

Learning about Limericks

A limerick is a type of humorous poem with a five lines. It has a specific rhythm and rhyme scheme. Here are some examples of limericks by Edward Lear.

There was an Old Person of Chili,
Whose conduct was painful and silly;
He sat on the stairs,
Eating apples and pears,
That imprudent Old Person of Chili.

There was a Young Lady of Norway,
Who casually sat in a doorway;
When the door squeezed her flat,
She exclaimed, "What of that?"
This courageous Young Lady of Norway.

Identify the rhythm and rhyme scheme in the limericks above. Put a letter in the blank for words that rhyme. Use the letter A to represent the first group of sounds, the letter B to represent the second, etc. To determine the rhythm, put an ictus (/) over the sounds that are stressed and put a breve (^) over unstressed sounds.

There was an Old Person of Chili, A
Whose conduct was painful and silly; A
He sat on the stairs, B
Eating apples and pears, B
That imprudent Old Person of Chili. A

There was a Young Lady of Norway, A
Who casually sat in a doorway; A
When the door squeezed her flat, B
She exclaimed, "What of that?" B
This courageous Young Lady of Norway. A

Now try writing a limerick yourself. Fill in the blanks of the following lines with words that will match the limerick rhyme scheme.

Examples of a correct answer

There once was a boy in the town
Who wanted to go be a clown
He traveled by car
To become a big star
That curious boy in the town.