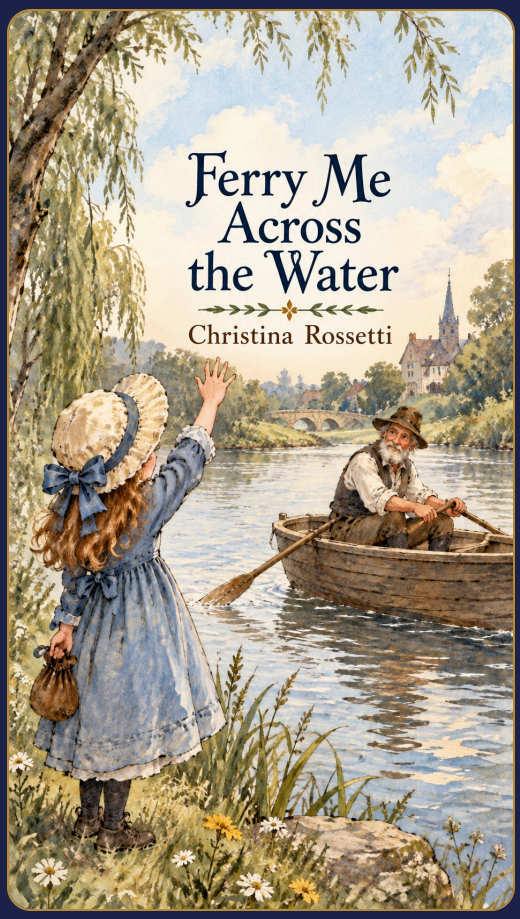
Storyland Classics

FREE POEM GUIDE

From Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book (1872)



- ✦ The Poem
- ✦ Try It
- ✦ Missing Words
- ✦ Put It in Order
- ✦ Handwriting
- ✦ Meet the Poet
- ✦ Word Match & Sort
- ✦ Yes or No & ABC Order
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- ✦ Answer Key
- ✦ Let's Talk
- ✦ Word Search
- ✦ Rhyme Hunt & Syllables
- ✦ Learn It by Heart
- ✦ Standards

Ages 4–8 ✦ Pre-K to Grade 2 ✦ Aligned to Common Core

This cover is for your screen. Print from page 2 to save ink.

FOR GROWN-UPS

How to Use This Guide

This free guide goes with the Storyland Classics read-aloud of “Ferry Me Across the Water” by Christina Rossetti. Every page is ready to print, and no sign-up is needed. Pick the pages that suit your child or class.

ABOUT THE POEM

A girl asks a boatman to ferry her across the water. He says he will, if she has a penny in her purse. She does have a penny (and blue eyes, she tells him!), so he invites her to step into his ferry-boat. The whole poem is a little conversation, which makes it perfect for two readers.

SKILL FOCUS

Dialogue: how two speakers take turns talking in a poem

A simple routine

1. **Day 1.** Watch the read-aloud together (scan the QR code on the poem page), then read the poem aloud.
2. **Day 2.** Read it again. Meet the poet, then use Let’s Talk and Try It.
3. **Day 3.** Learn the words with the word match, word sort, word search and missing words.
4. **Day 4.** Listen for rhymes and syllables, put the poem in order, and perform it with voices.

What’s inside

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Standards

Every activity is aligned to the Common Core State Standards for kindergarten to grade 2. Codes appear at the bottom of each page, and the full table is on the last page.

Younger children

Children who aren’t writing yet can answer out loud or tell a grown-up what to write.

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THE POEM

Ferry Me Across the Water



"Ferry me across the water,
Do, boatman, do."
"If you've a penny in your purse
I'll ferry you."

"I have a penny in my purse,
And my eyes are blue;
So ferry me across the water,
Do, boatman, do."

"Step into my ferry-boat,
Be they black or blue,
And for the penny in your purse
I'll ferry you."

▸ Watch the read-aloud

Scan the code to watch "Ferry Me Across the Water" read aloud, or visit storylandclassics.com/ferry-guide.

Christina Rossetti, Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book (1872). Public domain.

Name _____ Date _____

MEET THE POET

Christina Rossetti

1830–1894 ✦ English poet

Christina Rossetti was born in London in 1830. She grew up in a busy, book-loving family: her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti became a famous painter and poet. Christina began writing poems as a girl, and she became one of the best-loved poets of her time. In 1872 she wrote *Sing-Song*, a book of short, gentle rhymes for little children about animals, the weather, colors, babies and the seasons. Many of her poems ask questions or name the things children see every day.

