

# Unit 15

## Nonsense Verse

### Writing Nonsense

(narrative / poetry)

#### Part 1: Standards Addressed in This Activity

- W.7.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.7.3.A** Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- W.7.3.B** Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.7.3.C** Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- W.7.3.D** Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- W.7.3.E** Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
- W.7.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.7.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- W.7.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

#### Part 2: Description of Activity

In this activity, the student will experiment with nonsense writing in the style of Edward Lear, a writer featured in Unit 15.

### Part 3: Connecting with the Text

1. Prompt students to verbalize what they know about Edward Lear. Examples:
  - Lear was born in 1812, the youngest of 21 children. He lived at the same time as Lewis Carroll.
  - Lear made his living and became famous as both an artist and a writer, especially a writer of nonsense verse.
  - Lear is best known for his limericks and longer nonsense poems, which often tell a story. A single book he published in 1846 contained more than 100 limericks.
2. Let students know they can find Lear's poetry and artwork by searching *Edward Lear* at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).
3. Distribute copies of the handouts in Part 5 for students to use as prewriting activities.

### Part 4: Directions for the Student

1. Reread Edward Lear's poems in Unit 15 and explore more of his work at [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org). Think about the subjects of Lear's writings. Brainstorm a list of ideas for your own nonsense poem or narrative. Who or what will your writing be about?
2. Brainstorm lists of alliteration, portmanteau words, and invented words. Websites such as [rhymezone.com](http://rhymezone.com) can help you find rhyming words.
3. Experiment with using rhythm and rhyme to create humorous writing. Remember, nonsense is not the opposite of sense. In nonsense verse, a ridiculous idea is treated seriously.
4. Experiment with dialogue and/or create a drawing to go with your nonsense verse if you want. Or, use one of Edward Lear's drawings to inspire your writing.

#### **Prompt**

Write several limericks or a long nonsense poem in the style of Edward Lear. Incorporate rhythm and rhyme. You may want to include dialogue and/or create a drawing to go with your nonsense verse. Or, use one of Edward Lear's drawings to inspire your writing.

### Part 5: Handouts

Writing a Limerick Worksheet

Alliteration Organizer

Lear's Invented Nonsense Words

Edward Lear's Artwork

Proofreader's Checklist

## Writing a Limerick

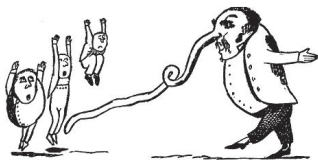
A limerick follows a very specific pattern of rhyme, known as AABBA. The first, second, and fifth lines rhyme, and the third line rhymes with the fourth. Limericks also have a rhythm (beat), which comes from emphasizing certain syllables or words.

<b>Rhyme pattern</b>	AABBA
<b>Syllable pattern</b>	8 or 9 syllables in the first, second, and last line 5 or 6 syllables in the third and fourth lines
<b>Rhythm</b>	3 strong beats in the first, second, and last line 2 strong beats in the third and fourth lines
<b>Example</b>	There <b>was</b> an Old <b>Man</b> with a <b>beard</b> , Who <b>said</b> , 'It is <b>just</b> as I <b>feared</b> ! Two <b>Owls</b> and a <b>Hen</b> , Four <b>Larks</b> and a <b>Wren</b> , Have <b>all</b> built their <b>nests</b> in my <b>beard</b> !'

Notice that in Lear's limericks, the last word of the first line often repeats at the end.

See if you can find the rhythm in these examples from Edward Lear:

There was a Young Lady of Ryde,  
Whose shoe-strings were seldom untied.  
She purchased some clogs,  
And some small spotted dogs,  
And frequently walked about Ryde.



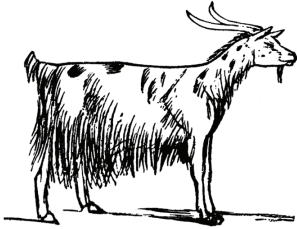
There was an Old Man with a nose,  
Who said, 'If you choose to suppose,  
That my nose is too long,  
You are certainly wrong!  
That remarkable Man with a nose.

