

## Grade 8 English Home Language Worksheet

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### Writing an own poem

#### ACTIVITY 1

Read the following narrative poem. Describe how the author presents his narrative. Pick out details that you like or that you think are significant. With reference to the details you have observed look at:

- how the story is told
- content of the story
- stanza form and rhyme

#### **The Owl and the Pussy-cat   Edward Lear**

I  
The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea  
    In a beautiful pea green boat,  
They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
    Wrapped up in a five pound note.  
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!'

II  
Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!  
    How charmingly sweet you sing!  
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:  
    But what shall we do for a ring?'  
They sailed away, for a year and a day,  
    To the land where the Bong-tree grows  
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood  
    With a ring at the end of his nose,  
        His nose,  
        His nose,  
With a ring at the end of his nose.

III

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'Dear pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'  
So they took it away, and were married next day  
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.  
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,  
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;  
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,  
They danced by the light of the moon,  
The moon,  
The moon,  
They danced by the light of the moon.

### ACTIVITY 2

Write your own narrative poem. Make sure you look at HOW you will tell your story, WHAT the story will be about, and the FORM of the poem (stanza form and rhyme). Your poem must be a minimum of 3 stanzas and/or 20 lines.

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### Suggested Solutions

#### ACTIVITY 1

- narrative style*

The narrative is told in a typical fairy-story way: the Owl and the Pussycat went to sea. The story is told chronologically, without the question-answer technique that is found in some ballads. There is an element of whimsy, good humour and the comic. Back up with detail from the poem.

- content*

The story is fanciful and imaginative. It is not meant to be taken seriously. It is typical of the kind of stories we find in nursery rhymes.

- stanza form and rhyme*

Take one stanza as an example:

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea	a
In a beautiful pea green boat,	b
They took some honey, and plenty of money,	c
Wrapped up in a five pound note.	b
The Owl looked up to the stars above,	d
And sang to a small guitar,	e
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,	d
What a beautiful Pussy you are,	e
You are,	e
You are!	e
What a beautiful Pussy you are.	e

The stanza has eleven lines, with lines 9 and 10 being very short. Those lines repeat the last two words of line 8. The 11-line structure and the repetition give the poem the feeling of a ballad, but it isn't. There is a refrain.

The rhythm is very song-like and so that also gives the poem the flavour of a ballad.

#### ACTIVITY 2

The learners produce a narrative poem. It must tell a story. It must have stanza structure and rhyme.