

# Mr. Grumpdump's Song

by Shel Silverstein

Everything's wrong,  
Days are too long,  
Sunshine's too hot,  
Wind is too strong.

Clouds are too fluffy,  
Grass is too green,  
Ground is too dusty,  
Sheets are too clean.

Stars are too twinkly,  
Moon is too high,  
Water's too drippy,  
Sand is too dry.

Rocks are too heavy,  
Feathers too light,  
Kids are too noisy,  
Shoes are too tight.

Folks are too happy,  
Singin' their songs.  
Why can't they see it?  
Everything's wrong!



# Shel Silverstein

Shel Silverstein was born on September 25, 1930 in Chicago, Illinois and began writing and drawing at a young age. He became a cartoonist, playwright, poet, performer, recording artist, and Grammy-winning, Oscar-nominated songwriter.

Silverstein is best known as the author of iconic books of prose and poetry for young readers. His works include such modern classics as *Lafcadio: The Lion Who Shot Back* (1963), *The Giving Tree* (1964), *A Giraffe and a Half* (1964), *The Missing Piece* (1976), and *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O* (1981).

His immensely popular poetry collections are *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, a 1974 Michigan Young Readers Award winner; *A Light in the Attic*, recipient of the School Library Journal Best Books Award in 1982; *Falling Up* (1996); and *Don't Bump the Glump! And Other Fantasies*, which was originally published in 1963 and reissued in 2008. *Runny Babbit*, a posthumous poetry collection of spoonerisms, was conceived and completed before his death.

Silverstein's books, which he also illustrated, are characterized by a deft mixing of the sly and the serious, the macabre, and the just plain silly. His unique imagination and bold brand of humor is beloved by countless adults and children throughout the world. He died in May 1999.



**Vocabulary:**

1. To formally suggest someone for an award or position is to **nominate** them.
2. The opposite of poetry is **prose**.
3. A representative or symbol of something is **iconic**.
4. The book was published **posthumously**, after Silverstein's death.
5. The book was published again many years later, it was republished or **reissued**.
6. Accidentally switching the first letters of two words is a **spoonerism**.
7. If you have skill and are clever, you are **deft**.
8. A person who is sneaky or secretive is **sly**.
9. If something is disturbing and horrifying, it is **macabre**.
10. Something that is very popular with a group of people it is **beloved**.

**Vocabulary:**

1. Mark Twain's "The Mysterious Stranger," was published \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Elvis Presley is an \_\_\_\_\_ symbol of Rock and Roll.
3. He gave me a \_\_\_\_\_ grin, like he knew where my bike was hidden.
4. Dr. Seuss' books are \_\_\_\_\_ by children in many countries.
5. Next year they are going to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord of the Rings DVDs.
6. The Godfather was \_\_\_\_\_ for ten Oscars and won two.
7. I was fighting a liar. Oops! I mean lighting a fire! That was a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Robert Graves' books are famous for being \_\_\_\_\_ and entertaining.
9. My uncle writes \_\_\_\_\_ stories for children.
10. A series of \_\_\_\_\_ murders occurred last winter.

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### **About the worksheet**

This lesson plan has been made as an example of how to prepare a lesson from a poem. Although I personally feel the arts in all forms foster new thinking and creative ideas, I'm also somewhat practical. Whatever enjoyment or pleasure we get out of a work of art isn't always helpful for learning a second language. So in order to couch the poem in more practical language I've included this short piece about the author Shel Silverstein.

As with the other worksheets I've made this one is as an example, for educational purposes only and is intended as an idea teachers might be able to use in their classrooms.

### **To the teacher**

There are a number of different ways in which you could organize this lesson.

1. Have students discuss growing up, or favorite things from when they were growing up while offering correction.
2. Pre-teach the key vocabulary from the text.  
Introduce the terms, show examples and explain them, have the students make up their own example sentences and drill them.
3. Read the article and information about Shel Silverstein either in groups or as listening practice and reconfirm the meanings of the terms above. The article might be a bit tricky as it has a list of book titles and information about Silverstein's books. Getting them is interesting in reading but not as helpful for language acquisition so don't linger on them.
4. Have students work in different groups and discuss books and literature.
5. Introduce the poem by Shel Silverstein for a fun round of rhythm practice. Students read the poem aloud and in doing so, work on making clear English rhythm patterns.

### **Variations**

1. Have students read the story about Shel Silverstein and then work on the vocabulary.
2. If you have copies of one of Silverstein's books, you might have students read them in class. Silverstein's stories tend to work on multiple levels. The missing piece is a very short book and has sweet ideas for children, but when we read it as adults we might find some of the more universal themes of human relationships more meaningful. In that case students might discuss the various meanings found in the story.
3. Have students discuss the poem itself. Was the old man mean, lonely or jealous? (If you do this though, it's better to do so without the image that I made for the story so

that it doesn't effect students' perceptions.

4. Introduce a few funny spoonerisms to the class. (Do this only sparingly. They are an interesting part of Silverstein's writing but students don't need to study them.)

**However you organize the lesson, make sure to give students lots of talking time. The vocabulary is the only real technical part of the lesson, everything else is conversation, and pronunciation.**