

Character Clerihews



Four line poems with a clear rhyming structure, clerihews are easy to construct – and packed with facts and descriptions!

Challenge your pupils to share their understanding of and thoughts about characters from books they're exploring through poetry. Four line poems with a clear rhyming structure, clerihews are easy to construct – and packed with facts and descriptions!

Key Stages: KS2

Outcome: deeper thinking about fictional characters, extended vocabulary, increased awareness of poetic forms.

Preparation: download the Red Riding Hood Clerihew powerpoint.

Instructions:

- 1) Explain that pupils are going to think about a character or characters from a book/story that you are looking at a class – then write poems about that character.
- 2) Explain that the poems they're going to write are called clerihews – and that you're going to use Little Red Riding Hood as an example.
- 3) Lead a discussion (or small-group discussions) about the character of Little Red Riding Hood.
 - What do we know about her?
 - What else can we deduce about her?
 - What is her "story"?
 - How can we describe her?
- 4) Explain that a clerihew always names its subject in the first line – and that the first line of the poem also always contains at least one fact about (or description of) the character.
- 5) Using the Red Riding Hood Clerihew powerpoint, show the first line of the poem:

Red Riding Hood's basket held goodies for Gran

- 6) Explain that you've chosen the last word of the line carefully – as it has to be easy to rhyme with.
- 7) If appropriate, check for pupils' understanding of the concept of rhyme – then ask for words that rhyme with "Gran".
- 8) Using the Red Riding Hood Clerihew powerpoint, show how the poem develops into its second line:

**Red Riding Hood's basket held goodies for Gran
She spotted some flowers as through the woods she ran.**





Explain that the next line does not rhyme with the first two – and use the Red Riding Hood Clerihew powerpoint to show how the poem grows:

Red Riding Hood's basket held goodies for Gran.
She spotted some flowers as through the woods she ran.
She then made the mistake of speaking to a stranger

9) Explain that you've also chosen the last word of the line carefully – it has to be easy to rhyme with as well.

10) Ask for words that rhyme with "stranger".

11) Explain that the last line has to tie the story up – then use the Red Riding Hood Clerihew powerpoint to show how the poem comes to a conclusion:

Red Riding Hood's basket held goodies for Gran.
She spotted some flowers as through the woods she ran.
She then made the mistake of speaking to a stranger –
An error that put poor Granny in danger

12) Draw pupils' attention to the fact that you've been inserting appropriate punctuation marks as you've gone along.

13) Tell the pupils that there are some rules to writing a clerihew – and show these by advancing the Red Riding Hood Clerihew powerpoint.

14) Set pupils the challenge of creating their own Character Clerihews – and remind them of the process:

- Think of facts about and descriptions of the character ...
- Write the first line (naming the character and featuring at least one fact/description) – making sure that the last word is easy to rhyme with ...
- Write the second line – which needs to contain at least one fact/description and rhyme with the first line ...
- Write the third line – which needs to contain at least one fact/description and end on a word that is easy to rhyme with ...
- Write the fourth line – which needs to tie the story up and rhyme with the third line.

Follow-Up Activities:

Apply the same methodology to explore other poetic forms – producing Concrete Limericks or Cinquains!