



## Poetry Selections

This session's featured poet is Edmund Spenser. We've included three of his poetry selections along with modern translations for your kids and teens to read, listen to, memorize, and recite. We have also included three additional England-themed selections from various writers. Our selections are:

- Excerpt from the Faerie Queene, Book I, Canto I, Stanzas I-V
- Excerpt from The Faerie Queene, Book V, Canto II, Stanza 39
- Excerpt from The Faerie Queene, Book V, Canto II, Stanza 43
- God Save the King
- Land of Hope and Glory
- This England by William Shakespeare

These selections are also available as copywork. We have included Zaner-Bloser style handwriting sheets for primary, elementary, and cursive, as well as college-ruled for older students.

*"So let us love, dear love, like as we ought,  
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught."*

~ Edmund Spenser

Poetry Recitation & Copywork



## Edmund Spenser

1552/1533 – January 13, 1599

Edmund Spenser was an important English poet who lived during a period known as the English Renaissance. He was born in London around 1552 and went to school at the Merchant Taylors' School, later studying at Pembroke College, part of the famous University of Cambridge. Spenser lived during the rule of Queen Elizabeth I, a time when art and literature were growing quickly in England.

Spenser is best known for his long poem *The Faerie Queene*. This poem is a mix of adventure, fantasy, and moral lessons. It tells the stories of brave knights who represent virtues like holiness, temperance, and justice. The poem was written to honor Queen Elizabeth I, who is represented in the poem as a powerful and noble queen.

*The Faerie Queene* was written in a special type of poetry called the "Spenserian stanza," which has nine lines and a special rhyme pattern that Spenser created himself.

Spenser's poetry often focused on big ideas like goodness, beauty, and the fight between right and wrong. He was very interested in using old stories and classical myths in his writing, but he also added his own new ideas. His writing helped shape English poetry and inspired many writers who came after him, including William Shakespeare.

Spenser spent some time in Ireland working for the English government. While there, he wrote about his thoughts on politics and the role of England in Ireland. He also wrote poems like *Amoretti*, a collection of love poems written for his future wife, and *Epithalamion*, a beautiful poem celebrating their wedding day.

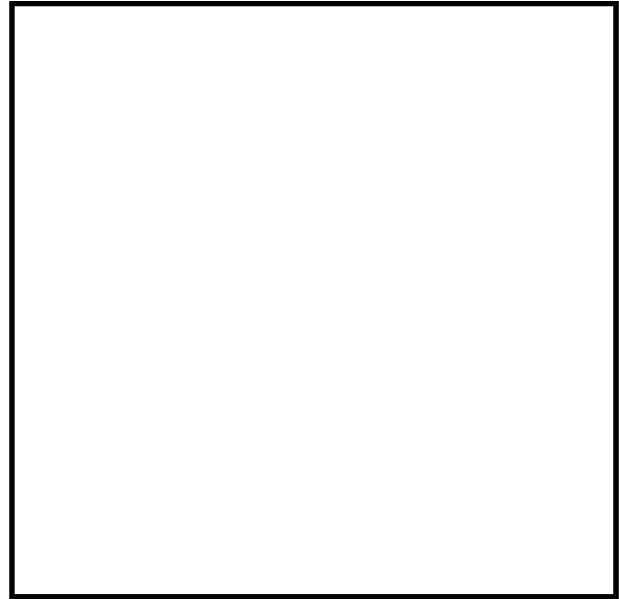
Edmund Spenser returned to London in 1588, dying shortly thereafter in 1599, and was buried in the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, a special honor for poets in England. Even though Spenser lived many years ago, his poetry is still remembered and studied today. His creative imagination, love for storytelling, and beautiful language made him one of the greatest poets in English history.

# Poet Study

Poet: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_



**3 Facts About the Poet:**

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**Best Known Poems by the Poet:**

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# Poetry Selections

## Excerpt from *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Canto I, Stanzas I-V

by Edmund Spenser

### I

A GENTLE Knight was pricking on the plaine,  
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,  
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,  
The cruel markes of many'a bloody field;  
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:  
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,  
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:  
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,  
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

### II

And on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,  
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,  
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,  
And dead as living ever him ador'd:  
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,  
For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:  
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,  
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;  
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

### III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,  
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,  
That greatest Glorious Queene of Faerie lond,  
To winne him worship, and her grace to have,  
Which of all earthly things he most did crave;  
And ever as he rode, his hart did earne  
To prove his puissance in battell brave  
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;  
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

## Modern Translation

### Stanza I

A noble knight was riding across the plain  
Clad in mighty armor and carrying a silver shield  
Where scars from deep wounds still remained  
The harsh reminders of many bloody fields  
Yet arms in war did he never wield  
His spirited horse chewed its foaming bit  
Resenting the reins that forced it to yield  
A fine, brave knight, and fair did sit  
For knightly jousts and fierce combat fit

### Stanza II

And on his chest, a red cross he bore  
A symbol honoring his dying Lord  
To show his devotion, that symbol he wore  
Whether living or dead, he still adored  
Likewise on his shield the cross was scored  
Representing the hope in the Lord he had  
He was faithful and true in both in deed and word  
But his expression seemed too solemn and sad  
Yet, he feared nothing and was himself feared

### Stanza III

On a great adventure he was bound  
Queen Gloriana to him she gave  
That glorious Queen of Fairyland  
To win great honor and her favor to have  
Which above all earthly things he craved  
As he rode, his heart did yearn  
To test his strength and in battle be brave  
Against a fearsome enemy, a new force to learn  
A terrifying dragon, horrible and stern

# Poetry Selections

## Excerpt from *The Faerie Queene*, Book I, Canto I, Stanzas I-V (cont)

### IV

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,  
Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,  
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide  
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low,  
And over all a blacke stole she did throw,  
As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,  
And heavie sat upon her palfrey slow;  
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,  
And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad.

