Imitation Poem

Aim

- I can plan an imitation poem.

Success Criteria

- I can explain what is meant by an imitation poem.
- I can choose a setting and an enemy for my poem.
- I can plan my poem, closely basing it on the Jabberwocky.
- I can include some of the formal features of Jabberwocky.
- I can identify an audience for my poem.

Imitation Poem

In this lesson, you are going to imitate a poem. This is the perfect exercise for learning how to write great poems.
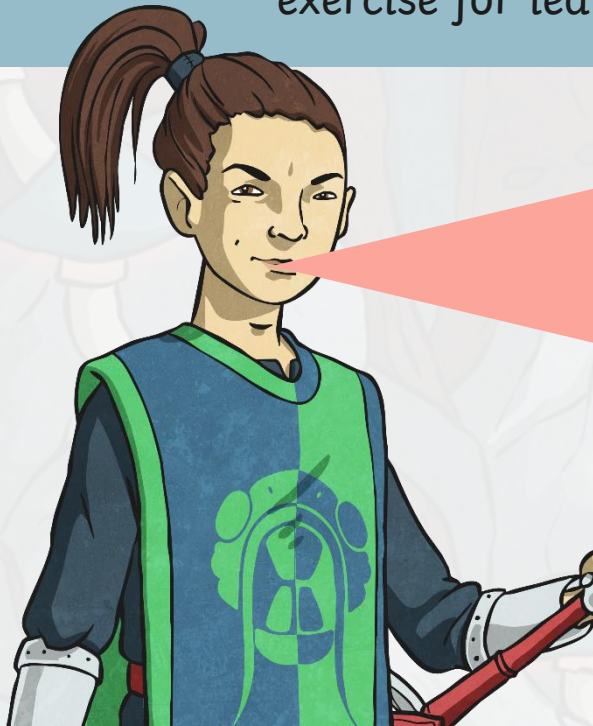
Top Tips

- Do follow the poem closely. Follow the formal features of the poem: word placement on the page, shape, syllables, narrative structure and punctuation.

- Don't follow the original poem's subject matter – the subject matter should be far away from the original poem's so that your poem doesn't sound just like the original.

This can result in an excellent poem. Good luck!

Imitation Poem

You will decide upon your own setting.

You will choose your own personal enemy (manxome foe).

Where is the setting of the poem?

Who is the personal enemy (manxome foe)?