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!'



Fill in the blanks.

## The Goat



He's so proud of his glorious skirt

But it drags when he walks through the \_\_\_\_\_.

A good barber can \_\_\_\_\_.

His fine fur, limb to limb,

And, of course, a good bath wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_!

## The Zebra

A speedy zebra runs 'round a \_\_\_\_\_.

With five little monkeys on its \_\_\_\_\_.

He finds it amusing

And somehow confusing

This sort of ride is called "piggyback."



## The Vulture

The vulture has many fine traits.

By the side of the road, he \_\_\_\_\_.

After getting his \_\_\_\_\_.

Of delicious roadkill,

He writes in his book of debates.



Art by Edward Lear

# Alliteration

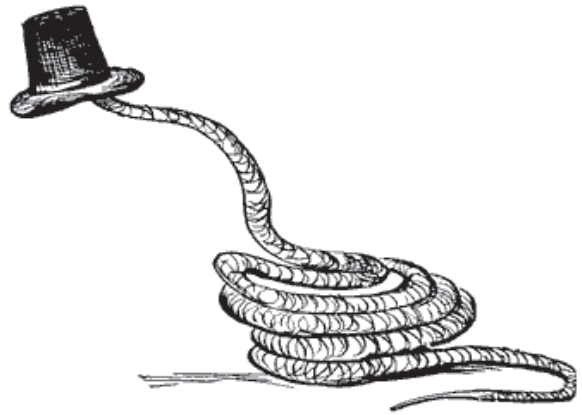
Alliteration is the repetition of beginning consonant sounds in two or more words or syllables. It is a literary device used in poetry, song, rap, speech, and common sayings. Here are some examples from Edward Lear. Write some alliterations of your own.

A	
B	The Butterfly, Beetle, and Bee      Let us dine on Beans and Bacon!
C	
D	There was an Old Derry down Derry
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	
J	
K	
L	
M	
N	
O	
P	
Q	
R	
S	They went to sea in a sieve, they did; In a sieve they went to sea
T	
U	
V	
W	When he walks in waterproof white
X	
Y	
Z	

## Lear's Invented Nonsense Words

This is a list of made-up words found in Edward Lear's writings. Some may be portmanteau words. An example of how Lear used the word is included.

