

Session Guide: Fun Limericks

Session Outline

Description

This session explores a type of poem called Limerick. It presents learners with examples of limericks for them to analyse and identify the basic limerick structure. It then provides opportunities for testing their understanding of this structure by writing and sharing some limericks. It concludes by presenting a challenge where limericks that relate to prompts have to be written by groups of learners and providing an opportunity for the class to write a whole poem written as a sequence of limericks.

Session Objectives

The objectives of this session are to:

- Develop poetry writing skills.
- Understand the structure of limericks.
- Be able to write limericks and assess whether presented poems are limericks.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the session learners will have:

- Analysed example limericks to understand the structure of a limerick.
- Written and shared their own limericks.

Areas involved

- Language
 - Poetry
 - Oral Literature
 - Writing
- Life Skills
 - Communication



Activity: The Limerick

Objectives

- To gain familiarity with the concept of poetry styles
- To understand the structure of a limerick

Expected Outcomes

- Learners will have understood the basic structure of a limerick.
- Learners will have understood the idea that a limerick is meant to tell a short funny story in a concise way.

Teaching Instructions

Give Learners some examples of limericks (see Student Instructions) and ask them to identify any similarities between them. Learners should identify the three key defining points in a Limerick:

- They have 5 verses
- The first, second and fifth verses have 7 to 10 syllables (are longer) and rhyme
- The third and fourth verses have 5 to 7 syllables (are shorter) and rhyme

Mention to Learners that this type of poem is called a Limerick and it's often used to tell a fun story or joke. There are even whole books of limerick, one of the most famous being A Book of Nonsense by Edward Lear.

Suggested Guidelines

- Let learners discuss and analyse the different examples giving them time to identify the structure independently.
- You can find more information about limericks online, including their history and plenty of examples.

Student Instructions

In this session we will be looking at a type of fun poem called a Limerick. Read the following example Limericks:

1. A wonderful bird is the pelican,
His bill holds more than his belican.
He can take in his beak,
Enough food for a week,



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But I'm damned if I see how the helican
(By Dixon Lanier)

2. There was a young lady of 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.
(By Edward Lear)

3. A flea and a fly in a flue
Were imprisoned, so what could they do?
Said the fly, "let us flee!"
"Let us fly!" said the flea.
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.
(By Ogden Nash)

4. If ice cream could be grown on the tree top,
Tiny tummies would be liking it lots.
Any fruit flavour
For all to savour.
Do stop by at the ice cream tree shop.
(By Beryl L. Edmonds)

5. Oh, I wish that I had a green thumb.
All my houseplants are looking quite glum.
I never can tell
Why they're looking unwell
Or why so many succumb.
(By Cynthia C. Naspinski)

6. I remember when I was small and cool,
I was always playing truant from school.
My mum used to say,
"You'll regret it one day
When you grow up to become a fool."
(By John P. Read)

Can you identify anything in common between these poems? Do they follow any particular structure? How does the length and rhyme of the different verses relate to each other?



Activity: Writing Limericks

Objectives

- To develop poetry writing skills.
- To be able to write poems that follow the structure of a Limerick.

Expected Outcomes

- Learners will have written a small number of Limericks.
- Learners will have assessed their peers' work.

Teaching Instructions

Learners should try to write 3 or 4 (or more) limericks and select one to share with the rest of the class. One at a time the learners should read out their chosen Limerick and the rest of the group should determine whether or not they are Limericks and identify some nice or good points about each of them.

Suggested Guidelines

- Encourage learners to write silly or funny things, they can be as creative as they want, the content is not important, the structure is what matters.
- Ensure that at least one positive is identified for each learner's shared limerick.

Student Instructions

Write a few Limericks. They can be about anything you want. You should try to bring humour in, maybe tell a funny story, be creative! Pay careful attention to the structure, in particular the length and rhymes in the verses.

Activity: A Limerick Challenge

Objectives

- To be able to write a limerick from a set of prompts.



Expected Outcomes

- Learners will have proposed each other words, topics or other prompts for new limericks.
- Learners will have written and shared more limericks.

Teaching Instructions

Ask a volunteer learner to propose a word. Learners should work in groups of 3 or 4 to write a limerick that includes that word and then share with the rest. Ask a second volunteer to suggest a topic for the groups to write a limerick about that topic and share. Repeat with other prompts that can include more words, a character, topics, a situation, or anything else they can think of.

Activity: Group Limerick

Objectives

- To be able to write a sequence of limericks that follow from each other.

Expected Outcomes

- Learners will have written and shared more limericks.
- Learners will have written a story in the form of a sequence of limericks.

Teaching Instructions

Learners will work together to write a story as a sequence of limericks. Split learners in groups of 3 or 4. One team writes a limerick presenting a situation or a character for the rest of the learners to develop. The next group should write a second limerick that follows on from the first to start telling a story. The next groups take it in turns to write further limericks to take the story wherever they want. The first group should then write a final limerick to conclude the story.

Suggested Guidelines

- You can carry this out as a whole group activity if learners are struggling to get limericks written.
- This final activity could be optional if the previous ones take longer than expected.
- It might be interesting to propose to write part or all of the story in Kiswahili rather than English.