Jabberwocky
Lewis Carroll

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogroves,
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 by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came wiffling through the tugley 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.
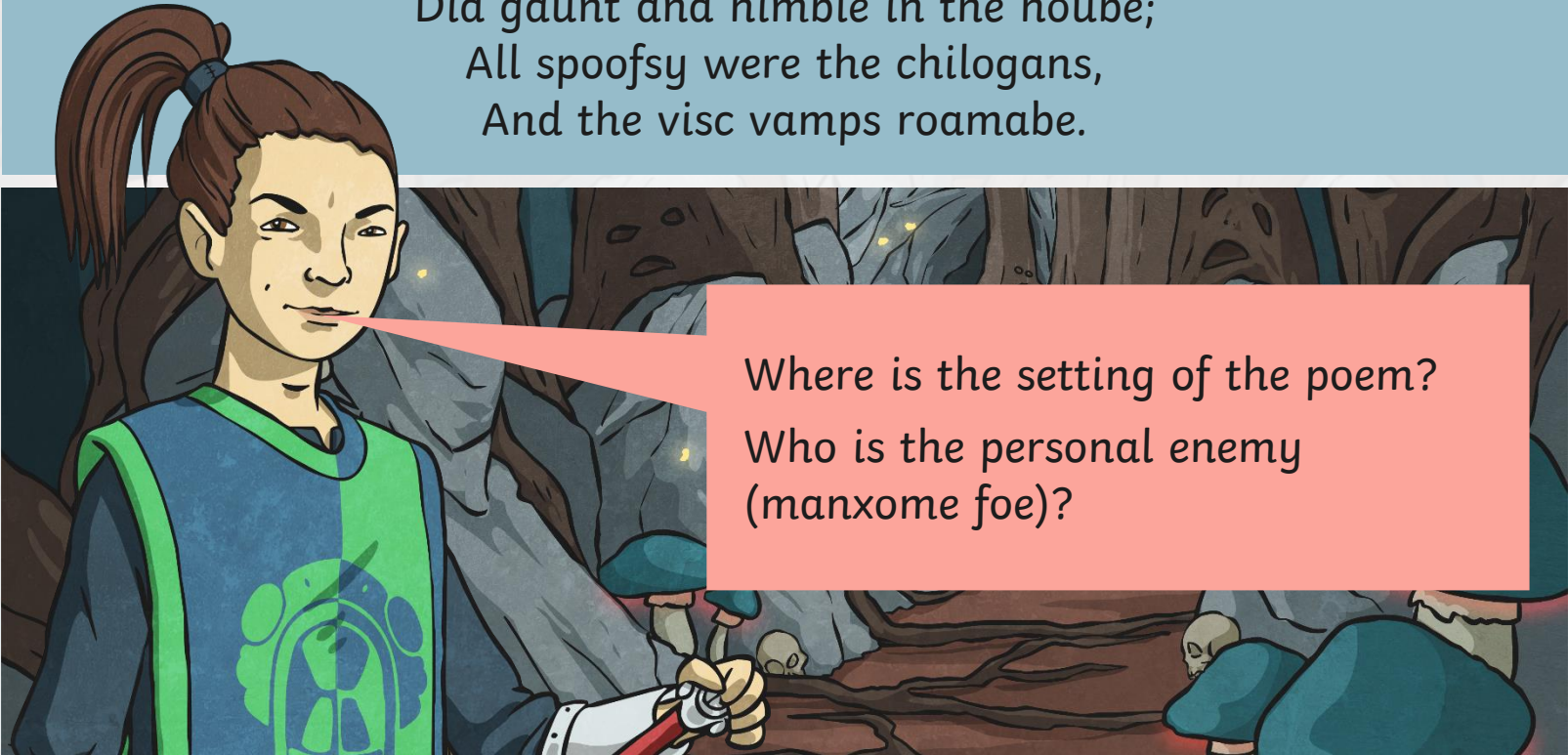
"And has thou slain the Jabberwock?

Formal Features

Jabberwocky has a regular rhyme scheme. It is written in quatrains (four-line stanzas) that have a regular ABAB, CDCD, EFEF rhyme scheme. The lines themselves are mostly written in iambic tetrameter. Let's look at the first lines with the accents all marked out:

'Twas **Brill**-ig, **and** the **sli**-thy **toves**
Did **gyre** and **gim**-ble **in** the **wabe**'

Do you notice that there are four stressed syllables in each line, and that they alternate neatly with unstressed syllables, with the unstressed syllable coming first? That's called iambic tetrameter. The *iambic* bit refers to the unstressed-STRESSED, unstressed-STRESSED rhythm of it, and the *tetrameter* bit is just to let you know that there are four iambs (or four unstressed-STRESSED groupings) in each line.

We call this type of poem *Ballad Stanza*.
What's a ballad? The short answer is that it's a song. Ballad stanza is traditionally found in folk songs and is used as a way for people to communicate legends and tales to each other orally. Its rhythm and rhyme make it easy to remember for this reason. Even though it has some strange language, Jabberwocky is no exception. Because it has the memorable rhythm and rhyme, Jabberwocky remains one of the most frequently memorised poems in the English language.

Formal Features

It would be a bit tricky to copy the stressed and unstressed syllables exactly, but we can try to copy the number of syllables in each line.

- Count the syllables in the first line of the Jabberwocky, then count the syllables in the first line of Kiddersnacky.

- Do they match? Repeat for the other lines.

- How does this improve the imitation poem?

Jabberwocky

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

Kiddersnacky

'Twas bleakly, and the frighty ghousts
Did gaunt and himble in the hoube;
All spoofsy were the chilogans,
And the visc vamps roamabe.

Formal Features

Can you spot any other formal features that have been imitated from the Jabberwocky?

- The placing of the punctuation.
- The placing of the nonsense/portmanteau words.

