

Going Vertical The Acrostic Poem

An acrostic is a type of poem you probably first wrote in elementary school. The writer takes a word or phrase, writes it vertically on the page, and then builds each line beginning with one letter of the word/phrase. This simple and sweet technique has adorned innumerable Mother's Day cards. However, more advanced uses of the technique can be compelling for a reader, providing an opportunity for unique insight and a nice surprise when the reader notices the code. Ideas for building an advanced acrostic poem:

- Build your poem with rhyming couplets (AABBCCDD...) or try an alternate (ABABCD CD...) rhyme scheme.
- Consider ending your poem with the first word you used in the poem. This gives a strong note of finality to your work.
- Try a double acrostic, where the first and last letter of each line are the same letter, so the root word/phrase appears, like a code, on both sides of the poem.
- Want a real challenge? Try to make every line the exact same meter/number of syllables.

Makes me feel better
Only thinks of others
Takes me to get ice cream
Helps me with my homework
Every day is there for me
Ready to give a hug

Love,
Junior



EXAMPLES

The Price Of Peace

Tired soldiers going home
Hope is the road they roam
Each waiting for war to cease

Proud to believe in peace
Ready to return to family
Instead of facing the enemy
Courage becomes their reward
Endless warriors with a sword

One wish for each day to live
Fighting for protection to give

Pressed to use the power of will
Endlessly not wanting to kill
A time for a loved ones kiss
Candles in a window and a wish
Each day is the price of peace

- Chris Smith

Edgar Allan Poe

Evil comes, reaching and creeping
Darkness leaving you, shivering and weeping
Gray shadows fall, they bring doom
All around, trapping you in the room
Ready to claim you, as you scream

And you realize that this is no dream
Life almost deserts you, you're left alone
Lonely thoughts are chilling you to the bone
Almost as the nightmare starts becoming true
Now you feel the horror striking out at you

Panic begins stabbing inside your head
Out there come those you believed long dead
Endless laughter comes from a solitary raven

- Author Unknown

from *Through the Looking-Glass*

A boat, beneath a sunny sky
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July -

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear -

Long has faded that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and memories die:
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies
Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream -
Lingering in the golden gleam -
Life, what is it but a dream?

In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*, the writer includes this poem, which is an acrostic of **Alice Pleasance Liddell**, his real-life family friend and inspiration for his *Alice in Wonderland* protagonist.

ASSIGNMENT

Now, it's your turn!

Take your assigned topic and build an acrostic poem that shows some depth of thought about the subject.

1. Write the word/name/phrase at the top of your poem as the title.

2. You must use either rhyming couplets (AABBCCDD...) or an alternate (ABABCD CD...) rhyme scheme.

3. Your poem needs to be typed and left-justified, so that the capital letters of each line can be read vertically.

Due:

NOTE TO TEACHER:
Use this page for acrostic poems
based on American authors.

Langston Hughes

Anne Bradstreet

Maxine Hong Kingston

Mark Twain

Maya Angelou

Willa Cather

Tim O'Brien

William Faulkner

T.S. Eliot

Stephen Crane

Flannery O'Connor

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Zora Neale Hurston

Arthur Miller

Eugene O'Neill

Toni Morrison

J.D. Salinger

Emily Dickinson

Alice Walker

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Tennessee Williams

Frederick Douglass

Gertrude Stein

John Steinbeck

Ernest Hemingway

Ralph Ellison

Henry James

Herman Melville

Upton Sinclair

Robert Frost

Thomas Wolfe

Ralph Waldo Emerson

James Fenimore Cooper

Lorraine Hansberry

Walt Whitman

Henry David Thoreau

Jack London

Amy Tan

Joseph Heller

NOTE TO TEACHER:
Use this page for acrostic poems
based on characters from *Romeo & Juliet*.

Friar Lawrence

Juliet Capulet

Balthasar

Lord Montague

Friar John

Romeo Montague

Lord Montague

Lady Montague

The Apothecary

Mercutio

Lady Montague

Lord Capulet

Prince Escalus

Benvolio

Lord Capulet

Lady Capulet

County Paris

Tybalt Capulet

Lady Capulet

Juliet Capulet

Balthasar

Friar Lawrence

Juliet Capulet

Romeo Montague

Lord Montague

Friar John

Romeo Montague

Mercutio

Lady Montague

The Apothecary

Mercutio

Benvolio

Lord Capulet

Prince Escalus

Benvolio

Tybalt Capulet

Lady Capulet

County Paris

Tybalt Capulet

NOTE TO TEACHER: Use this page for acrostic poems based on American presidents.

George Washington	Zachary Taylor	Benjamin Harrison	Dwight D. Eisenhower
John Adams	Millard Fillmore	Grover Cleveland	John F. Kennedy
Thomas Jefferson	Franklin Pierce	William McKinley	Lyndon Johnson
James Madison	James Buchanan	Theodore Roosevelt	Richard Nixon
James Monroe	Abraham Lincoln	William Taft	Gerald Ford
John Quincy Adams	Andrew Johnson	Woodrow Wilson	Jimmy Carter
Andrew Jackson	Ulysses S. Grant	Warren Harding	Ronald Reagan
Martin Van Buren	Rutherford Hayes	Calvin Coolidge	George Bush
William Henry Harrison	James Garfield	Herbert Hoover	Bill Clinton
John Tyler	Chester Arthur	Franklin D. Roosevelt	George W. Bush
James Polk	Grover Cleveland	Harry Truman	Barack Obama

NOTE TO TEACHER:
Use this page for acrostic poems
based on popular films.

Toy Story

Monsters University

How to Train Your Dragon

The Hunger Games

The Jungle Book

Despicable Me

The Chronicles of Narnia

Lord of the Rings

A Bug's Life

Miss Congeniality

Pirates of the Caribbean

Harry Potter

Legally Blonde

Mary Poppins

Kung Fu Panda

Lion King

Castaway

Tangled

Finding Nemo

Star Wars

Forrest Gump

The Little Mermaid

Wizard of Oz

Princess Bride

Sleeping Beauty

The Incredibles

Beverly Hills Chihuahua

Beauty and the Beast

Cinderella

Pocahontas

Ratatouille

Indiana Jones

Men in Black

Princess Diaries

Peter Pan

Home Alone

Monsters, Inc.

Princess and the Frog

The Nightmare Before Christmas