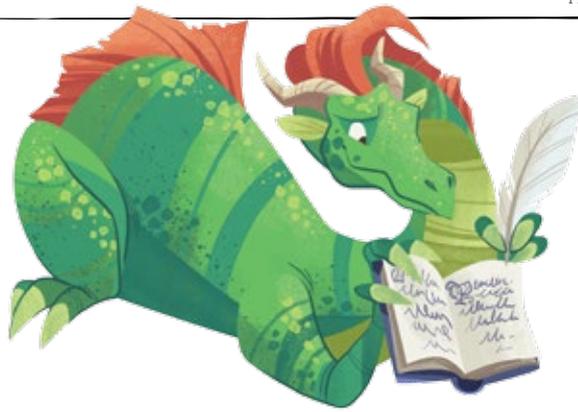


WHAT IS A POEM? FACT SHEET



- A poem is a piece of writing that uses imaginative words to share ideas, emotions or a story with the reader.
- A person who writes a poem is called a poet.
- Many poems have words or phrases that sound good together when they are read aloud.
- Most poems for children rhyme or they have rhythm (just like music) or repetition. But a poem doesn't have to rhyme!
- People have been writing poetry for over 4,000 years, but they were probably making up verses to recite in front of audiences long before that.
- In Ancient Greece, some poems were sung or performed with music – just like a song.
- William Shakespeare, William Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti, John Keats, Robert Louis Stevenson and Emily Dickinson are all famous poets from history. Have you heard of them? Look out for Christina Rossetti's *What is Pink?* poem in **Storytime Issue 12** and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Bed In Summer* in **Storytime Issue 3**.
- Modern children's poets you might know include Michael Rosen (his poem *Where Broccoli Comes From* was in **Storytime Issue 13**), Brian Moses (*The Budgie Likes to Boogie* is in **Storytime Issue 25**), Benjamin Zephaniah, Jackie Kay, Roger McGough, Allan Ahlberg, Roald Dahl, John Agard, Jack Prelutsky and Shel Silverstein. Can you read a poem from each of the poets listed above or find their poetry being performed on YouTube? Which one is your favourite and why?
- See the rest of our worksheets to become a brilliant poet!

DIFFERENT TYPES OF POEMS



There are many different types of poetry. Here are some you might know...

- **NARRATIVE POEMS** tell a story. You could say that Julia Donaldson's books, such as *The Gruffalo*, are narrative poems. In **Storytime Issue 1**, we featured *The Owl and the Pussy-cat* by Edward Lear, which is a narrative poem.
- In **SHAPE POEMS** (or **CONCRETE POEMS**) the words are arranged to look like the thing you're writing about. You could write a poem about a snake in a long wiggly line or a poem about rain inside a raindrop shape. For example:

RAINDROP
RACING DOWN
THE WINDOWPANE
RAINDROP CAN'T STOP
IT'S IN THE FAST LANE - WHEE!

- **NONSENSE POEMS** feature made-up words, characters or places, and are funny. In **Storytime Issue 4**, we featured the nonsense poem *On the Ning Nang Nong* by Spike Milligan. Other well-known nonsense poets are Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear.

- In **ACROSTIC POEMS** when you look at the first letters of each line of the poem, they spell out a word vertically. This word links to the subject of the poem. It doesn't have to be the first letter that stands out – it could be the last letter of each line, or a letter in the middle. Also, acrostic poems don't have to rhyme. Here's an example:

Creamy and sweet
A big birthday treat
Kids love to tuck in
Eat it with a grin!

- **FOUND POEMS** use words you've found somewhere. Turn to random pages in a dictionary and choose words, take the first sentence from your favourite book, or rip out random headlines from a magazine or newspaper, then use the words you've found to make a poem. It's a bit like a collage with words!

