

# Laughable limericks - a step by step guide to writing them

## Step 1 - introduction

- Limericks are funny poems with five lines
- The first, second and fifth lines (group A) usually have 8 or 9 syllables and rhyme with each other
- The third and fourth lines (group B) have 5, 6 or 7 syllables and rhyme with each other
- Each group of lines should have the same rhythm and usually the same number of syllables as each other.
- A syllable is a part of a word, a sound. It usually has a vowel in it. Can you clap the syllables in your name?
- 'Ruth' has one syllable but 'Ruthy' has two beats or syllables and 'Sofia' has three syllables.
- Watch this fun video to help you learn about limericks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-rN3DGMCsE>

## Step 2 - listen to and learn the rhythm of limericks

- Read the four limericks below and listen to more here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtLQO1Gk39g>

There was an Old Man on a <b>train</b> , (8) Who said, 'I'm in pain, I'm in <b>pain!</b> (8) They said, 'No! you're <b>not!</b> (5) He said 'utter <b>rot!</b> (5) That unhappy Old Man on a <b>train</b> (9)	There was an Old Man from Peru, ( ) Who couldn't work out what to do; ( ) So he danced out a jig, ( ) And down fell his wig, ( ) That funny Old Man of Peru. ( )
There was a young man with a cat, ( ) Who said he'd prefer a pet rat, ( ) He went to the shop, ( ) And did a pet swap, ( ) But then came on home with a bat! ( )	I'm in a class called 3 E E. ( ) My teacher drinks lots of hot tea. ( ) One day there was none, ( ) The tea bags had gone, ( ) And so she refused to teach me. ( )

- Count the number of syllables in each line of the limericks above and write it in the brackets at the end of the line ( ), the first one has been done for you.
- Highlight (colour) in yellow the words in lines one, two and five of each of the limericks that rhyme.
- Highlight (colour) in blue the words in lines three and four of each of the limericks that rhyme.
- Tap out the rhythm of the limericks whilst you say them,
  - dee dum, dee dum, dee dum, dee dum (8)
  - dee dum, dee dum, dee dum, dee dum (8)
  - dee dum, dee dum, dee (5)
  - dee dum, dee dum, dee (5)
  - dee dum, dee dum, dee dum, dee dum (8)

## Step 3 - learn the subject/content of limericks

- Limericks are usually a silly story poem about a person (or group of people).
- Line 1 tells you who they are or where they are from.
- Line 2 tells you a bit more detail about the person.
- Line 3 and line 4 tell you a silly story about them.
- Line 5 is a funny ending about what happens in the end.
- Some limericks repeat a lot of line 1 in line 5, for example in the first limerick about the old man on a boat.
- Watch this video to revise what is in a limerick <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQ79VFgDr8Q>

#### **Step 4 - have a go yourself**

- Write some words that rhyme with 'Spain' and 'Rome', some ideas have been given to you.
- It can help to look at the alphabet and try changing the 'onset' (the first sound) whilst keeping the same 'rime' (the last sound that does the rhyming).
  - For example if the word you want to find rhymes for is 'vet' try:
  - A Bet C Debt E F Get H I Jet K Let Met Net O Pet Q R Set T U Vet Wet X Yet Z
- Try it yourself for the words in the rhyming list on the next page, here's an alphabet to help you.

• A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

<b>word</b>	<b>words that rhyme with the word</b>
Rome	dome, gnome,
shock	block, flock, knock,
Spain	reign, rain, cane
me	tea, pea,

- Remember rhyming words can have more than one syllable, you usually just need to change the first sound in the word, e.g. Zoe, Chloe or yummy, mummy.
- Finish this limerick:
  - There was a young lady from Rome
  - Who sat down too quick \_\_\_\_\_
  - She jumped up in shock
  - And fell on a \_\_\_\_\_
  - That silly young lady from Rome
- Write your own limerick about someone from Spain. Are they young or old? A girl, lady, boy or man?
- You can use little 'filler' adjectives to make a line have the right number of syllables, e.g. 'young', 'old', 'big'.