

Poems for Learning to Read

by Bob Wilson

This is a little book of silly poems for helping people learn to read. In English the consonants are generally quite easy to read. The vowel sounds, on the other hand, present the reader with a lot of difficulties because many of these sounds are spelt in a variety of ways. For example, *boss*, *yacht* and *gone* all have the same vowel sound. The same goes for *night*, *time* and *cry*.

The poems in this collection introduce readers to the many different spellings of the different vowel sounds in English. The poems use assonance (the use of the same vowel sound in different words) and rhyme to encourage readers to guess the pronunciation of the words and so read them correctly.

The poems are in order of the most common vowel sounds first, starting with /i/ as in *pig* and /æ/ as in *man*. Not only are these the most used vowel sounds in the English language(with the exemption of a little burping sound known as the schwa), but they also the most stable when it comes to spelling. They are neary always written with the letter “i” and “a” respectively.

All these poems can be heard on Youtube and can be downloaded as mp3 files from the author’s website.

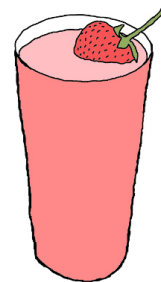
And remember, the more you read them, the better you will get. And of course, you need to read them aloud.

I hope you enjoy them and that they help you.

Best regards,

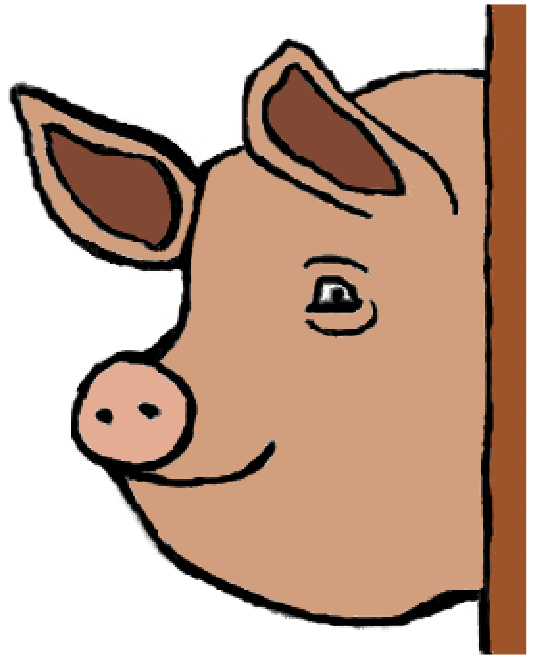
Bob Wilson

autoenglish.org



I as in Chimp

It is big.
It is pink.
It is Pig.



A Tick Trick for Hippos

Fish pick the ticks
off hippos' skin
so that they don't
twitch and shiver
when they're swimming
in the river.

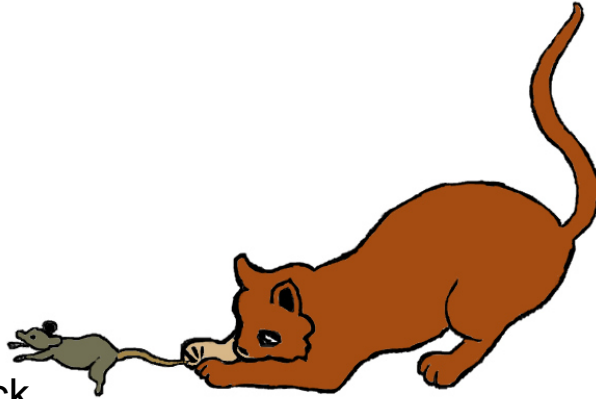
A as in Bat

Bad Back Dad

Daddy has a bad back.
Daddy has a pill.
Daddy is a happy man,
now he isn't ill.

Cat in a Flat

Cat lives in a flat.
Rat lives in a crack
in the flat.
Cat catches Rat.
Rat smacks Cat
and dashes back to the crack.



E for Elephant

The Mad Restaurant

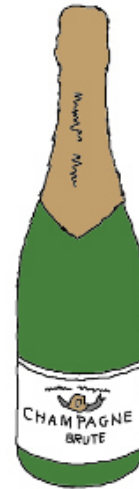
“French bread and chocolate spread,” I
said.
“One fresh egg and cress as well.”
– The chef is deaf. You have to yell – a
friend said.
“French bread and spread!” I said again.
“ONE fresh egg and cress as well!”
Instead he brings me ten!
He trips and spills my drink and eggs
and wets my dress and legs.
He forgets the cress.
I’m in a mess
and very upset as well.
I ring the bell
to get the check
and think,
“Never,
never again.”

