

Level 2 Speaking Verse and Prose:

Grade 5 – Verse

Titles in Level 2 Speaking Verse and Prose: Grade 5 – Verse

The Wolf and the Crane

Love and Friendship

An Irish Airman Foresees His Death

A Bird Came Down the Walk (originally published as In the Garden)

The Usual Suspect

Song of the Sirens

Tula ['Books are door-shaped']

Dear Mr Examiner

The Wolf and the Crane

A wolf, once forgetting the size of his swallow,
Tried to pass a large marrow-bone through it.
'Oh dear,' said the beast, thinking death was to follow,
'How careless and stupid to do it!'

His mouth was propp'd open by means of the bone,
And his breathing was greatly impeded,
But a crane coming up, he contrived to make known
What kind of assistance he needed.

'How d'ye do?' said the bird; said the beast, 'Very ill,
For a bone has gone down the wrong way;
But if you can extract it by means of your bill,
The service I'll amply repay.'

Thought the crane, 'I'm no surgeon: yet all must agree,
That my bill will make excellent forceps;
And as for the money, I do not now see
Why I need refuse taking his worship's.'

Said the bird, 'It's agreed;' said his patient, 'Proceed,
And take the bone hence, I beseech;'
Which, after a while, and with infinite toil,
The crane at last managed to reach.

'Thank my stars!' said the beast, from his terrors released,
'Thank you too, sir,' said he to the bird;

'Alas!' said the crane, 'is this all I'm to gain,
I was waiting the promised reward.'

Said the wolf, 'You forget, I've contracted no debt,
Since the service was *rendered by me*;
Your head I releas'd from the jaws of a beast,
And now you're demanding a fee!'

By Marmaduke Park

Love and Friendship

Love is like the wild rose-briar,
Friendship like the holly-tree—
The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms
But which will bloom most constantly?

The wild rose-briar is sweet in spring,
Its summer blossoms scent the air;
Yet wait till winter comes again
And who will call the wild-briar fair?

Then scorn the silly rose-wreath now
And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That when December blights thy brow
He still may leave thy garland green.

By Emily Brontë

An Irish Airman Foresees His Death

I know that I shall meet my fate
 Somewhere among the clouds above;
 Those that I fight I do not hate
 Those that I guard I do not love;
 My country is Kiltartan Cross,
 My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
 No likely end could bring them loss
 Or leave them happier than before.
 Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
 Nor public man, nor angry crowds,
 A lonely impulse of delight
 Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
 I balanced all, brought all to mind,
 The years to come seemed waste of breath,
 A waste of breath the years behind
 In balance with this life, this death.

By W. B. Yeats

**A Bird Came Down the Walk
 (originally published as In the Garden)**

A bird came down the walk:
 He did not know I saw;
 He bit an angle worm in halves
 And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
 From a convenient grass,
 And then hopped sidewise to the wall
 To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
 That hurried all abroad, –
 They looked like frightened beads, I thought;
 He stirred his velvet head.

Like one in danger, cautious,
 I offered him a crumb,
 And he unrolled his feathers,
 And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
 Too silver for a seam,
 Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
 Leap, plashless as they swim.

By Emily Dickinson

The Usual Suspect

I'm the demon of the stair,
I'm waiting for you here.
I know you're on the way because
I can smell your fear.

I'm the ghoul beneath the bed
I terrify the meek.
This is my home: I'm always here,
But never when you peek.

I'm the figure in the flame,
The spectre in the smoke.
Wind in the chimney is my voice
Although I never spoke.

I'm the monster in the cupboard,
The face behind the door.
The less you try to think of me
I think of you the more.

And though you might imagine me
As gremlin, imp, or elf,
The truth is ten times worse, because
I am – of course – yourself.

By David Harsent

Song of the Sirens

Come Odysseus draw thou near
Our celestial voice to hear
Weaving notes that intertwine
Gradually will make you mine
Beg your men the boat to steer
Close Odysseus, do not fear

Come Odysseus nearer still
Sail your ship so close until
We may wrap you in our arms
Soothe your worries with our charms
Brave Odysseus fear no ill
From our voices soft not shrill

Come Odysseus faster row
Sluggish sailors go too slow
Once you taste our watery kiss
Die forever in such bliss
We will gently help you go
Sink in to our world below

By Ginny Avery

Tula ['Books are door-shaped']

Books are door-shaped
portals
carrying me
across oceans
and centuries,
helping me feel
less alone.

But my mother believes
that girls who read too much
are unladylike
and ugly,
so my father's books are locked
in a clear glass cabinet. I gaze
at enticing covers
and mysterious titles,
but I am rarely permitted
to touch
the enchantment
of words.

Poems.
Stories.
Plays.
All are forbidden.
Girls are not supposed to think,
but as soon as my eager mind
begins to race, free thoughts
rush in
to replace
the trapped ones.

I imagine distant times
and faraway places.
Ghosts.
Vampires.
Ancient warriors.
Fantasy moves into
the tangled maze
of lonely confusion.

Secretly, I open
an invisible book in my mind,
and I step
through its magical door-shape
into a universe
of dangerous villains
and breathtaking heroes.

Many of the heroes are men
and boys, but some are girls
so tall
strong
and clever
that they rescue other children
from monsters.

By Margarita Engle

Dear Mr Examiner

Thank you so much for your questions
I've read them most carefully through
But there isn't a single one of them
That I know the answer to.

I've written my name as instructed
Put the year, the month and the day
But after I'd finished doing that
I had nothing further to say.

So I thought I'd write you a letter
Fairly informally
About what I can see from my desk here
And what it's like to be me.

Mandy has written ten pages
But it's probably frightful guff
And Angela Smythe is copying
The answers off her cuff.

Miss Quinlan is marking our homework
The clock keeps ticking away
I suppose for anyone outside
It's just another day.

There'll be mothers going on errands
Grandmothers sipping tea
Unemployed men doing crosswords
Or watching 'Crown Court' on TV.

The rain has finally stopped here
The sun has started to shine
And in a back garden in Sefton Drive
A housewife hangs shirts on a line.

A class files past to play tennis
The cathedral clock has just pealed
A mower chugs backwards and forwards
Up on the hockey field.

Miss Quinlan's just read what I've written
Her face is an absolute mask
Before she collects the papers in
I've a sort of favour to ask.

I thought your questions were lovely
I've only myself to blame
But couldn't you give me some marks
For writing the date and my name.

By Gareth Owen