LIMERICKS - SAYING THEM AND WRITING THEM – and using them in CLASS!!

❖ What is a limerick? It is a funny little nonsense poem containing 5 lines. It has a very distinctive rhythm and rhyme pattern.

- Rhyme Pattern: The last words of the **first, second, and fifth** lines all rhyme with each other - this is the "A" pattern
- The last words of the **third and fourth** lines also rhyme with each other – this is the "B" pattern

❖ A very famous example is :

There was an old man from Peru	A
Who dreamed he was eating his shoe	A
He woke in a fright	B
In the midst of the night	B
And found it was perfectly true	A

❖ Rhythm Pattern :

✚ The **first, second, and fifth** lines (the A rhymes) all have the following rhythm pattern:

da DUM da da DUM da da DUM   (there are 3 DUMS, or strong beats).

Students say, "da DUM da da DUM da da DUM" (clapping hands here can help)

They then say, "There was an old man from Peru

The second line has the same pattern ; Who thought he was eating his shoe

As does the fifth : And found it was perfectly true

✚ The third and fourth lines (the B rhymes) have a different rhythm pattern:

da DUM da da DUM   (there are 2 DUMS or strong beats)

say "da DUM da da DUM" out loud (clapping is good here too)

Try saying the two middle lines :

He woke up in a fright
In the midst of the night

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There was an old man from Peru	A
Who dreamed he was eating his shoe	A
He woke up in a fright	B
In the midst of the night	B
And found it was perfectly true	A

❖ To write a limerick, it will have to have
  ⚑ the AABBA pattern
  ⚑ 3 dums, 3 dums, 2 dums, 2 dums, 3 dums too!

There are millions of limericks that have been written – below is a smattering for you to sample!
Students love writing them, and they fit into any theme.

1. Beforehand :

Students work in pairs. Each group receives 2 limericks mixed up, and that have been cut into strips. They then put the strips of paper into what they think might be the correct order and read TOGETHER to the others.

2. Next in groups :

→ Each student writes 5-6 places s/he's lived or visited.... cities, countries, addresses, etc. Or if they have an idea about a silly story, or thought, whatever!

→ Choose the 2 places that are easiest to rhyme (this may take some experimenting and more than one try). Students try to come up with words that rhyme and which they then write in columns underneath the place names. This can be done using only the last syllable of the name.

Example :
Annecy, Paree, (= Paris!), free, me, glee, she, bee

Train, pain, shame, main, same,

Example : (produced by students in a classe de 2°)
There once was a boy from Annecy (pronounced Ancy!)
Who wanted to go to Paree
So he got on a train
But the price was a pain
'Cos he'd really thought it was free!

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❖ For my 2° EURO (dnl Maths) class, I asked them to write out the mathematical formula for the following limerick! They found it amazingly easy!!

A Dozen, a Gross, and a Score,
plus three times the square root of four,
divided by seven,
plus five times eleven,
Is nine squared and not a bit more.

Help – a gross = 12 dozen items
A score = a group, or set of 20

$$\frac{12+144+20+3*\sqrt{4}}{7}+5*11 = 9^2 + 0$$

❖ A template can sometimes help students to write limericks. They must use past tenses.

Template - A:
There once was a _____ from _____.
Who _____.
(So) s/he _____.
And _____.
That _____ from _____.

Template - B:
I once met a _____ from _____.
Every day s/he _____.
But when(ever) s/he _____.
The _____.
That _____ from _____.

❖ Here are some to amuse and inspire you!! Also a GREAT way of improving students' phonological skills, not to mention increasing their vocabulary!!

There once was a lady from Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger
They returned from the ride
With the lady inside
And the smile on the face of the tiger

A pet store employee named Blair
Was missing a small patch of hair
A tarantual crawled
To the spot that was bald
And nobody noticed it there

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There once was a lady from Hyde
Who ate some green apples and died
The apples fermented
Inside the lamented
And made cider inside her insides

A fly and a flea in a flue
Were caught, so what could they do?
Let us flee said the fly
Let us fly said the flea
So they flew through a flaw in the flue

There was an old man with a beard
Who said, it is just as I feared
Two owls and a hen
Four larks and a wren
Have all built their nests in my beard

A wonderful bird is the pelican
His beak can hold more than his belly can
He can take in his beak
Enough food for the week
I'm damned if I know how the helican

There once was a girl named Irene,
who lived on distilled kerosene.
But she started absorbin'
A new hydrocarbon
And since then has never benzene !

Said an envious, erudite ermine,
"There's one thing I cannot determine:
When a girl wears my coat,
She's a person of note.
When I wear it, I'm called only vermin."

There was a young lady named Rose
Who had a large wart on her nose.
When she had it removed
Her appearance improved,
But her glasses slipped down to her toes.

The limerick's callous and crude,
Its morals distressingly lewd;
It's not worth the reading
By persons of breeding -
It's designed for us vulgar and rude.

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