

Title: Jabberwocky Jive

Grade Ranges:

 K-4
 X 5-8
 9-12

Subject Tag:

Language Arts: Literature: British Literature
Creative Writing: Poetry
Grammar

Synopsis: The British author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, but his genius shines through in the way he came about his pen name of Lewis Carroll. He translated his first two names into Latin "Carolus Lodovicus" then switched them around and simplified them into Lewis Carroll. After discussing what students already may know about Carroll and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, students will read and re-read Carroll's famous poem "Jabberwocky" together as a class. They will learn what portmanteau words are, pick them out of the poem, and try to decipher their meaning.

Keywords:

British literature, Lewis Carroll, "Jabberwocky," portmanteau word, invented words, wordplay, poetry, quatrain, dictionary

Body:

1. Begin by asking students to share prior knowledge of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Obtain a copy of one of Carroll's books to share pictures with the class and point out that Carroll's work is fantasy.
2. Give an overview of Carroll's life, emphasizing that he was a mathematician, photographer, illustrator, and later a clergyman, as well as a writer. Most of his writings were in the form of mathematical textbooks.
3. Give each student a dictionary and a copy of "Jabberwocky" to follow along as you read it to them. After reading the poem once at its normal cadence, read it aloud again, but slowly so students can underline any words they aren't familiar with. Give students about five minutes to look up the first three words they will most likely have underlined (brillig, slithy, toves).
4. After it becomes obvious that none of the words is in the dictionary, ask students to look up chortle (from the sixth stanza). When they find it is a combination of chuckle and snort, and originated with Carroll, introduce the word "portmanteau," which means suitcase. Tell students that Carroll referred to the words he made up as portmanteau, because they collapsed onto each other, like objects in a suitcase. Some of his portmanteau words have been incorporated into the English language, while others have not.
5. Divide the class into pairs, and have each read the poem out loud to his or her partner. After reading, they should work together to make a list of all the words they suspect

are portmanteau. If the word is in the dictionary, they should record the definition and the words from which it is derived. If it isn't listed, they should try to determine what two or more words it may be made from.

6. Culminate with a class discussion, during which partners may share their findings.

Their lists should include some of the following:

- 1) frumious (fuming, furious)
- 2) uffish (gruffish, roughish, huffish)
- 3) burble (bleat, murmer, warble)
- 4) mimsy (flimsy, miserable)
- 5) mome (from home)
- 6) galumph (gallop, jump)
- 7) slithy (lythe, slimy)
- 8) frabjous (fabulous, joyous)
- 9) chortle (chuckle, snort)

7. To extend the class, have students write a quatrain that includes their own invented words.

Related Links:

Translations, parodies, and other variants of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky"

<http://www.76.pair.com/keithlim/jabberwocky/index.html>

Click on "The Poem" for good teachertips on the formation of some of the words and Carroll's own explanations.

Lewis Carroll: Home Page

<http://www.lewiscarroll.org/carroll.html>

This site includes many links and resources related to Lewis Carroll's life and writings.

Objectives:

Students will read and listen to Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" to learn what portmanteau or invented words are and how to recognize them in Carroll's poem. They will use the dictionary and their own reasoning ability to determine the words from which the invented word was made.

Standards:

NY: 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.**2:** Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

NYC: E2b The student produces a response to literature. **E4a.** The student demonstrates an understanding of the rules of the English language in written and oral work, and selects the structures and features of language appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the work.

CT: 1. Reading and Responding: Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts. **2.** Producing Texts: Students will produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

NJ: 3.3: All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes. **3.4:** All students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. Copies of Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky" for each student
2. Dictionary for each student
3. Pencil and paper

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:

Review Comments: