



Poetry Recitation & Copywork

Poetry Selections

This session's featured poet is William Blake. We've included six poetry selections for your kids and teens to read, listen to, memorize, and recite. They are:

- The Lamb
- The Tyger
- Laughing Song
- The Divine Image
- The Chimney-Sweeper (from *Songs of Innocence*)
- The Chimney-Sweeper (from *Songs of Experience*)

For copywork, we have included Zaner-Bloser style handwriting sheets for primary, elementary, and cursive, as well as college-ruled for older students. The poems we have chosen are:

- The Lamb
- The Tyger
- Laughing Song
- The Divine Image

*"To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour."*

~ William Blake



William Blake

November 28, 1757 - August 12, 1827

William Blake was an English poet, painter, and printmaker whose work stands among the most imaginative and spiritually rich creations of the Romantic era.

Although he was not well-known during his lifetime, Blake is now remembered as a visionary artist who brought together poetry and visual art in a way that was entirely his own.

He was born in London in 1757 and showed artistic ability from an early age. As a child, Blake claimed to see visions—glimpses of the spiritual world woven into everyday life. Rather than setting these experiences aside, he embraced them, and they became the foundation of his life's work.

As a teenager, he was apprenticed to an engraver, where he learned the careful craft of printmaking. This training would later allow him to create his own books, combining words and images in a deeply unified form.

Blake is best known for his collection, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, in which he explores the contrast between the purity and simplicity of childhood and the harsher realities of the adult world. His poems, including well-known pieces like "The Lamb" and "The Tyger," are written in deceptively simple language, yet they carry profound spiritual and philosophical meaning.

What makes his work especially remarkable is that he did not separate poetry from art. Instead, he developed a method called illuminated printing, engraving both text and illustrations onto copper plates and then hand-coloring each page, creating books that are as visually striking as they are literary.

His artwork is filled with bold imagery and symbolic figures, often drawn from biblical themes as well as his own imaginative vision of the universe. He believed that human beings were created to be both imaginative and spiritual. Though he lived during the Romantic period, his style is difficult to categorize, blending influences from medieval art, scripture, and his own deeply personal mythology.

He also saw the tensions between opposites—such as innocence and experience, or good and evil—not as problems to be solved, but as necessary elements of growth. Blake was deeply critical of the rise of industrialization, which he saw as a form of human evil—famously describing England's

factories as “dark Satanic Mills”—lamenting how they scarred the natural world and exploited children through harsh labor. Both of his poems entitled, “The Chimney-Sweeper,” demonstrate this criticism.

During his lifetime, Blake lived in relative obscurity and often struggled financially, with many people viewing his work as strange or difficult to understand. It was only after his death in 1827 that his writings and artwork began to receive the recognition they deserved. Today, he is considered one of the great voices of his age, influencing generations of poets, artists, and thinkers.

William Blake offers us a powerful reminder that creativity is not simply about skill, but about vision. His work invites us to see the world with wonder, to think deeply about truth and beauty, and to recognize that imagination is a gift meant to be cultivated.

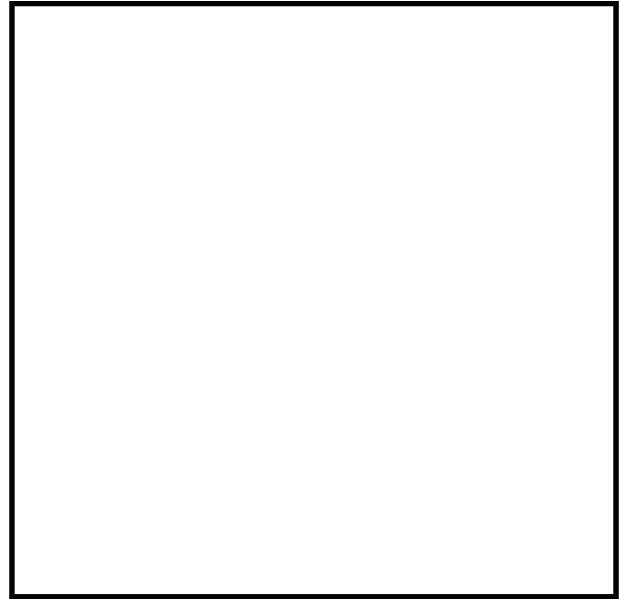
As he once wrote, “If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite,” a line that captures the essence of his lifelong pursuit—to help others see beyond the surface of things into the infinite reality he believed lay just beneath.

Poet Study

Poet: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____



3 Facts About the Poet:

Best Known Poems by the Poet:

Poetry Selections

The Lamb

Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Poetry Selections

Laughing Song

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene;
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing 'Ha ha he!'

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread:
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of 'Ha ha he!'

The Divine Image

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,
All pray in their distress,
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,
Is God our Father dear;
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love,
Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart;
Pity, a human face;
And Love, the human form divine:
And Peace the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine:
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew.
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell,
There God is dwelling too.

Poetry Selections

The Chimney-Sweeper **(from *Songs of Innocence*)**

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry 'Weep! weep! weep! weep!'
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I said,
'Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!—
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins, and set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind:
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

Poetry Selections

The Chimney-Sweeper (from *Songs of Experience*)

A little black thing among the snow,
Crying! 'weep! weep!' in notes of woe!
'Where are thy father and mother? Say!'—
'They are both gone up to the church to pray.

'Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smiled among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

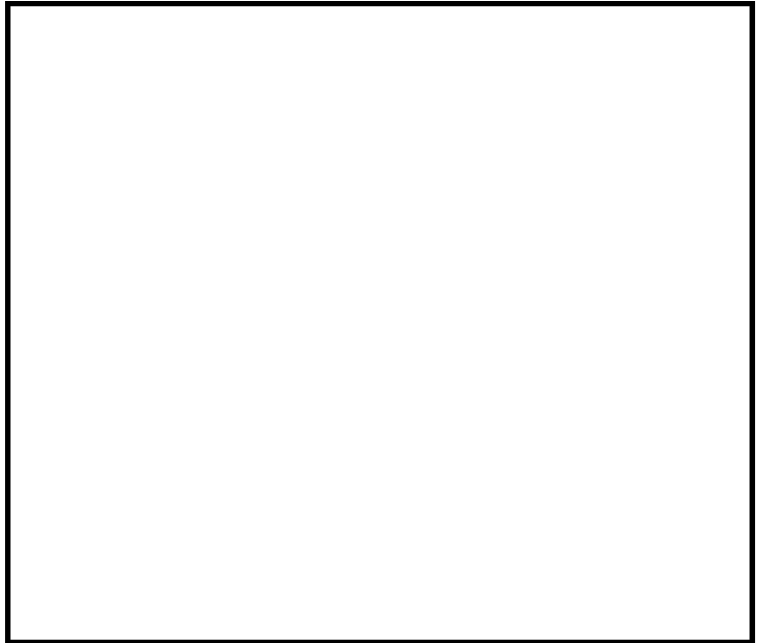
'And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and His priest and king,
Who made up a heaven of our misery.'

Poetry Study

Title:

Type of Poem:

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:

Write three adjectives about the poem.

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