

THE JUMBLIES

BY DAVID HARMER

There are several activities here based upon the poetry of Edward Lear. The first three look at the poetry ideas you can use based on the first verse and the chorus of *The Jumblies*. The next two look at the wider implications of the poem, on how to treat strangers and welcome them into our lives even if they are very different to us.

These activities are not intended to fill one session of time and can be used over several days or weeks. Please feel free to change them, adapt them or develop them as you feel appropriate for the needs of your children.

1. Starting out

Show the children what a sieve is, and how it could never float in a bowl of water. Then use the Edward Lear chant (the first item on the activity sheets attached) and have everyone say it aloud. Clap your hands, stamp your feet, dance about – or bang a drum, shake a shaker, hit some other kind of percussion! Have a great time with it.

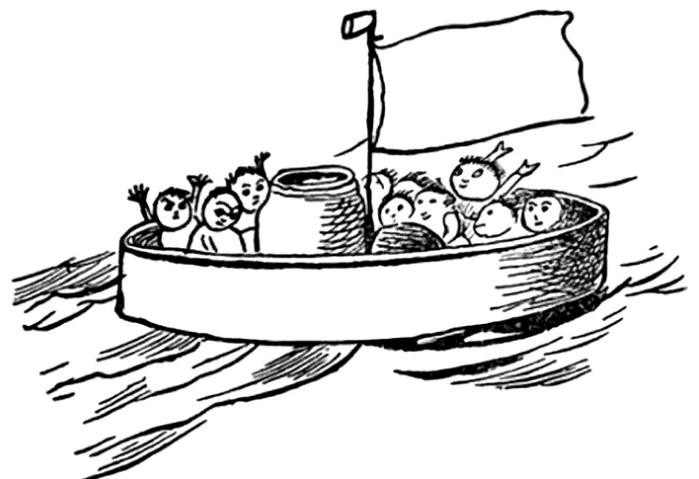
Now look at the first bit of Edward Lear's poem *The Jumblies* – the whole poem is attached. Once you have explained some of the words and the children are clear about what is being said, do just what you did before, but louder, faster, with more gusto!

2. Nonsense ideas

Now make a list together of all the silly things we can use as a boat – some examples might be a hat, a spoon, a paddling pool or a tea cup. Ask the children to come up with more. Now replace the sieve with one of these and say the poem out loud – “They went to sea in a hat they did, in a hat they went to sea”, and so on. Try making a list poem using all of the silly boats:

They went to sea in hat they did
They went to sea in a spoon they did
They went to sea in a bowl they did

– and so on using the Lear chorus every five lines or so. It's a lot of fun with lively language and it shows that poems have a beat, a structure (in this case five lines and a chorus repeatedly) and that they are like a list.



3. Writing like Lear

Use the poetry frame on the first activity sheet to create your own Jumblies poem – the children can complete it in pairs, or on their own. Perhaps in Foundation, this can be done by the class as a whole with the teacher scribing?

4. Jumblies as strangers

There is a second poetry frame attached which can be used to explore both poetry ideas (mainly similes) and a wider idea – the idea of strangers who look different, who sound different, who do things we might think are silly. You can use this for a discussion of how we must respect them all and celebrate those differences, and how difference can be a good thing.

5. The travelling Jumblies

Use the 'Jumblies chorus' on the second sheet attached to remind the children that the Jumblies are strangers travelling to new places and to act as a chorus between verses of your next poem. Now the children, collectively, in pairs or as individuals can make a list of all the silly things Jumblies can do as well as sail to sea in a sieve, to form the basis of a new poem.

Prompt answers with questions like:

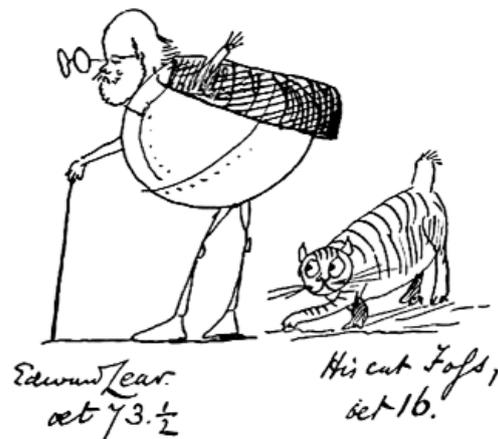
*Where do Jumblies come from?
Where do they live?
Is it hot there or very cold?
Is it different from here?
What do Jumblies wear?
What do Jumblies eat?
What do Jumblies drink?
Where do Jumblies go shopping?
How do they talk?
What do they look like?
What do they use for cars?
Where do they play?
Where is a Jumblie school?*

Work together to organise the material so that a regular pattern of perhaps five-line verses are spaced between the new chorus. Again, this might be a whole class activity or one for children on their own/in a pair or trio.

'The voyage be long...'

Obviously there are implications for drawing, painting and model-making here as well as dance, drama, music and story making. Teachers could use *Where The Wild Things Are* and *The Gruffalo* books alongside this work as well as books like *Angry Arthur* and *Not Now, Bernard*.

And always end the work with a rousing chant of the original poem. Enjoy yourself!

