

# Example Text: Couplet Poetry (Ages 7 - 11)

A couplet is a **pair** of lines in a poem that **rhyme** and usually have similar syllable structures too (the same number of sounds in a line). Couplets can be used in different types of poems, such as narrative poems (poems that tell a story) or poems that describe something.

It can be tricky to create a rhyming poem! Take a look at the example and the features required.

1 Follow the **rhyming structure** of a couplet poem. Each pair of lines must rhyme. In this example, we've highlighted each pair of rhyming words with the same colour. Encourage your child to spot the rhyming sounds in each couplet.

2 There might be some **repetition** in a couplet poem. Your child might like to repeat a phrase or line of poetry a few times throughout to give it some structure and familiarity. The poem starts by repeating 'faster than' and uses 'here is' several times in the second stanza.

3 Use **powerful adjectives** (describing words) to give more information about things (nouns) in the poem.

4 Start each line with a **capital letter** - this is common in lots of types of poetry.

## From a Railway Carriage

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;  
And charging along like troops in battle,  
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:  
All of the sights of the hill and the plain,  
Fly as thick as driving rain;  
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,  
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clammers and scrambles,  
All by himself and gathering brambles;  
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;  
And here is the green for stringing the daisies!  
Here is a cart runaway in the road,  
Lumping along with man and load;  
And here is a mill, and there is a river:  
Each a glimpse and gone forever!

5 Often, a **comma** is used at the end of each line. This shows where there is a pause. Sometimes other pieces of punctuation are used. In this poem, lines are sometimes separated with a semicolon (;) or a colon (:) or an exclamation mark (!).

6 Use a **full stop** (or a question mark or exclamation mark, if appropriate) at the end of the poem and at the end of each stanza. This shows this section has come to an end. A stanza is like a paragraph of poetry - it is a group of lines and they are separated by a space.

7 Your child might want to group lines together into **stanzas** and separate stanzas with a space. Each stanza could be focused on a theme. In this particular poem, there are two stanzas; talk to your child about the theme in each stanza.

8 Try to include figurative language techniques, such as **alliteration**, to paint a picture for the reader. Alliteration involves repeating the first sound in a string of words or words that are close together in a sentence.

9 Try to include figurative language techniques, such as personification, to paint a picture for the reader. **Personification** gives non-human things (like animals, plants or objects) human traits or characteristics.

10 Try to include figurative language techniques, such as **similes**, to paint a picture for the reader. A simile is a technique that compares one thing to another, using the words 'like', 'as', 'than' and 'as if'.

11 Try to include figurative language techniques, such as **metaphors**, to paint a picture for the reader. A metaphor is a comparison between two things, using the words 'is' or 'was'.

You'll notice there aren't many powerful adjectives in this poem, but it is still an entertaining and effective poem. Discuss this with your child. Do they enjoy it? Why? What powerful adjectives might they use to describe this train journey?