- **HAIKUS** are Japanese poems. They don't have to rhyme, but some do. Haikus always have three lines. Line 1 has 5 syllables; line 2 has 7 syllables; and line 3 has 5 syllables:

**In school I can learn
to climb and scale and conquer
mountains of knowledge**

- **LIMERICKS** are short, funny poems with five lines. They always start with the words "There was a..." and end in a silly way. Lines 1, 2 and 5 rhyme with each other, and lines 3 and 4 rhyme too. Edward Lear's limerick *There Was an Old Man with a Beard* was in **Storytime Issue 12**:

**There was an old man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared,
Two owls and a hen,
A lark and a wren**

WORD WISE! Syllables are the sounds that make up words. 'Cat' has one syllable, 'cattle' has two syllables (cat-tle) and 'catalogue' has three syllables (cat-a-logue).

POETRY TECHNIQUES

There are many clever tricks you can use to help you write great poems.



▷ RHYMING

To make your poem rhyme, the words at end of the lines should sound the same or very similar, e.g. cow and now. Not all poems rhyme, but it's a fun way to get started with poetry. When two lines of poetry rhyme with each other, it's called a rhyming couplet. Here's an example:

*Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are*

● Notice how these two lines have the same amount of syllables? (The rhyme wouldn't work as well if the first line was a lot shorter.)

▷ ALLITERATION

This means using lots of words that start with the same letter or sound. Alliteration sounds good when you read it out and it gives your poem rhythm. For example:

*On the **p**avement his **p**aws go **pit-pat**
Could it be **C**laude the **c**ool **kitty cat**?*

▷ ASSONANCE

This is similar to alliteration, but instead of repeating the letter at the start of each word, you repeat similar sounding vowels inside the words. This is another good way to give your poem rhythm. For example:

*Today the **ei**gh flew off again
Right **throu**gh the big **blu**e **mo**on*

▷ REPETITION

You can repeat the same word, phrase or even line to get your idea across or to give your poem a more dramatic ending. This also helps to give your poem rhythm. See how repetition brings rhythm to Edward Lear's *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat* (read it in full in **Storytime Issue 1**):

*The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"*

▷ SIMILES

Poems are a great way to use your imagination, and similes allow you to compare two things using the words 'like' or 'as' (as cold as ice, as light as a feather).

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star has a good 'like' simile in it:

*Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky*

▷ METAPHORS

Metaphors are used widely in poetry. When you use a metaphor, rather than saying something is 'like' another thing, you say it is that thing. For instance, you might say someone is a ray of sunshine, or describe tree branches as a 'wonderful stair', like in the poem *Climbing* by Amy Lowell (from **Storytime Issue 21**).

▷ PERSONIFICATION

In poems, you can use your imagination to bring objects or animals to life and describe them like you would describe a human. For example, in the nursery rhyme *Hey Diddle, Diddle*, 'the dish ran away with the spoon' and, when it's sunny, people often say 'the sun has got his hat on and he's coming out to play'. T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* with characters like Macavity the cat is a good example of the personification of cats.

RHYMING FOR BEGINNERS



Rhyming is fun and easy to do – especially with the help of online rhyming dictionaries like www.rhymezone.com. But before you use something like this, use rhyming to test and expand upon vocabularies.

▷ Say, for example, you want to make up a rhyme about a **cat**. How many words can you think up with an **-at** ending to rhyme with cat? Ask everyone to come up with as many rhyming words as they can. Write them all on the board. Here are some simple ones to get you started:

Fat Hat Mat Pat Rat Sat

▷ See if you can come up with four short lines using words that rhyme with cat. Remember: if each line has a similar amount of syllables, it sounds and reads better:

*There was never a **cat**
Quite as podgy and **fat**
As the cat that has **sat**
On my favourite top **hat***

▷ Try rhyming some other simple words, such as **dog**, **pet**, **snow** or **chair** and see our **Rhyming Sheet** and **Poetic Pairs Sheet** for some simple poetry exercises.