A as in Grape

The Ape Escapes

An ape awakes inside his cage and says,
“Today’s the day, without delay, that I escape.”
He breaks his chains,
he breaks the gate
and then he runs away.
“Rain!” he complains, “but that’s OK.
I can’t wait or I’ll be late.”

The very same day
his ship sets sail
and he lands at a beautiful place.
He celebrates this brilliant day
with champagne and a plate of snails.
His new friends ask him,
“What’s your name?”
“I’m Ape and I am great,” he says.



O for Octopus

Bob the Boss

The boss of the yacht was a man named Bob.
He was rich and a bit of a snob.

“I’m strong, never wrong and I never get lost,”
was what he always said.

A sailor said “Stop!” when they sailed into fog
but Bob made the yacht sail on.

It was a terrible shock when the yacht hit a rock
and the beautiful boat was gone.

The sailor was cross with his silly boss
because they both had a long swim home.

Aye! as in Smile

A Knight on an Island

A knight arrives on an island at night
and the tribe invites him to dine.

“How nice!” says the knight
in the evening light.

“It’s rice with a slice of lime.”

A fortnight later the knight decides
it’s time to say goodbye.

“Thank you, guys,” says the knight to the tribe.

“I’ve had an excellent time.”

And so
he sets sail
on the morning tide,
trying not to cry.

U as in Nuts

Wanting Stuff

Gus is in a huff
because he’s always wanting stuff.

“I want some bubble gum
and I want a puzzle.

I want a fluffy puppy
and I want a ... ”

“Enough’s enough!”
said his mother to her son.

“Stop making such a fuss.

“Here, Son,
have some monkey nuts
and please, please,
shut up!”



EE as in free

Cheese Thieves

Lee sees the police.
“While I’m sound asleep,
they steal all my cheese
and some of my peas.
It’s really
a terrible feeling.

“We need,” said the Chief,
“a trap for the thief.
So, jump in the jeep.
We’ll wait in your street
and surprise them
late in the evening.

They see, from the jeep,
three geese and a sheep
who sneak out of Lee’s
with a bag of cheese
and they arrest them
when they are leaving.



Oh! (as in mobile phone)

Ode to a Toad

There once were a vole and a toad
who were travelling a lonely old road.
Up jumped a troll
who said to the vole,
“Where do you think you are going?”

“The castle’s old moat,” said the vole.
and they poked that big troll with a pole.
He fell in the moat
and trolls don’t float
so that was the end of the troll.

Oo! as in Shoe

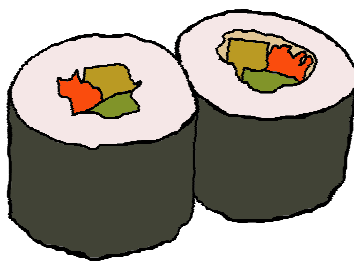
A Rude Duke

Sir Luke the Duke
was moody and rude
and also a bit of a foody.

“The miso soup,
the sushi and fruit,
some prunes and a strawberry
smoothie.”

“And make it soon!”
he boomed from the room.
“You know that I’m really choosey.”

“Luke! Don’t be rude!
and chew all your food.”
said Mother,” And don’t be so
moody.”



Poo in a Shoe

“Who did a poo
in the zoo keeper’s shoe?”
It said on the afternoon news.

“Too small for a moose,”
said Inspector Seuss,
“And too huge for a kangaroo.”

“It’s not true it’s a goose,
so, in my point of view,
this is a toucan poo.”

“You can tell by the smell of nuts and fruit
so with this clue I accuse... you!
Arrest Mr Toucan.”

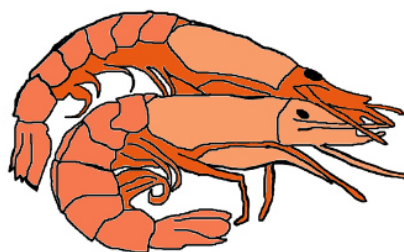
Or for Awesome

The Lord Sean Story

Lord Sean was born in the north of Yorkshire where he lived in an ancient old hall. He went on tours and fought in wars and the hall was full of ornaments.

