

**Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lesson Four**  
Level: Grades 6-12



John Tenniel, *The jabberwock, with eyes of flame*: preliminary drawing. Pencil on paper. 1870/71. 1954.22

"Jabberwocky" is a nonsense poem included in *Through the Looking-Glass* in the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Read "Jabberwocky" aloud and listen to how it sounds.

## The Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
Long time the manxome foe he sought—  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Try writing your own nonsense poem in the style of “The Jabberwocky.” Start by substituting nonsense words to stand in for regular nouns, pronouns, verbs, or adjectives (for example: doozle = noise). Don’t worry about the “real” meaning of each new word; the final nonsense poem only needs to sound like verse. Just keep writing until you feel yourself transported to Alice’s Wonderland.

We’d love to see your poems! Please email them to [eparker@rosenbach.org](mailto:eparker@rosenbach.org)

Want more Jabberwock? Here’s Benedict Cumberbatch and some other celebrities reading the poem aloud. <https://rosenbach.org/blog/a-sextet-of-jabberwocky/>