▷ Instead of rhyming every line in a four-line poem, try rhyming just lines 2 and 4:

*The puss from next door
Is podgy and **fat**,
I know as it sat on
My favourite top **hat!***

Or rhyme lines 1 and 2 and come up with different rhymes for lines 3 and 4:

*There was never a **cat**
Quite as fluffy and **fat**
As the cat on my **lap**,
Which is taking a **nap!***

▶ Play **Pass the Poem**. Divide your class into groups of four and give each group one easy word to rhyme. Ask the children in each group to work together to come up with as many rhyming words as they can, then ask each child to write one line of a four-line rhyme and see how the finished poem turns out. Get everyone to perform their poems when they've finished. Download our **Pass the Poem Sheet** to help you create your masterpieces.

▶ When coming up with your own rhymes, think about which rhyming words make the funniest or best rhyme – or choose words that inspire you and give you ideas. These make a good starting point.

▶ Now test everyone's new poetry skills on our **Finish The Poem Sheet**, have a go at some shape poems on our **Shape Poem Sheets**, create a found poem using our **Found Poem Sheet** and try out an acrostic on our **Acrostic Poem Sheet**.

▶ Read the poems we've featured in **Storytime magazine** for more poetry inspiration. See what types of poems and rhymes you can spot! Also check out these great **Poetry Resources**:

- www.brianmoses.co.uk for poems by our poetry competition judge, Brian Moses, and poems from school children.
- www.youtube.com/user/artificedesign/videos – Michael Rosen's YouTube channel. Also Michael's new book *What Is Poetry* (Walker Books), out October 2016, gives tips on how to write poems.
- www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/genre/poe/Poetry-.html – poetry book recommendations for under 7s from LoveReading4Kids.
- www.childrenslaureate.org.uk/usr/library/documents/main/tips-on-writing.pdf – poetry writing tips from Booktrust.
- childrenspoetryarchive.org – inspiring poems for kids.



WRITE A POEM! RHYMING SHEET

NAME _____

CLASS _____

How many rhymes can you find for these words? Write them down in each box.

CAR

FEET

BLUE

FLY

NAME _____

CLASS _____

Can you pair up the rhyming words? Draw a line between them.

Fruit bat

Beware

Rhyme

Bog

Seaside

Pea

Canoe

High tide

Pig

Doormat

Frog

Peru

Bee

Big

Brown bear

Time

WRITE A POEM! PASS THE POEM SHEET

NAME _____ CLASS _____

Pass the poem around so that each person can write his or her own line!

Line 1

Line 2

Line 3

Line 4

NAME _____ CLASS _____

Can you give each of these poems a missing word or line that rhymes?
The words you need to rhyme with are in bold.

Frankie the **frog**,
Lived in a **bog**,
Sat on a **log**,
Barked like a _____



In this **box**
There is a **fox**
And he is wearing

Find a penny,
Pick it **up**,
Spend it on a

If you ever meet a monster,
Here's what you should **do**:
Shake his hand and tell him

