

You are Old, Father William

Poem

<p>✧ Let the students discuss the character with their partners. Move around to guide and assess the discussion.</p>	<p>Get Going!</p>
<p>✧ 'You Are Old, Father William' is a humorous nonsense poem written by Lewis Carroll. It was first published in 1865 as part of Carroll's children's novel 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'.</p> <p>✧ The poem consists of eight stanzas of four lines each. The entire poem is in question-answer form. There are two voices, one of the father and the other of his son, who are exchanging their views. The language employed is very simple and the poem is in a mocking tone.</p> <p>✧ The poem follows the rhyme scheme 'abab'; that is, the first line rhymes with the third while the second line rhymes with the fourth in every stanza.</p> <p>✧ Stanza 1: The young man brings up Father William's advanced age and says that his hair has grown white. He is puzzled by this, for Father William does not act his age. Instead, he chooses to stand on his head constantly. The young man asks whether Father William considers standing on his head an appropriate activity for his age.</p> <p>✧ Stanza 2: Father William says that he has been afraid to stand on his head while he was young. At that time, he thought it might injure his brain. But then he says that his long years on earth have assured him that he has no brain to be worried about. Therefore, to compensate for not standing on his head in his youth, he performs this action repeatedly in his old age.</p> <p>✧ Stanza 3: The youth again reminds Father William of his advanced age. He also tells the old man that he has gained a lot of weight. Yet, despite this, Father William has turned a back-somersault in at the door.</p> <p>✧ Stanza 4: Father William tells the young man that he has managed to keep his arms and legs very flexible by using an ointment at the cheap rate of one shilling per box. Following this, Father William attempts to sell two boxes of the ointment to the young man.</p>	<p>Read and Enjoy</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Stanza 5: The young man mentions that since Father William has grown old, he believes that his teeth are not strong enough to consume anything other than 'suet' or animal fat. Yet, Father William has devoured an entire duck, including its bones and beak. The young man asks how Father William has managed to consume such hard food. ✧ Stanza 6: Father William replies to the question by recalling the days of his youth, when he used to actively argue about every legal case he came across with his wife. He says his jaws received a lot of exercise during those arguments. In fact, he says that those arguments in his youth have ensured that his jaws have remained strong throughout his life. ✧ Stanza 7: The young man reminds Father William of his advanced age for the last time. He tells Father William that one expects, like other older men, that his vision would have decayed with age. However, instead, Father William has managed to train his eyes and balance an eel on the tip of his nose. The young man asks Father William how he has achieved this feat. ✧ Stanza 8: Father William refuses to reply to this question. Instead, he feels it is enough that he has answered the previous three questions. Then, as a warning, Father William tells the young man to stop imagining that he has all the time in the world to answer absurd questions. Finally, he threatens to knock the young man off the stairs if he doesn't get out of his sight at once.
Read and Understand	✧ Exercises A, B and C: Read and explain the questions and answer them orally. Then ask the students to write the answers. Check and assess their work individually.
Think and Answer	✧ Exercise A: Read and explain the question and discuss it in class. Then ask the students to write the answer. Check and assess their work individually.
Appreciating the Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Brush up on rhyme scheme, which has already been covered in the earlier classes. The rhyme scheme of a poem defines the sequence or pattern of lines that match with one other in a poem. For example, let's take a look at the following lines: Nature's first green is gold, Her hardest hue to hold. Her early leaf's a flower; But only so an hour.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ In the above stanza, the first line rhymes with the second, and the third line rhymes with the fourth. So, the rhyme scheme is aabb. ✧ Exercise A: This can be discussed in class and then the students can do it on their own. Let them check their own work. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Exercise A: Explain the question and ask the students to write the paragraph on their own. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually. 	Write Well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Exercise A: This can be done by the students under the guidance of the teacher. ✧ Exercise B: Students will enjoy reading this popular book by Lewis Carroll. 	AIL Activity (Experiential Learning)