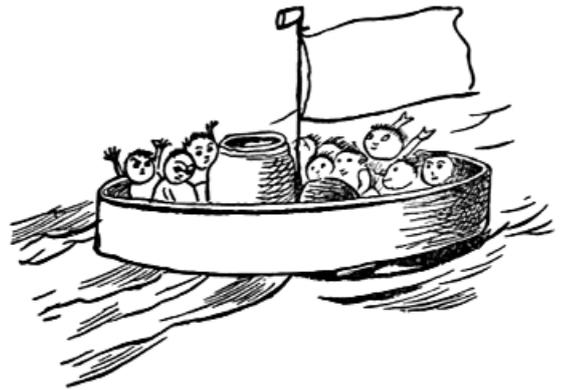


JUMBLIE ACTIVITIES

AN EDWARD LEAR CHANT

Read me aloud! All together now:

*You can't sail in a sieve
You can't sail in a sieve
It's full of holes
It sinks in bowls
You can't sail in a sieve
Glug glug
You can't sail in a sieve.*



POET'S TIP

Remember to keep your ideas silly and fun – make up your own words if you like!

WRITING YOUR OWN LEAR POEM

Use the frame below to write your own poem using nonsense language like Lear.

They went to sea in a

All their friends said

The Jumblies laughed, they said

Then the sea

Their new boat

Their friends said

The Jumblies laughed, they said

.....

.....

.....

NAME:

JUMBLIE ACTIVITIES

Finish this frame to write a poem about strangers. As you write, think about the good things that make us all different.

POET'S TIP

Remember to keep your ideas silly and fun – make up your own words if you like!

They went to sea in a

Jumblies live in

Jumblies sleep in

They snore like

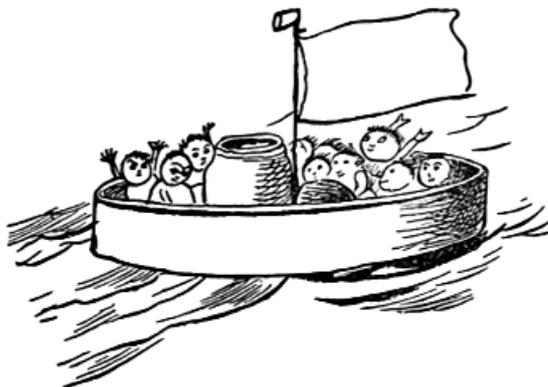
Jumblies laugh louder than

Jumblies leap about like

They are as small as

Far and few, far and few,

*Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.*



THE JUMBLIES CHORUS

Say aloud this chorus about the Jumblies- they are strangers adventuring to new places and we need to make them feel welcome!

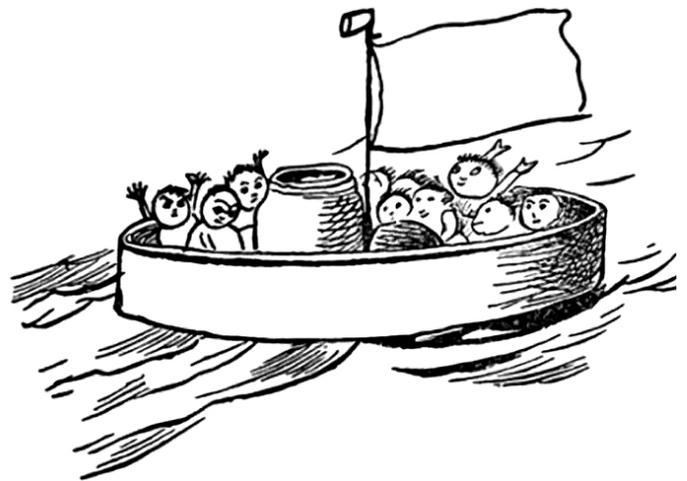
*Jumblies are strange,
Jumblies are silly
Jumblies live far away
They are our friends,
We like them all
Jumblies are here to stay.*

NAME:

THE JUMBLIES

I

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
In a Sieve they went to sea!
And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And every one cried, "You'll all be drowned!"
They called aloud, "Our Sieve ain't big,
But we don't care a button! we don't care a fig!
In a Sieve we'll go to sea!"
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.



II

They sailed in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea-green veil
Tied with a riband by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco-pipe mast;
And every one said, who saw them go,
"O won't they be soon upset, you know!
For the sky is dark, and the voyage is long,
And happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a Sieve to sail so fast!"
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

III

The water it soon came in, it did,
The water it soon came in;
So to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat,
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery-jar,
And each of them said, "How wise we are!
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
While round in our Sieve we spin!"
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

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POETRYCLASS: FRESH IDEAS FOR POETRY LEARNING FROM THE POETRY SOCIETY

THE JUMBLIES *ctd*

IV

And all night long they sailed away;
 And when the sun went down,
 They whistled and warbled a moony song
 To the echoing sound of a coppersy gong,
 In the shade of the mountains brown.
 "O Timballo! How happy we are,
 When we live in a Sieve and a crockery-jar,
 And all night long in the moonlight pale,
 We sail away with a pea-green sail,
 In the shade of the mountains brown!"
 Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

V

They sailed to the Western Sea, they did,
 To a land all covered with trees,
 And they bought an Owl, and a useful Cart,
 And a pound of Rice, and a Cranberry Tart,
 And a hive of silvery Bees.
 And they bought a Pig, and some green Jack-daws,
 And a lovely Monkey with lollipop paws,
 And forty bottles of Ring-Bo-Ree,
 And no end of Stilton Cheese.
 Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

VI

And in twenty years they all came back,
 In twenty years or more,
 And every one said, "How tall they've grown!
 For they've been to the Lakes, and the Terrible Zone,
 And the hills of the Chankly Bore!"
 And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
 Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
 And every one said, "If we only live,
 We too will go to sea in a Sieve,—
 To the hills of the Chankly Bore!"
 Far and few, far and few,
 Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
 Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
 And they went to sea in a Sieve.

EDWARD LEAR