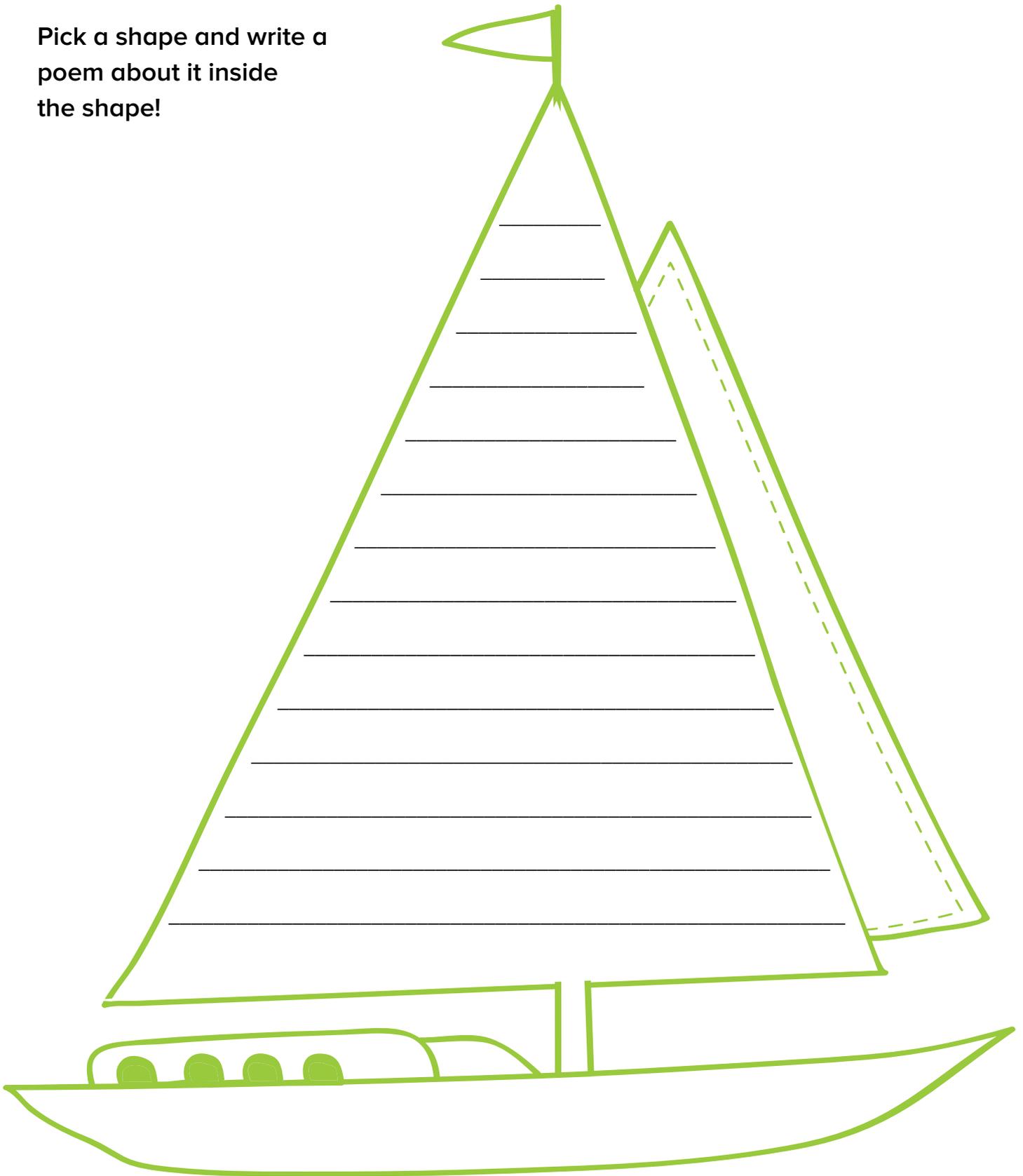
Let's play outside,
Let's go for a ride,
Let's climb, let's **shout**,
Let's _____

You might think that on my back,
I'm carrying a school rucksack,
But there's a secret tucked in **there**,