Questions About the Poet

1. In what city was Christina Rossetti born?

2. What is the name of her book of poems for little children?

3. Christina Rossetti liked to write about things children see every day. What would you write a poem about?

Who Is Talking?

Two people talk in this poem. Read it again, then answer.

"Ferry me across the water, Do, boatman, do." ☐

"If you've a penny in your purse I'll ferry you." ☐

"I have a penny in my purse, And my eyes are blue." ☐

"Step into my ferry-boat." ☐

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Name _____ Date _____

LET'S TALK

Ferry Me Across the Water

Young children can answer out loud. Older children can write their answers.

REMEMBER

1. What does the girl want the boatman to do?

2. What does the boatman want in return?

3. What else does the girl tell him about herself?

THINK

4. Why do you think the girl mentions her blue eyes?

5. Is the boatman friendly? How can you tell?

CONNECT

6. Have you ever ridden on a boat or a ferry? Where did you go?

NARRATION

Close the book and tell the poem back in your own words. What did the girl and the boatman say to each other?

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Name _____ Date _____

TRY IT

Ferry Me Across the Water

SKILL FOCUS

Dialogue: how two speakers take turns talking in a poem

Write a new verse where someone else asks the boatman for a ride. What do they say, and what does the boatman answer?

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Name _____ Date _____

WORDS TO KNOW

Word Match

Draw a line from each word to what it means.

ferry	a coin worth one cent
water	a boat that carries people across water
boatman	to carry across water in a boat
penny	to walk with one foot
purse	a person who rows or sails a boat
step	from one side to the other
ferry-boat	a river, lake or sea
across	a small bag for money

Word Sort: The Girl or the Boatman?

Write each word in the right box.

has a penny · rows the boat · has blue eyes · asks for a ride · asks for a penny · has a purse · owns a ferry-boat · says “Step in”

The girl	The boatman

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Name _____ Date _____

WORD SEARCH

Ferry Me Across the Water

Find the words from the poem. Words go across (left to right) and down (top to bottom). Circle each word, then check it off.

G	T	F	H	D	B	O	A	T	M
N	Y	B	D	H	I	R	W	W	M
P	W	P	O	P	S	S	A	P	R
U	B	L	U	E	B	L	T	E	E
R	H	F	E	R	R	Y	E	N	C
S	C	J	S	C	G	O	R	N	P
E	S	U	V	M	S	Y	I	Y	W
L	O	P	R	S	T	S	I	J	R
C	H	B	W	J	E	R	A	R	E
N	V	K	B	L	P	I	F	N	L

WORD BANK

- ☐ FERRY
- ☐ WATER
- ☐ BOAT
- ☐ PENNY
- ☐ PURSE
- ☐ BLUE
- ☐ STEP
- ☐ DO

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Name _____ Date _____

MISSING WORDS

Ferry Me Across the Water

Read each line from the poem. Choose the missing word from the word bank and write it on the line. Then read the whole line aloud.

blue | Do | Ferry | penny | purse | you

1. “ _____ me across the water,
2. _____ , boatman, do.”
3. “If you’ve a _____ in your purse
4. I’ll ferry _____ .”
5. “I have a penny in my _____ ,
6. And my eyes are _____ ;

Make New Rhymes

Write a new word that rhymes with each word from the poem. Silly words count too!

ferry _____ _____ do _____ _____

penny _____ _____ you _____ _____

DID YOU NOTICE?

Read each line with the word you chose. Does it sound right? Check the poem to see if you were right!

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Name _____ Date _____

CHECK YOUR READING

Yes or No?

Read each sentence about the poem. Circle **Yes** if it is true. Circle **No** if it is not.

1. The girl asks the boatman to ferry her across the water. Yes No
2. The boatman wants a penny. Yes No
3. The girl has no money. Yes No
4. The girl says her eyes are brown. Yes No
5. The boatman says, “Step into my ferry-boat.” Yes No
6. The poem is a conversation. Yes No

ABC Order

Write these words from the poem in ABC order. Look at the first letter of each word.

ferry water boat penny step

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

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Name _____ Date _____

SOUNDS OF THE POEM

Rhyme Hunt

Find each word's rhyming partner in the word bank and write it on the line.

coat · do · many · nurse · skies · you

do _____ blue _____

purse _____ boat _____

penny _____ eyes _____

LISTEN

The short lines rhyme: do, you, blue. Can you find all the words that rhyme with "do" in the poem?