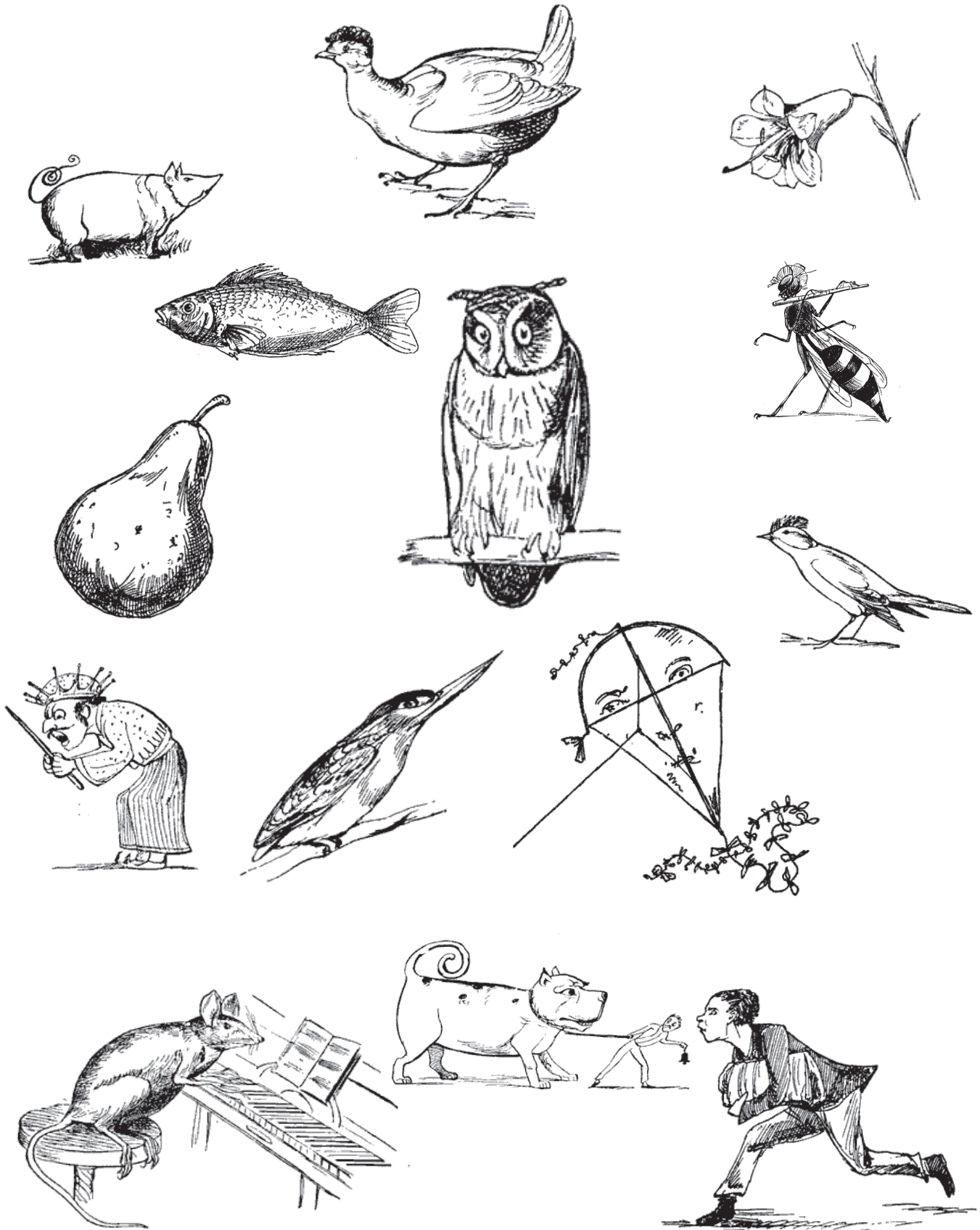
<u>Word</u>	<u>How Lear Used It</u>
plumdomphious	(in a somewhat plumdomphious manner)
scroobious	(his manners were scroobious and strange)
Piggy-wig	(and there in the wood a Piggy-wig stood)
runcible	(runcible cat, runcible raven, runcible spoon, runcible hat)
Quangle-Wangle	(an elderly Quangle-Wangle who had to cook dinner and make the tea)
Crumpetty	(on top of the Crumpetty Tree)
flumpetty	(suppose we should fall down flumpetty)
fimble	(the frog and the fimble fowl)
Pobble	(the Pobble who has no toes)
bisky	(the bisky bat)
meloobious	(a soft meloobious sound)
dolomphious	(a dolomphious duck)
borascible	(that borascible person)
fizzgiggious	(the fizzgiggious fish)
himmeltanious	(a himmeltanious chatter-clatter-blattery noise)
tumble-dum-down	(fell tumble-dum-down)
sponge-taneous	(with one sponge-taneous cry)



# Edward Lear's Artwork



# Edward Lear's Artwork





## Proofreader's Checklist

### Narrative

*Did I...*

- \_\_\_\_\_ use narrative techniques (real or imagined experiences, relevant descriptive details, well-structured event sequences, dialogue to develop characters)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ use descriptive details, sensory language, and precise words?
- \_\_\_\_\_ use a variety of transitions to show sequence and time shifts?
- \_\_\_\_\_ write a conclusion that follows from the experience?
- \_\_\_\_\_ use correct capitalization, spelling, and punctuation?

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