

A mysterious story poem



Read this poem aloud.

The Listeners

“Is there anybody there?” said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest’s ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller’s head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
“Is there anybody there?” he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller’s call.



And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
’Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head: –
“Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,” he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.



Walter de la Mare

This poem seems to be part of a longer mystery story. Why is it mysterious?

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Pronouns

Pronouns are used instead of **nouns** to avoid repeating the **nouns** themselves. Read the following text, which has no **pronouns** in it.

The Traveller arrived at the door. The Traveller knocked on the door, but there was no answer, so the Traveller knocked again. Meanwhile, the Traveller's horse was grazing. The Traveller's horse seemed untroubled.



With **pronouns**, the text becomes much less repetitive.

The Traveller arrived at the door. **He** knocked on **it**, but there was no answer, so **he** knocked again. Meanwhile, **his** horse was grazing. **It** seemed untroubled.

Read the **poem** *The Listeners*, and underline all the **pronouns** you can find.

Rewrite the following sentences changing the **nouns** in bold type to **pronouns**.

The Traveller rode **the Traveller's** horse as fast as **the horse** could go.

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.....

Emma said that **Emma** wanted to read **Emma's** favorite poem to them.

.....
.....

Jack and Kate enjoyed the poem that **Emma** read to **Jack and Kate**.

.....
.....

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Walter de la Mare

This poem seems to be part of a longer mystery story. Why is it mysterious?

The poem seems mysterious because neither the Traveller nor the reader
know why the people who live in the house are not there.

Listen to your child read the poem, helping where necessary with any difficult words. Encourage him or her to reread the poem, this time thinking about its meaning. Accept any answer that can be justified by some aspect of the poem.



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Rewrite the following sentences changing the **nouns** in bold type to **pronouns**.

The Traveller rode **the Traveller's** horse as fast as **the horse** could go.

The Traveller rode his horse as fast as it could go.

Emma said that **Emma** wanted to read **Emma's** favorite poem to them.

Emma said that she wanted to read her favorite poem to them.

Jack and Kate enjoyed the poem that **Emma** read to **Jack and Kate**.

They enjoyed the poem that she read to them.

This exercise helps your child identify pronouns and their functions. If your child has difficulty with this exercise, make a list of the various pronouns together. Ask him or her to reread the sentences and tell you which words are pronouns.