Lord Sean was tall with a big square jaw. When he spoke, he roared. When he slept, he snored and his breath was always awful.

He ate raw pork and thousands of prawns with his fingers, not with a knife and fork. He fought in the wars with his terrible sword on a black and frightening horse.



Sean sailed abroad to the wars in Norway but was caught in a terrible storm. Sean and his horse were safe, of course. They swam all the way to Oporto.

So when they got to the shore, Lord Sean swore, "No more war, no more glory. It's boring. War isn't normal. War is gory." and so began a whole new story.

One morning without warning, Sean saw a girl fetching water. and she wore a Spanish shawl.

Soon they were married with joy and laughter. They, the horse and four gorgeous daughters all lived happily ever after.

Ear as in Near

An Eel and a Seal

The fish round the pier
lived in fear
of Ian, a great big eel.

One day a grey seal
caught Ian the eel
and enjoyed a tasty meal.

The fish said, "Unreal!
Now our lives are ideal.
Thanks, Mr Seal and cheers!"



Ah! as in Far

Arthur and Marge

Arthur and Marge were security guards
in a large safari park.

They had a big car with metal bars
and looked after zebras and giraffes.

They called the vets when there were calves
and locked the gates when it was dark.

Under the stars, the wild dogs barked
and the hyenas laughed and laughed.

They loved their jobs with all their hearts
and they loved all the animals too.

Urgh! as in Bird.

Sir Bert and Lady Bertha

It was Thursday, August the first.
A bird was perched on a branch and chirped
and a rich man swirled his brandy and burped
and said, "This drink is quite superb."



His name was Sir Bert and he was thirty something.
He was the Third Earl of Woolworth or somewhere.

Sir Bert was fat and always thirsty.
His shirt and tie were always dirty
and his underwear always thermal.
Despite a purse filled to bursting
Sir Bert was quite absurd.

His wife was Lady Bertha
and she was a lovely person.
Bertha was a children's nurse
for global worldwide concerns.

She travelled the world
helping boys and girls
and fighting germs wherever they were
in international emergencies.

Lady Bertha loved her work
much more than she loved
her Sir Bert ;).

Owl! as in Cow

The Lout

A lazy lout
went to football grounds
to shout
at the opposite crowds
in the stadiums.

He lived in town
in his mother's house and
spent hours
on the couch in the lounge.
What a layabout!

He was a grouch
and very proud but
what about?
Without doubt he was a clown
who got his mother down.

One day the lout
went out. He was never
found,
so his mother moved south
and lived happily ever after.

OO as in Book

The Cook and the Pudding

"This looks good," said the cook,
as he took a recipe book off the shelf in his local library.
"Shush, shush!" said the butcher and the cook understood.
"You shouldn't speak out loud in the library."

So the cook pulled up his woolly hood
because the weather was not so good
and went home to make a pudding.



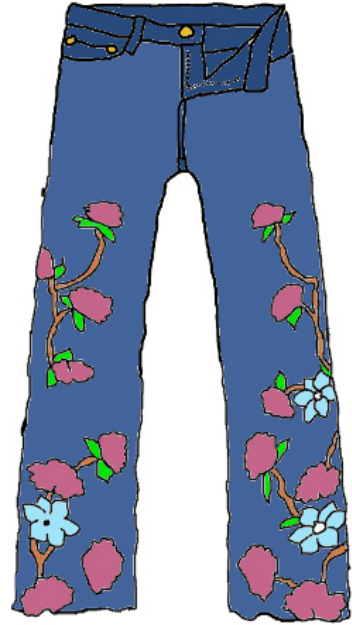
Air as in Bear

When Claire is sad

When Claire despairs,
she says her prayers
and feels a little better.

She sits on a chair,
then does her hair
and stares into the mirror.

She decides to wear
her flowery flares
and meet her friends for dinner.



Oi! as in Toy

Our Daughter

Our little daughter gets really annoyed
if a boy takes one of her toys.
“Oi! Give it back. You little brat.
Go play with one of your own.”

Our Daddy

Our Daddy enjoys
a night out with the boys
but next day
he’s really destroyed.

Potatoes

You can bake them in foil
or bring them to boil
or fry them in a pan with some oil.