NAME _____

CLASS _____

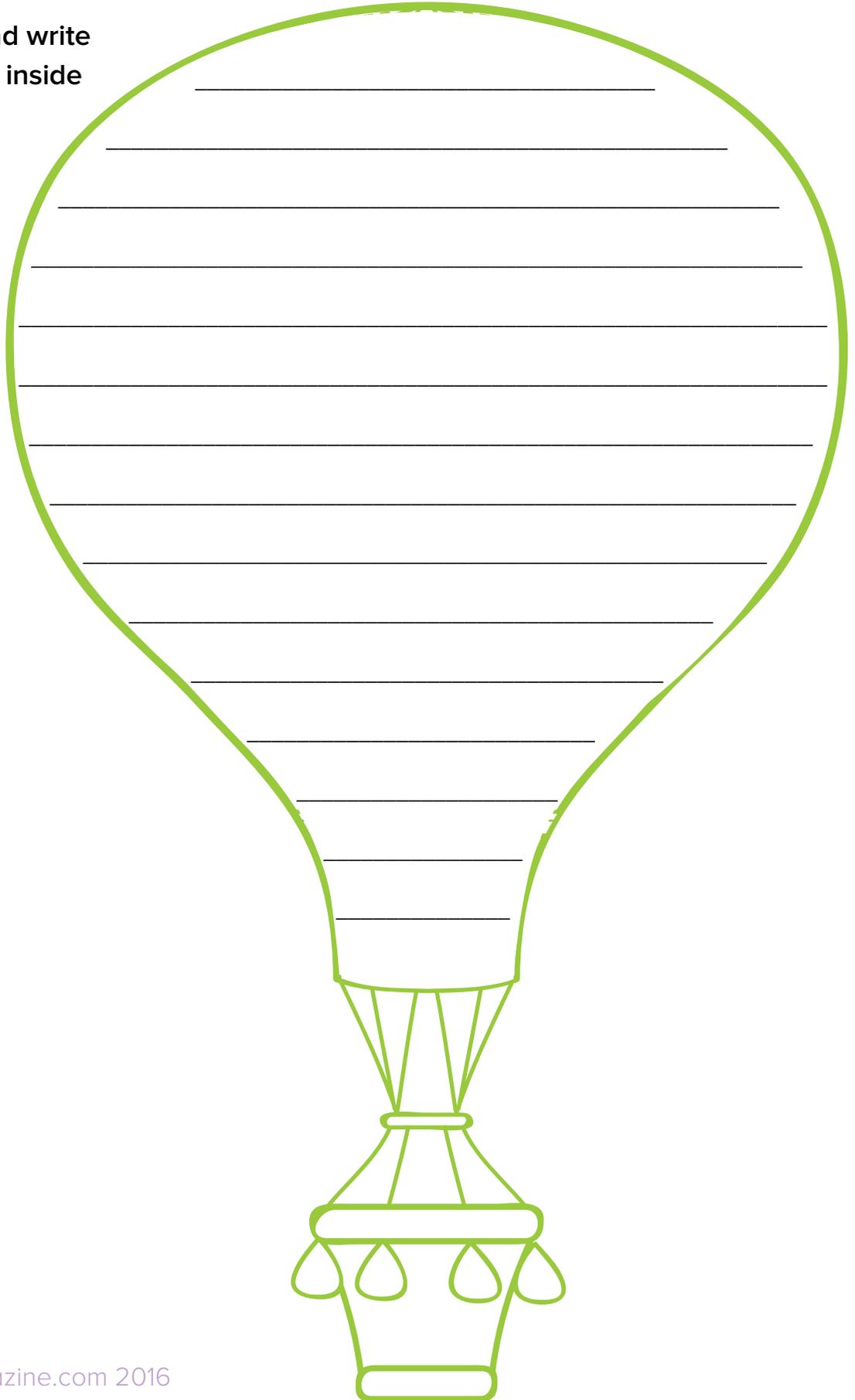
Pick a shape and write a poem about it inside the shape!



