Chart paper
- "Limerick Structure" guide (optional, but very helpful - see below!)
- Pencils
- Writing paper (lined is best)
- Rhyming dictionaries (physical or bookmarked online) - optional but encouraged!

Part 1: Introduction to the Limerick (10-15 minutes)

1. Warm-up: Start by reading a couple of simple, classic limericks aloud with a lot of energy and rhythm.

There once was a fellow named Dan,
Had a very mischievous plan.
He hid all the gold,
In a teapot quite old,
And then through the green bushes ran.

2. Deconstruct the Form: Use the example to teach the core components of a limerick. Write these rules clearly on the board/chart paper. Use a simple, illustrative diagram to help visualize the structure.

- Rule #1: Exactly 5 Lines. Count them out loud with the students.
- Rule #2: The AABBA Rhyme Scheme
 1. Lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme with each other (Rhyme A).
 2. Lines 3 and 4 rhyme with each other (Rhyme B).
- Rule #3: Line Length & Number of Stresses.
 1. Lines 1, 2, and 5 are longer. They typically have three strong stresses (or beats) and 7-10 syllables.
 2. Lines 3 and 4 are shorter. They only have two strong stresses and are shorter, around 5-7 syllables.

3. **Teach the Beat (Meter):** This is key! Have students clap or tap out the rhythm of a known limerick. The core beat is often an anapest (da-da-DUM), but a iamb (da-DUM) is also common and easier to start with. The goal is the overall jaunty, bouncy lilt!!

Practice together:

- "da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM" (3 beats for Lines 1, 2, 5)
- "da-DUM, da-DUM" (2 beats for Lines 3, 4)

Part 2: Brainstorming & Initial Ideas (10 minutes)

1. **Limerick Starters:** Give students a few options for how to begin their poem. Limericks often start with:
 - "There once was a [animal/person] from..."
 - "A silly [adjective] fellow named..."
 - "I know a [noun] that liked to..."
2. **Topic Ideas:** Brainstorm some lighthearted topics: animals, food, hobbies, school, or a made-up silly character.
3. **Find Your Rhymes (A Rhymes):** Have students choose a topic and a simple starting line. Encourage them to find 2-3 good, solid rhymes for the end word of their first line (this will be Rhyme A for lines 2 and 5). Use rhyming dictionaries or brainstorm as a group.

Part 3: Drafting the Limerick (15-20 minutes)

1. **Start Writing:** Encourage students to begin drafting. Remind them to focus on the structure and the flow. Don't worry about perfect spelling or grammar yet—get the ideas down!
2. **Syllable Support:** As students work, move around the room and help them count syllables on their fingers if they get stuck on line length. Offer alternative words that fit the beat better.
3. **Focus on Rhyme B** Remind students that Lines 3 and 4 must rhyme with each other but not with lines 1, 2, or 5. This is a common pitfall!
4. **Add Humor:** Encourage silliness, wordplay, and exaggerated descriptions. That's what limericks are all about.

Part 4: Revision & Sharing (10 minutes)

1. **Read It Aloud:** Have students read their completed limericks quietly to themselves or a partner. Does it have that bouncy "da-da-DUM" rhythm? Do the AABBA lines rhyme?
2. **Polishing:** Offer a few minutes for final polishes, corrections, and rewriting on clean paper if desired.
3. **Share the Fun:** Gather the group and invite volunteers to perform their limericks for the class. Encourage a theatrical, energetic delivery! You could even have a small "Poetry Café" setup.

Name _____


