

LEWIS CARROLL: *A BOAT, BENEATH A SUNNY SKY*

The I and the Eye of the Writer

An acrostic: meaning behind the pleasure of words?

The passage of time, mourning for childhood, life is but a dream

Essentials

- ✓ <http://bootless.net/mouse.html>: *The Mouse's Tale*: utilisation du "chapeau", divisé en 3 parties, puis du calligramme.
- ✓ Image tirée de <https://irunreadteach.wordpress.com/2011/04/30/acrostic-poetry-anchor-chart/>
- ✓ Les 2 romans de Lewis Carroll: *Alice in Wonderland* et *Through the Looking-Glass...*
- ✓ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGB4TQGNFKc>

- **OHP:** *The Mouse's Tale 1* (title): what comes to mind?

The Mouse's Tale 2 (ditto + author's name, down to "sighing"). Where does it come from? What content, what form? How long? Do you know another word with the same pronunciation?

The Mouse's Tale 3 (ditto + down to "something like this"): like what?

The Mouse's Tale, whole text: is that what you expected? Did you guess right?

A concrete poem/shape poem. What does it represent?

A literary game, playing with words. Consists in arrangement of words on the page to correspond to the shape of what the poem is about.

What's the play on words here? Tail /tale, homophones, pronounced in the same way, but different meaning + shaped like a tail.

- What we can deduce about Lewis Carroll
What you know about him. *Alice in Wonderland* 1865 + a sequel, *Through the Looking Glass* 1871. Novel.
- Do you know other literary games? Do you know what an acrostic is?
OHP: Acrostic poem. What is consists in. A form of poetry in which the 1st letter of each line spells out a word, a phrase or a name.
Why do people write acrostics, in your opinion? (+ in Victorian (very prudish) times, a way of passing on "secret messages")

OHP: Show video of *A Boat* for 30", with sound off. Can you find an acrostic? Who is she, in your opinion? What's Carroll's intention with the acrostic?

- Physically show with the actual novels how Lewis Carroll wrote a poem, *All in the golden afternoon*, as a preface to *Alice*, to explain how it all started. He recalls the afternoon on which he improvised the *Alice in Wonderland* story on a boat-trip.

Show that the epilogue to *Through the Looking Glass...* is in poem form too. One at both ends. Carroll as a logician.

- Hand out **worksheet**. [Page 1 only for now](#).

Read LC's biography. Pick out any info we didn't mention before.

Vocabulary + pronunciation

- Watch **USB**: *A Boat Beneath a Sunny Sky*- [Sound off](#)
 GW: groups of 4. Focus on: acrostic & place / place & people / people & time (hour, seasons) /time & feelings. If acrostic deciphered before: place/ people/ time/ feelings.
 Feed back to class.

The acrostic. How you understand this. Dedicated to her, he wrote the book for her. His favourite. A compliment. There was one at the beginning of *Alice*/she was at the origin of the novel, now the end. Loops the loop.

Issue: that whole poem just for the fun/ pleasure of it, without any other emotion? Or more serious concerns?

Worksheet

A Boat Beneath a Sunny Sky - Worksheet

from *Through the Looking-Glass And What Alice Found There (1871)* by Lewis Carroll

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was an English logician, nonsense writer, mathematician and photographer. He taught mathematics at Christ Church College, Oxford, and wrote under the pen name Lewis Carroll.

He loved children, who were often the subjects of his stories. One of his favourites was Alice Liddell, one of the daughters of Henry George Liddell, the Dean of Christ Church. She had two sisters, Lorina and Edith, and the three sisters were constant childhood companions.

On many occasions Dodgson took them out in boat excursions on the river. He would tell them stories about another young girl called Alice, and her adventures underground.

Vocabulary

beneath: *under*

to linger: *to take one's time*

onward: *ahead, forward*

to nestle: *to move close to someone*

to fade: *to become pale, to lose energy*

frost: *very cold temperature that causes freezing*

to slay, slew, slain: *to kill*

phantomwise: *like a ghost*

shall nestle: *will nestle (future)*

Watch the video once. In groups, pick out information about:

The acrostic

Places
People
Time
Feelings

Before reading the poem, study its structure. What do you notice?

Now read the poem and answer the following questions

Is there any information you can add to the grid above?
How would you couple or group the stanzas?

Page 2 of the worksheet

Stanzas 1 & 2

Describe the scene that you can see here. What is shown?

Are the sentences complete?

What is the effect?

What is your general impression when you read these two stanzas?

Why?

Stanza 3

What are the poet's feelings?

Why?

List the words belonging to the corresponding lexical field.

How can you link stanza 3 to stanzas 1 & 2?

Stanza 4

Who does "she" refer to?

What vision do we have of her?

"Alice": line 11. In your opinion, why does this name appear here only?

Stanzas 5 & 6

How do they echo stanzas 1 & 2?

What similarities and differences are there?

What comes 1st? Focus on "shall", line 15.

Lines 17 and 18: show how these two lines sum up the main ideas of the first two stanzas.

Stanza 7

Show that we still have an echo of the first two stanzas.

"Drifting down the stream": What metaphor is it?

What is the effect of the last line?

Explain what you understand here.

The music of the poem: rhythm and sounds

Watch video with [sound on](#): listen to rhythm. Experiment tapping it/rapping it/stamping your feet...

Pick out the stressed syllables in stanza 1, then in stanza 2. Practise reading the two stanzas aloud, along with the actor, marking the stress.

In your opinion, what is the effect produced by the difference in rhythm?

What about the rhythm of the last line?

The rhymes: what do they evoke? *Nursery rhyme* How is that related to the theme of the poem?

Pick out alliterations: what effect do they have?

To go further

Show how, in this poem, writing for fun does not exclude the expression of more serious concerns.

How fit is this poem as an epilogue to *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass And What Alice Found There*, in your opinion?

Final task: Record yourselves reading this poem (or what one of the poems we have studied) with a musical accompaniment and explain why you have chosen that particular music, and how it matches the poem, in your opinion. (1'30)

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