

Be brave with words: Write a limerick like Matilda

*There once was a word with an L,
That not many people could spell.
So they checked it, you see,
In a dictionary,
Which told them the meaning as well.*

That's a **limerick**, in case you haven't guessed. A limerick is a funny poem written with a particular structure.

Matilda wrote a limerick about Miss Honey and read it out in front of her class.

- A Line 1 *The thing we all ask about Jenny*
- A Line 2 *Is, 'Surely there cannot be many*
- B Line 3 *Young girls in the place*
- B Line 4 *With so lovely a face?'*
- A Line 5 *The answer to that is, 'Not any!'*

DID YOU KNOW?

A **syllable** is one of the sounds or beats in a word. The word *choc-o-late* has three syllables, and the word *scrum-did-ly-ump-tious* has five syllables.

In a limerick, lines **1, 2, and 5** should have **7 to 10 syllables**. Lines **3 and 4** should have **5 to 7 syllables**.

Count how many syllables are in each line of Matilda's limerick and write the number on the dotted line.

DID YOU KNOW?

If two words **rhyme**, they have the same sound at the end, like *squiggle* and *giggle*.

In each limerick the **lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme** with each other because they all end with the same sound—here the sound is 'enny', and the lines are labelled 'A'.

Lines 3 and 4 also rhyme, this time with a different sound—here the sound is 'ace', and the lines are labelled 'B'.



Discover a world of **lickswishy language** and unlock your inner **splendiferous storyteller**, just like Roald Dahl



Matilda Wormwood is a bright, book-loving girl with special telekinetic powers. But, as well as being very clever, Matilda is very brave (like when she stands up to recite her limerick about Miss Honey to the class, despite being very nervous). She isn't the only brave character in *Matilda* though.

Do you remember when Bruce Bogtrotter had to eat ALL of an ENORMOUS chocolate cake in front of his WHOLE SCHOOL? Miss Trunchbull called him a 'miserable little gumboil'. She told him that no one could leave the school hall until he finished the cake. She thought he couldn't do it. BUT Bruce Bogtrotter wasn't intimidated by Miss Trunchbull. He kept eating, his schoolmates cheered him on, and he did it! Bruce finished the cake!

Bruce was brave. He did not let Miss Trunchbull frighten him into giving up.



Have a go at writing your own limerick about Bruce Bogtrotter.

Start by thinking of words related to Bruce's story that rhyme. Here are some examples to help you get started—can you match the rhyming pairs?

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| bake | hasty |
| look | slicing |
| tasty | worst |
| icing | Trunchbull |
| burst | cake |
| mouthful | cook |

Don't be afraid to make up some words too. After all, that's what Roald Dahl did when he created words such as **gruncious** and **griggle**—you can discover what these words mean in the *Oxford Roald Dahl Dictionary*.

Now write your limerick

Remember all lines marked 'A' should rhyme with each other, and all lines marked 'B' should rhyme with one another as well. Don't forget how many syllables should be in each line too.

A	(7–10 syllables)
.....	
A	(7–10 syllables)
.....	
B	(5–7 syllables)
.....	
B	(5–7 syllables)
.....	
A	(7–10 syllables)
.....	

When you have finished, be brave and read your limerick to a friend, a family member or your teacher, just like Matilda did!