

## **Welcome to Creative Bursts: short creative activities to do at home with your children.**

Creative Bursts are created by Sarah Webb and supported by MoLI – Museum of Literature Ireland.

Sarah Webb is an award-winning children's writer and children's book champion. Her children's books include *A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea*, illustrated by Steve McCarthy which won the Irish Book Awards Junior Category and *Blazing a Trail: Irish Women Who Changed the World*, illustrated by Lauren O'Neill which won the Irish Book Awards Senior Category. Her latest book is *Dare to Dream: Irish People Who Took On the World (and Won!)*, illustrated by Graham Corcoran.

MoLI is committed to youth creativity and alongside the free primary schools tour and workshops programme, we also run Bright Sparks – a series of art and story workshops facilitated by Irish writers and illustrators where families embrace the opportunity to play and create together.

To get lost in a Creative Burst all you need is a pencil or pen and a notebook or piece of paper.

The writing games and prompts are aimed at around age 9+ but could be done with younger children if you give them a bit of help. Also included are more challenging story prompts for older or more experienced writers of around 11+ (every young writer is different).

Remember grown-ups – please join in too! It's great for children to see you being creative, making mistakes and having fun on the page!

### **Today's theme is: Stuff and Nonsense!**

Funny and whacky stories, word games and poems.

#### **Warm Up**

To get started let's warm up those writing muscles.

You could start by writing this week's quote into your writing notebook, copybook or sheet of paper. You could give it a fancy frame or border if you like!

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.” - Roald Dahl

If you've already got that one in your notebook, how about this one by Lewis Carroll, from his book *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871):

Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said: "one can't believe impossible things."

"I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

### **Creative Bursts Challenge #1: Limericks**

First – Limericks.

So do Limericks come from Limerick?

They are said to be inspired by a poetic form or kind of poetry that was used a lot by two Limerick poets called the Maigue Poets in the 18th century.

And the Irish word for rhymer or trickster is leamairic or leabhairic.

Edward Lear is a famous English writer (who loved Ireland and visited many times) who was famous for writing Limericks and nonsense verse.

Here are two of my favourite Limericks from my rhyme and poetry collection, *A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea*, illustrated by Steve McCarthy.

There once was a small girl called Maggie  
Whose dog was enormous and shaggy,  
The front end of him  
Looked vicious and grim,  
But the tail end was friendly and waggy.  
Author unknown

There was an Old Man with a beard,  
Who said, 'It is just as I feared!  
Two Owls and a Hen,  
Four Larks and a Wren,  
Have all built their nests in my beard!  
by Edward Lear

Now try writing your own Limerick.  
Here's how they are structured:

Line 1: Introduces the person or place that the Limerick is about

Line 2: Describes them or says something about them

Line 3: More funny things (these lines 3 and 4 tend to be shorter than lines 1, 2 and 5)

Line 4: More funny things

Line 5: This line closes off the Limerick.

Lines 1, 2 and 5 all rhyme

Lines 3 and 4 have their own rhyme

So here's an outline of Limerick for you to fill in. Good luck!

There once was a man from Cork

Who...

He ...

He...

That funny old man from Cork.

Or

There once was a girl called Suzy

Whose...

She ...

She ...

Which made Suzy keep saying excuse-y!

### **Creative Bursts Challenge #2: Gobbledygook and Gobblefunk!**

Did you know that Roald Dahl created over 500 new words and names, like froboscottle and scumdiddlyumptious?

These special words are known as his 'gobblefunk'.

He often blended existing words together to create a new word, like poppyrot and fizzwiggler.

Here are some of my favourites:

Biffsquiggled means confused or puzzled.

Fobscottle is a fizzy drink that giants like.

Whizzpopping is what happens when the giants drink too much fobscottle!

A human bean is what the giants of Giant Country in The BFG call humans.

Now, inspired by Roald Dahl, make up your own whacky words for the following things:

Staying inside all day

A new kind of fruit or vegetable (invent one and give it a cracking name!)

A baby with a whiffy (smelly) nappy

Hiccups

The tiny people who live under your floorboards (what do you mean you've never seen them?)

A new kind of hopping animal (like a kangaroo maybe but with superpowers!)

### **Creative Bursts Challenge #3: Tongue Twisters!**

'The Owl and the Pussy Cat' is one of my favourite poems. It's also by Edward Lear. He was born in 1812 and was one of twenty-one children, imagine that! He was a naturally talented artist and writer – he never went to school. He was taught at home by his big sister, Ann.

'The Owl and the Pussy-Cat'

By 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

“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.

He also wrote poems that are like tongue twisters – here’s an extract from ‘An Alphabet’.

‘An Alphabet’

by Edward Lear

A  
A was once an apple pie,  
Pidy  
Widy  
Tidy  
Pidy  
Nice insidy  
Apple Pie!  
B  
B was once a little bear,  
Beary!  
Wary!  
Hairy!  
Beary!  
Taky cary!  
Little Bear!  
C  
C was once a little cake,  
Caky  
Baky  
Maky  
Caky  
Taky Caky,  
Little Cake!  
D  
D was once a little doll,  
Dolly

Molly  
Polly  
Nolly  
Nursy Dolly  
Little Doll!  
E  
E was once a little eel,  
Eely,  
Weely  
Peely  
Eely  
Twirly, Tweedy  
Little Eel!

F  
F was once a little fish,  
Fishy  
Wishy  
Squishy  
Fishy  
In a Dishy  
Little Fish!

Here are some of my favourite tongue twisters: try saying them and then try making up one of your own!

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck, if a wood chuck could chuck wood?

She sells sea shells on the sea shore.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.  
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.  
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,  
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

Betty Botter bought some butter,  
but the butter, it was bitter.  
If she put it in her batter, it would make her batter bitter,  
but a bit of better butter, that would make her batter better.  
So, she bought a bit of butter, better than her bitter butter,  
And she put it in her batter, and her batter was not bitter.  
So, T'was better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter.  
(by Carolyn Wells, born 1862)

Now try writing a tongue twister of your own!  
Pick a letter and use it as many times as you can to create a tongue twister.

Here's one I wrote:  
Kitty cat kitty cat, climbing up the catkins.

#### **Creative Bursts Challenge #4: A Ghoulish Lunchbox**

Inspired by Lucinda Jacob's poem: Beware the Ghoul's Lunchbox (An extract)  
Look in a vampire's lunchbox;  
Lift the lid if you can  
On a dripping scream bun  
Filled with bloodberry jam.

You can download Lucinda's fantastic poetry kit and find out more about her poetry here:

<https://littleisland.ie/books/hopscotch-in-the-sky/>

and here:

[www.lucindajacob.com](http://www.lucindajacob.com)

Now – design your own lunchbox for the following:

A vampire

A ghost

A wizard

A witch

A monster

You can write it as a poem, a list, a story or even draw it – you decide!

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I hope you enjoyed today's Creative Bursts!

And remember what Einstein said: 'Creativity is intelligence having fun.'

Keep writing,

Sarah

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