Jabberwocky

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

Kiddersnacky

'Twas bleakly, and the frighty ghousts
Did gaunt and himble in the hoube;
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Formal Features

You are now going to create your own imitation poem. Remember:

- Choose your setting and your personal enemy.
- Imitate the placing of the punctuation.
- Imitate the placing of the portmanteau/nonsense words.
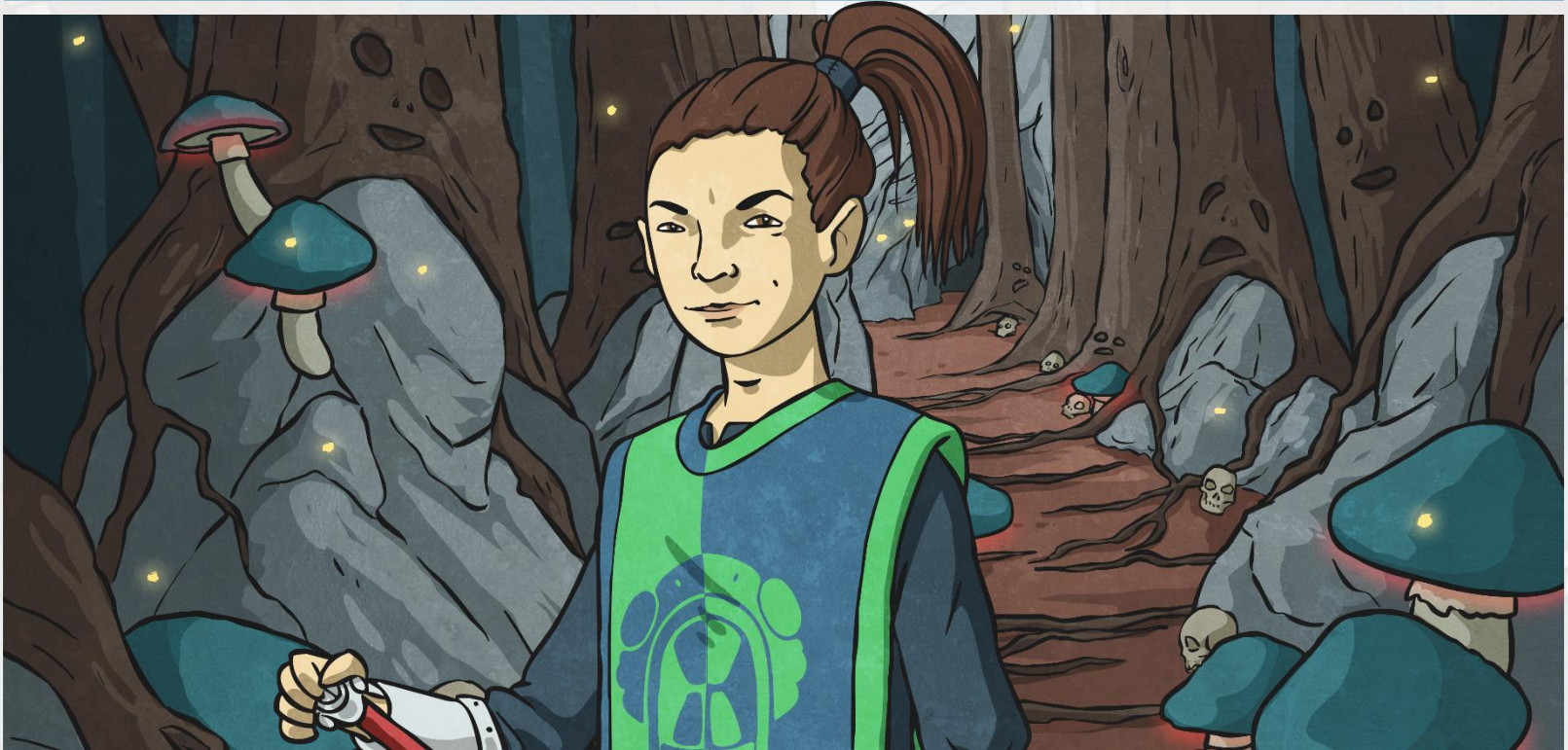- Try to imitate the number of syllables in each line.

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