NAME _____

CLASS _____

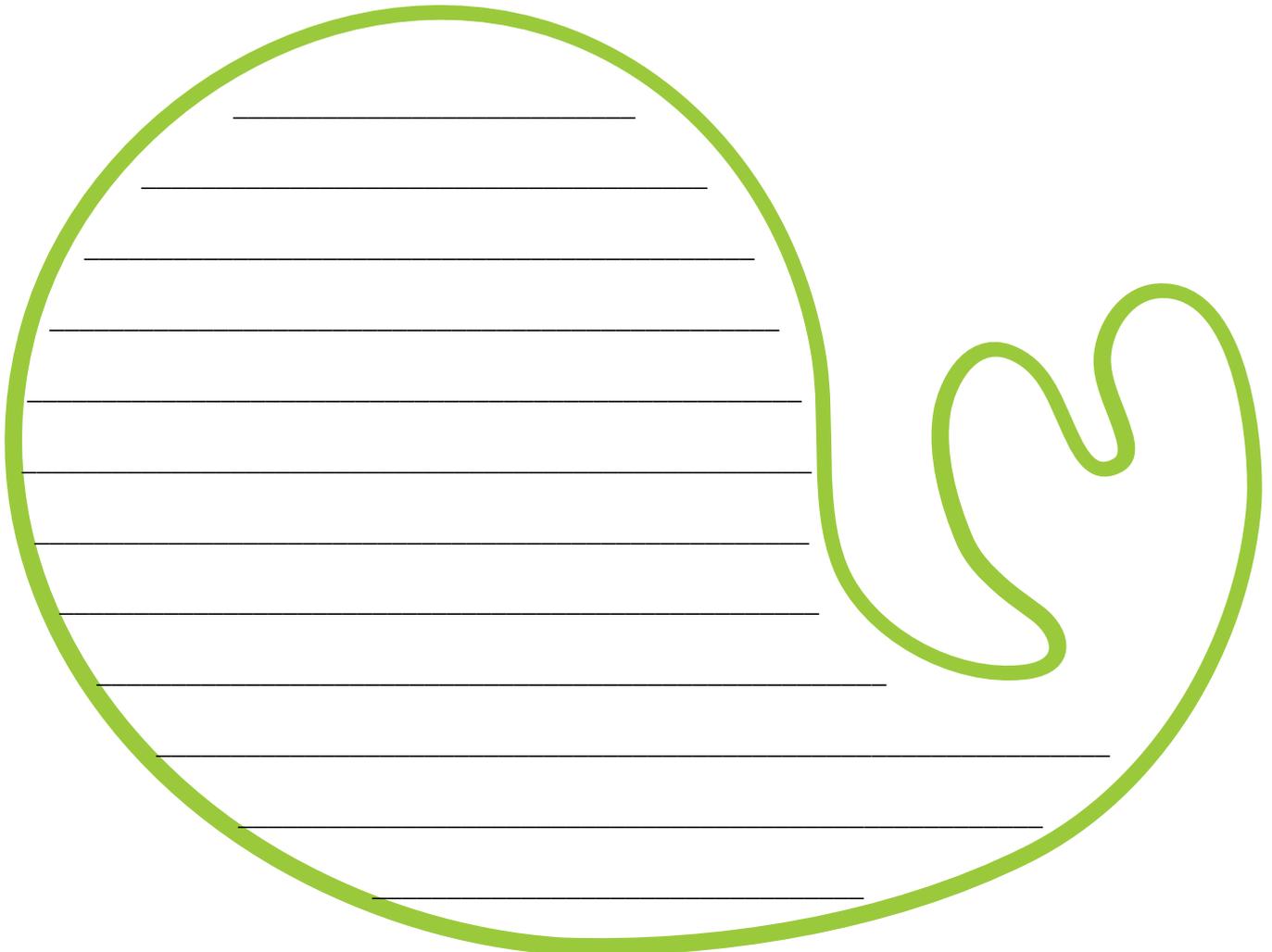
Pick a shape and write
a poem about it inside
the shape!



NAME _____

CLASS _____

Pick a shape and write a poem about it inside the shape!



NAME _____ CLASS _____



Write an acrostic poem about the word below. It doesn't have to rhyme!

H _____

O _____

L _____

I _____

D _____

A _____

Y _____

TIP!
Before you start, write down all the things you can think of when you see this word. When you've finished, write an acrostic poem about your best friend or favourite animal too!



NAME _____ CLASS _____

Make up a poem using words cut out of newspapers and magazines.
Stick them in the Found Words box, then write your poem in the large box.

