

# Writing With Writers: Jack Prelutsky Poetry Unit

## Step 3: Write Your Poem

Are you all warmed up? Then you're ready to write your own poem. If you want, you can choose one of the poem-starters below. You can use it to get going, and add as many stanzas of your own as you like.

### Poem 1

When I awoke one morning,  
A stork was on my head. I asked,  
"What are you doing  
there?"  
It looked at me and said . . .

*Hint:* If you wish, you may substitute any one-syllable bird, bug, or mammal for the stork. You may also change the word was to "sat," "stood," "snoozed," "perched," or any other verb you think is appropriate. You'll probably wind up with a very different poem if there's a mouse on your head instead of a moose.

## Poem 2

Almost every afternoon,  
I eat pickles with a spoon.  
Every evening right at six,  
I eat pickles stacked on bricks.

*Hint:* You can have a lot of fun writing about other ways to eat pickles. You can also use jellybeans, bananas, or potato chips instead of pickles — and explain the different ways that you eat them. It's up to you.

### Revising Guidelines

By now, you should have a first draft of your poem, which means you're ready to begin revising. To me, rewriting is the most important part of writing because nothing ever comes out right the very first time. Here are some guidelines I find helpful when I begin revising my own poetry:

1. Rewrite your poem at least once. I rewrite most of my own poems at least four or five times. Some I've even rewritten as many as 100 times!
2. Don't rush! Poems can take as long as a week, a month, or even a year to write.

3. How will you know when your poem is done? I find that the poem lets me know when it's done. It's just like being full when you eat. Sometimes if you take one more bite, you get a stomachache. But, if you don't take that extra mouthful, you'll feel perfectly satisfied. Well, it's the same with poetry — you'll just know when it feels right.
4. When you get frustrated, and feel that the poem is not coming out the way you'd like, put it aside and do something else for a while. When this happens to me, I work on another poem, or just go to a ballgame!
5. Sleep on it! If you're stuck, try thinking about your poem as you drift off to sleep. When I do this, I find that I dream the solution.

When you're happy with what you have written, share it with other students by publishing it online in our Poetry Collection.