lyricalLANGUAGE LAB

LESSON 6

ANAPESTIC METER

ANSWER KEY

PART 1a: Metrical Feet and Metrical Lines

Assume that each of the following is the first line of a different poem written in anapestic meter. For each line, ***1)*** *read the line aloud;* ***2)*** *mark the anapests (uu/);* ***3)*** *use slashes to divide the line into metrical feet;* ***4)*** *determine the name of the metrical line (e.g., anapestic tetrameter).*

u u / u u / u u / u u / u u / u u / u u /
How I long / to go live / in a lit / tle white house / on the shores / of McGil / likin Lake. [anapestic
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 heptameter]

u u / u u / u u / u u / u u /
That the earth / isn't flat / is a fact / that you can't / contradict. [anapestic pentameter]
1 2 3 4 5

(u) u / u u / u u / u u / u u /
___ Like sand / through an ho / ur glass, so / are the days / of our lives. [headless anapestic pentameter]
1 2 3 4 5

u u / u u / u u / u u /
Little kids / seem to grow / in the blink / of an eye. [anapestic tetrameter]
1 2 3 4

PART 1b

Print out Jack Prelutsky's poem "The Turkey Shot Out of the Oven." The first two verses are below, but for practice, I suggest you do the whole poem. ***1)*** *Mark the anapests.* ***2)*** *Note which lines are headless, truncated, or otherwise catalectic.* ***3)*** *What is the dominant metrical line?*

Stanza 1

(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___The tur / key shot out / of the oven

(u) u / u u / u u /
___and rock / eted in / to the air,

(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___it knocked / every plate / off the table

(u) u / u u / u u /
___and part / ly demol / ished a chair.

Stanza 2

(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___It ric / ocheted in / to a corner

(u) u / u u / u u /
___and burst / with a deaf / ening boom,

(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___then splat / tered all o / ver the kitchen,

(u) u / u u / u u /
___complete / ly obscur / ing the room.

Stanza 3

Dominant metrical line = anapestic trimeter

Stanzas 1 and 2

Lines 1 and 3 are both headless and hypercatalectic.
Lines 2 and 4 are headless.

Note that although many of the metrical feet are not "perfect" anapests, Prelutsky follows the same pattern of "irregular" headless and hypercatalectic feet throughout the entire poem. Thus the poem is completely consistent and reads perfectly.

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(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___It stuck / to the walls / and the windows,

(u) u / u u / u u /
___it to / tally coat / ed the floor,

u u / u u / u u / (u)
there was tur / key attached / to the ceiling,

u u / u u / u u /
where there'd nev / er been tur / key before.

Stanza 4

(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___It blank / eted eve / ry appliance,

(u) u / u u / u u /
___it smeared / every sau / cer and bowl,

(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___there was / n't a way / I could stop it,

(u) u / u u / u u /
___that tur / key was out / of control.

Stanza 5

(u) u / u u / u u / (u)
___I scraped / and I scrubbed / with displeasure,

(u) u / u u / u u /
___and thought / with chagrin / as I mopped,

u u / u u / u u / (u)
that I'd nev / er again / stuff a turkey

(u) u / u u / u u /
___with pop / corn that had / n't been popped.

Stanza 3

Line 1 is both headless and hypercatalectic as in Stanzas 1 and 2.

Line 2 is headless as in Stanzas 1 and 2.

Line 3 departs from the third lines in Stanzas 1 and 2 in that the first anapest is complete (not headless), though the line is still hypercatalectic with an extra beat at the end.

Line 4 departs from the fourth lines in Stanzas 1 and 2 in that the first anapest is complete (not headless).

Stanza 4

Here the poem returns to the same pattern as in Stanzas 1 and 2.

Stanza 5

This stanza also follows the same pattern as in Stanzas 1 and 2 with one exception:

Line 3 is not headless.

Did you find all the variations?

© Jack Prelutsky from the book SOMETHING BIG HAS BEEN HERE (Greenwillow Books).

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