

## 4.4 The Height of the Ridiculous

### Warming Up!

#### Individual activity

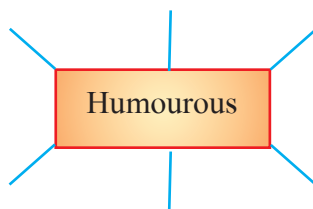
1. The teacher writes incomplete sentences on the board. He/She asks the students to complete them in their notebooks.

- (a) Today, I am happy because .....
  - (b) Today after the class, I wish .....
  - (c) Tomorrow, I feel that .....
  - (d) I want to laugh because .....
  - (e) Today, the class seems to be cheerful about .....
- (The teacher asks every student to answer.)

2. The teacher writes an incomplete sentence and asks the students to complete it in a funny way.

- For example, (1) Mother gave me cheese but the cat ate it.  
(2) I went to the market and bought an elephant.  
(The teacher can add her own sentences.)

3. Give the words related to:



#### Syllable

A syllable is a unit of spoken language made up of a single uninterrupted sound formed by a vowel and consonants. For example, single syllable : ant, two syllables - water, three syllables : Inferno.

4. Pick out the word from the given box and write it in the correct columns below.

jump, narrow, cable, live, queen, butter, tree, kitten, van, yellow, dale, happy, night, printer, star, sober, paper, cloud, pearl, within, bike, began, slender.

Here the focus is not on the spellings but the pronunciation of the words.

Words with one syllable	Words with two syllables

5. Count the syllables and circle the appropriate number in the box.

elephant 1 2 3	mirror 1 2 3	bus 1 2 3	kangaroo 1 2 3	rough 1 2 3
insect 1 2 3	telephone 1 2 3	monkey 1 2 3	bucket 1 2 3	biscuit 1 2 3

6. Write the names of any five of your friends and mention the number of syllables in each name.

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## The Height of the Ridiculous

I wrote some lines once on a time  
In **wondrous** merry mood,  
And thought, as usual, men would say  
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,  
I laughed as I would die;  
**Albeit**, in the general way,  
A **sober** man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;  
How kind it was of him  
To mind a slender man like me,  
He of the mighty limb.

“These to the printer,” I exclaimed,  
And, in my humorous way,  
I added (as a **trifling** jest,)  
“There’ll be the devil to pay.”

He took the paper, and I watched,  
And saw him peep within  
At the first line he read, his face  
Was all upon the grin  
He read the next; the grin grew broad  
And shot from ear to ear;  
He read the third; a chuckling noise  
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;  
The fifth; his waistband split;  
The sixth; he burst five buttons off  
And tumbled in a fit.

- **Ridiculous** : Too funny to believe
- **wondrous** : delightful

- **Ableit** : though
- **sober** : clear headed, serious
- ♦ *In what frame of mind did the poet write some lines?*

- ♦ *What was the contrast in the narrator and his servant?*
- **trifling jest** : a small simple joke, of no importance
- ♦ *When did the servant grin?*

- ♦ *When was the chuckling noise heard?*
- ♦ *Which line suggests that servant was totally out of control?*



• **wretched** : (here) in a helpless condition  
 ✦ *What was the impact of this experience, on the poet?*

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,  
 I watched that **wretched** man,  
 and since, I never dare to write  
 As funny as I can.

– Oliver Wendell Holmes  
 (1809-1894)

**ENGLISH WORKSHOP**

**1. Find out expressions from the poem that indicate funny moments.**

For example, I laughed as I would die.

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**2. Order of sequence : Arrange the following reactions in their proper order, as per the poem.**

- (a) His waistband split
- (b) The grin grew broad.
- (c) Sleepless eye.
- (d) Was all upon the grin.
- (e) He broke into a roar.
- (f) He burst five buttons off.

**3. Form pairs and find out the various rhyming words in the poem and two of your own. Complete the following table.**

Words	Rhyming words	
	From the poem	More of your own
1. ear		
2. within		
3. man		
4. split		
5. way		
6. him		
7. die		
8. mood		

**4. Match the lines with the Figures of Speech.**

Lines	Figures of Speech
1. In wondrous merry mood	Tautology
2. They were so queer, so very queer.	Alliteration
3. And saw him peep within	Onomatopoeia
4. The grin grew broad.	Repetition
5. And shot from ear to ear.	Hyperbole
6. He broke into a roar.	Repetition
7. Ten days and nights with sleepless eye	Transferred Epithet

**5. Copy any two stanzas of the poem in the lines below. Using a coloured pen underline the stressed syllables in each line and put a stress-mark ( ' ) over each.**

**6. Complete the lines of the poem by choosing proper pairs of rhyming words and make it meaningful.**

- We returned home late, one ..... ,  
 In the window, there glowed a ..... .  
 Burglars !! was our very first ..... ;  
 For defence, sticks 'n stones we ..... .  
 "Let's grab the loot and ..... ,"  
 was uttered soft, by .....  
 The door we softly ..... ,  
 And then we were truly .....  
 Oops! Before, outside, we'd ..... ,  
 The television had been left .....  
 (run, shocked, gone, night, sought, on, someone, thought, light, unlocked)



**7. Form groups in your class and together compose a short humorous poem. Use jokes, experiences, etc. and convert it to a poetic form. Write and decorate it on chart-paper and put it up in your class, in turns.**

**8. Go through the poem and write an appreciation of the poem in a paragraph format. (Refer to page no. 5)**

**9. Project :**

**Reading a poem.**

Arrange the poetry reading competition. Select the poem of your choice.

- Read the poem silently.
- Repeat the reading of the poem.
- Focus on the pauses, stresses, intonation etc.
- Pay attention to the proper pronunciations.

