

The Tummy Beast (Poem)

The Tummy Beast

Poem

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ▶ Learning about the poetry in a musical way to tell a story, or enact it.
- ▶ Reading and reciting the poem with the correct rhythm and emphasis.
- ▶ Answering questions on the poem.
- ▶ Learning words, meanings, spellings, pronunciation and rhymes.

Read and Enjoy

- ✧ Give a brief introduction of Roald Dahl, who has written delightful stories and poems for children. If time permits, read out some book written by him or show one of the movies based on his books to the students: 'BFG', 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' or 'Matilda'.
- ✧ This is a funny poem about a child who is constantly feeling hungry and, therefore, overeats. Then he feels sick and complains about it to his mother. His mother scolds him for being so greedy and a glutton, but the silly fellow is sure that there is someone else inside his tummy who is responsible for the overeating and the 'voices' he keeps hearing in his tummy! Finally even his mother is so horrified that she faints!
- ✧ This poem has not been broken up into stanzas but is written in one continuous flow. The lines are arranged as couplets, that is, two lines are rhymed and then the next two and so on.
- ✧ In the first two couplets, the poet as a little boy is troubled by his tummy and tells his mother that there must be someone inside it. That person in his tummy must be thin and small enough to have got into it.
- ✧ In the next couplet, his mother is mildly irritated and tells him that it is not nice to talk like that. But the poet is sure it is true. In the next six couplets, he tells his mother more details about it. He swears there is a person in his tummy. He talks to the poet when he goes to bed. He talks constantly in fact, asking for food and screams at the poet, demanding 'sugar buns for tea'. He encourages the poet to go and 'raid the biscuit tin', telling him that it is not a sin, not something to feel guilty about. The poet admits that it is wrong to keep stuffing himself with food all day. But he is unable to control his gluttony, blaming it on 'this person in my tummy'.
- ✧ His mother is really angry listening to him and yells at him. In the next three couplets, she gives him a good scolding. "You horrid child!" she says, asking him to admit that he has been telling lies. She says he is simply trying to produce silly excuses like a donkey!
- ✧ In the next couplet, the poet does not give up and tries to persuade her again, asking her to believe him. But at that very moment, something happens that saves him from punishment. This event he describes in the next three couplets. His tummy rumbles loudly, and it is 'an awful noise', 'a snorting, grumbling, grunting sound' and it is very loud and makes his 'tummy jump around'.
- ✧ The sound startles his mother terribly. "My goodness, what was that?" she asked. The poet says she looked so shocked, as if she 'nearly died'!

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ In the next three stanzas, his tummy yells out loudly, “Hey there! Listen you! I’m getting hungry! I want eats!” It wants chocolates, sweets and a whole lot of nuts! Then it threatens the poet and his mother. It asks them to hurry up, to “be snappy”, or else it would “twist your guts!” ✧ The poet is frightened and says that is the voice of his tummy. “So now do you believe me, mummy?” he asks his mother. But it was too late. His mother had fainted from shock and was lying on the floor! This we learn from the last two couplets.
Read and Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Exercises A, B and C: Explain the exercises. Do them orally and then ask the students to write the answers in their books. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.
Appreciating the Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Read out some funny poems from Roald Dahl, Ruskin Bond, Enid Blyton, A.A. Milne or Lewis Carroll or any other poet. ✧ Explain what limericks are and add some more examples apart from the one given. Limericks are normally funny poems written in five lines. Their rhyme scheme is aabba. Many are available on the Internet. For example: There once was an ape in a zoo, Who looked out of the bars at you, Do you think it’s fair To give poor apes a scare? I think it’s a mean thing to do! ✧ Exercise A: These two questions can be discussed in class. Explain the exercises. Do them orally and then ask the students to write the answers in their books. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.
Word Wise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Exercise A: Explain what are antonyms [opposites] and ask the students at random for the answers and let them write them down.
Punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Exercises A and B: Refresh what has been taught about punctuation, especially about the apostrophe – its usage in contractions of words. Explain the instructions and examples. Then do the exercises orally. Ask the students to write the correct answers down. Write down the answers on the blackboard and let them check their own work or in pairs.
Write Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Exercise A: Limericks are not easy to write as they require imagination, a command of language and a great deal of wit. Therefore, it is advisable to encourage the students to take up each of the three given topics and suggest lines of the limerick, developing it like a funny story. Write down the viable lines on the blackboard and let them take down all three.
AIL Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Exercise A: Encourage the students to do this exercise on their own.