### V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,  
She was in life and every vertuous lore,  
And by descent from Royall lynage came  
Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore  
Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne shore,  
And all the world in their subjection held;  
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore  
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld:  
Whom to avenge, she had this Knight from far compeld.

## Modern Translation

### Stanza IV

A beautiful lady rode along beside  
On a humble donkey as white as snow  
Though she was fair, her face she did hide  
Under a veil that covered low  
And it over all, a dark cloak did she throw  
As if in deep mourning, to show she was sad  
With a heavy heart did she ride slow  
Deep in her heart, hidden worries she had  
And by her side, a white lamb she had

### Stanza V

As pure and innocent as that little lamb  
A life of virtue and wisdom she bore  
From a royal lineage she came  
From ancient kings and queens before  
Who once ruled from East to Western shore  
And all the world in their kingdom held  
Until a dark enemy caused a foul uproar  
Laying waste to the land, and them expelled  
To avenge her people, this knight she compelled

# Poetry Selections

## Excerpt from *The Faerie Queene*, Book V, Canto II, Stanza 39

*by Edmund Spenser*

Of things vnseene how canst thou deeme aright,  
Then answered the righteous Artegall,  
Sith thou misdeem'st so much of things in sight?  
What though the sea with waues continuall  
Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all:  
Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought,  
For whatsoever from one place doth fall,  
Is with the tide vnto an other brought:  
For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.

## Modern Translation

"How can you judge unseen things right?"  
Answered the righteous Artegall  
"When you misjudge even the things in sight?  
Though the ocean waves beat continual  
Eating the land, until there's nothing at all  
Yet there's no less earth than what there ought  
For whatever from the earth does fall  
With the tides, another is brought  
For nothing is lost that can't be found, if sought."

## Excerpt from *The Faerie Queene*, Book V, Canto II, Stanza 43

*by Edmund Spenser*

For take thy ballaunce, if thou be so wise,  
And weigh the winde, that vnder heauen doth blow;  
Or weigh the light, that in the East doth rise;  
Or weigh the thought, that fro[m] mans mind doth flow.  
But if the weight of these thou canst not show,  
Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall.  
For how canst thou those greater secrets know,  
That doest not know the least thing of them all?  
Ill can he rule the great, that cannot reach the small.

## Modern Translation

Use the scales if you think you're so wise  
And weigh the wind that under heaven does blow  
Or weigh the light that in the East does rise  
Or weigh the thought that from a mind does flow  
But if the measure of these things you can't yet show  
Then weigh a single word that from your lips does fall  
For how can life's greater mysteries you know  
When you don't even know the smallest of them all?  
He will never master the great who can't master the small

# Poetry Selections

## **This England**

*by William Shakespeare*

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands,  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this  
England...

John of Gaunt, Richard II  
William Shakespeare

## **God Save the King**

*Unknown Author*

God save our gracious King!  
Long live our noble King!  
God save the King!  
Send him victorious,  
Happy and glorious,  
Long to reign over us,  
God save the King.

Thy choicest gifts in store  
On him be pleased to pour,  
Long may he reign.  
May he defend our laws,  
And ever give us cause,  
To sing with heart and voice,  
God save the King.

## **Land of Hope and Glory**

*by A.C. Benson*

Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free,  
How shall we extol thee, who are born of thee?  
Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set;  
God, who made thee mighty, make thee  
mightier yet,  
God, who made thee mighty, make thee  
mightier yet!

# Poetry Study

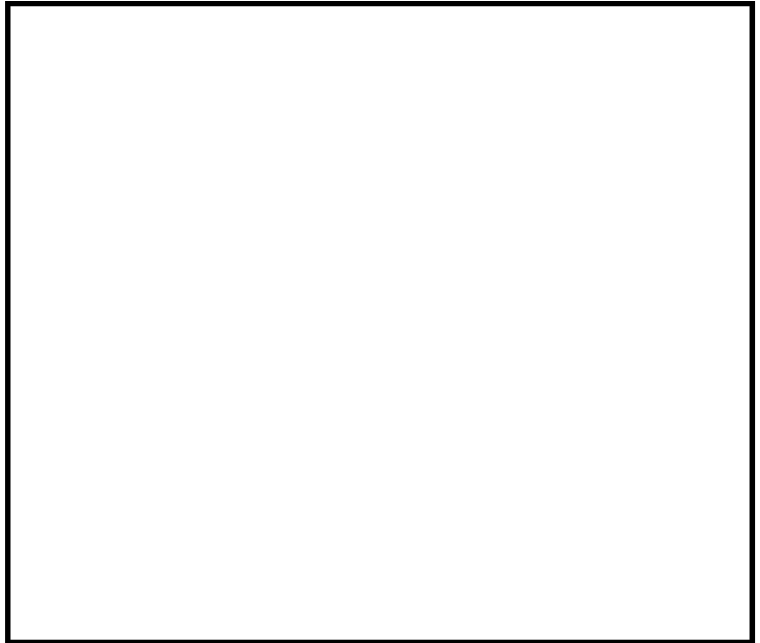
**Title:**

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**Type of Poem:**

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**Use the box to at right to draw a picture of what the poem brings to mind.**



**Write one thing you liked and did not like about the poem:**

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**Write three adjectives about the poem.**

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**Compose a few lines of your own poem inspired by this work**

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