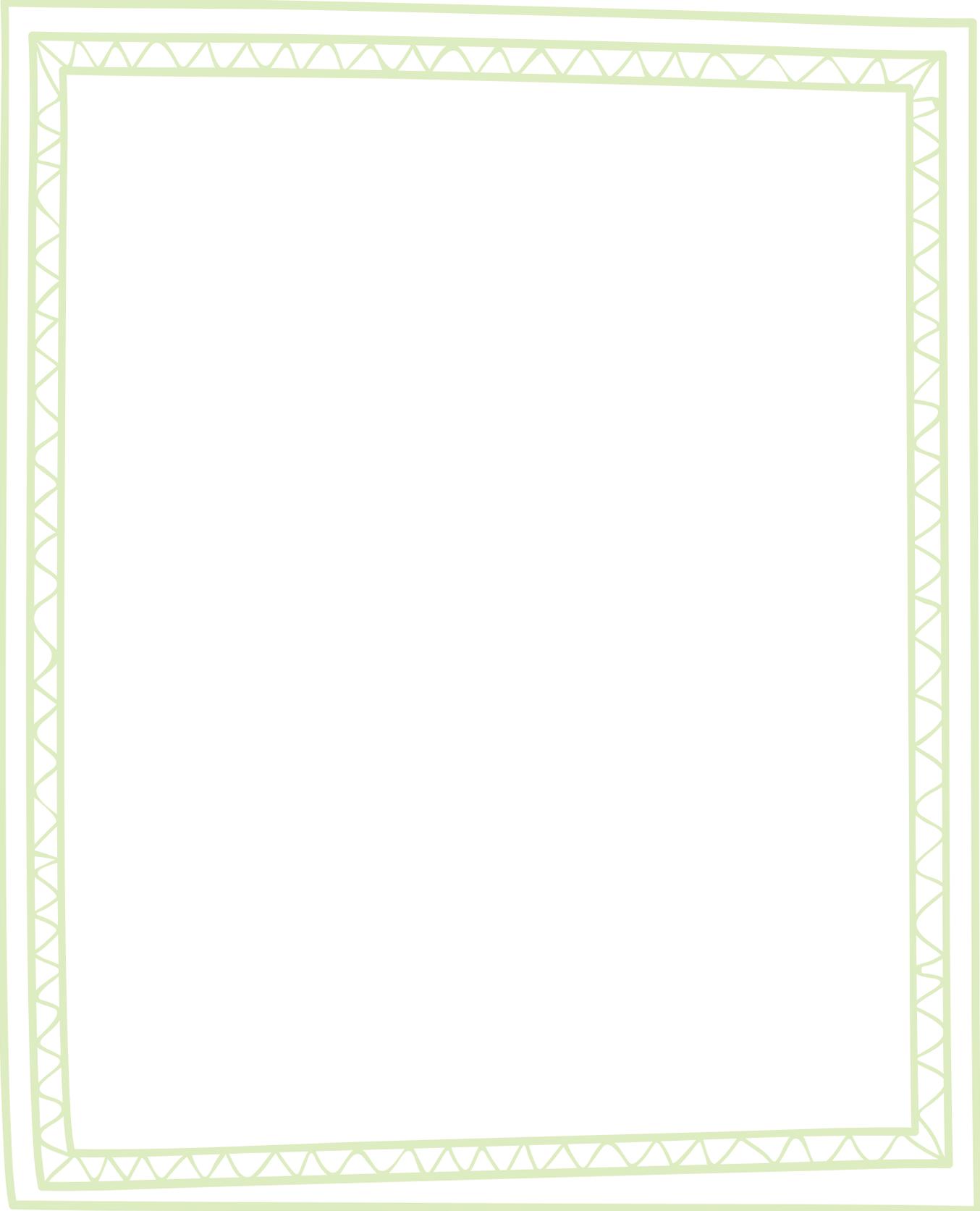
MY POEM

FOUND WORDS

WRITE A POEM! MY POEM

NAME _____

CLASS _____



NAME _____

CLASS _____

Draw a character or scene from your poem here!