Clap the Syllables

Say each word and clap for every part. Write the number of claps.

ferry claps: ___	water claps: ___	boatman claps: ___
penny claps: ___	purse claps: ___	across claps: ___

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Name _____ Date _____

PUT IT IN ORDER

What Happens First?

Read each sentence. Write 1 in the circle next to what happens first, 2 next to what happens next, and so on up to 6.

- ◯ The girl says she has a penny.
- ◯ The girl asks the boatman to ferry her.
- ◯ The boatman says, “Step into my ferry-boat.”
- ◯ The boatman asks for a penny.
- ◯ The girl tells him her eyes are blue.
- ◯ The boatman says, “I’ll ferry you.”

Retell the Poem

Use the order words to tell the poem in your own words. Say it out loud, or write it.

First, _____

Next, _____

Then, _____

Last, _____

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Name _____ Date _____

PERFORM IT

Read It With Voices

The girl | The boatman

Two readers! The **girl** reads the first and second verses' asking lines, and the **boatman** answers. Pretend to row your boat while the boatman speaks.

TIPS FOR READING ALOUD

Make the girl's voice hopeful and polite ("Do, boatman, do"). Make the boatman's voice deep and friendly.

Read It Three Times

Read the poem aloud three times. Color a star each time. Your reading gets smoother every time!



My Favorite Part

Write about your favorite part of the poem.

My favorite part is _____

_____

_____

because _____

_____

_____

_____

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LEARN IT BY HEART

Say It From Memory

Learn this verse by heart. Check off each step as you go.

"Ferry me across the water,
Do, boatman, do."
"If you've a penny in your purse
I'll ferry you."

- [ ] Listen to the verse on the read-aloud video.
- [ ] Read it aloud three times with the book.
- [ ] Say it with a grown-up, one line at a time.
- [ ] Say it with the book closed. Peek if you need to!
- [ ] Say it to someone at home or in class.

✦ CERTIFICATE ✦

I can say "Ferry Me Across the Water" by heart!

by Christina Rossetti

Name _____ Date _____

Heard by _____

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CCSS RF.1.4b · SL.K.6 · SL.1.6

Name _____ Date _____

HANDWRITING PRACTICE

Ferry Me Across the Water

Trace the gray words, then write them on your own on the empty lines. Tall letters touch the top line; small letters reach the dotted line.

Ferry me across the water,

Ferry me across

the water,

Do, boatman, do.

Do, boatman,

do.

☐ I started with a capital letter. ☐ I left spaces between words. ☐ I copied the end mark.

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CCSS L.K.1a · L.1.1a · L.K.2a

FOR GROWN-UPS

Answer Key & Ideas

Who Is Talking?

The girl (G) · the boatman (B) · the girl (G) · the boatman (B). Write G or B in each box.

Let's Talk

1. Ferry her across the water. 2. A penny. 3. That her eyes are blue. 4–6. Answers will vary.

Word Sort

The girl: has a penny, has blue eyes, asks for a ride, has a purse. The boatman: rows the boat, asks for a penny, owns a ferry-boat, says "Step in."

Word Search

G	T	F	H	D	**B**	**O**	**A**	**T**	M
N	Y	B	**D**	H	I	R	**W**	W	M
P	W	P	**O**	P	S	S	**A**	**P**	R
U	**B**	**L**	**U**	**E**	B	L	**T**	**E**	E
R	H	**F**	**E**	**R**	**R**	**Y**	**E**	**N**	C
S	C	J	S	C	G	O	**R**	**N**	P
E	S	U	V	M	**S**	Y	I	**Y**	W
L	O	P	R	S	**T**	S	I	J	R
C	H	B	W	J	**E**	R	A	R	E
N	V	K	B	L	**P**	I	F	N	L

Word Match

ferry: to carry across water in a boat · water: a river, lake or sea · boatman: a person who rows or sails a boat · penny: a coin worth one cent · purse: a small bag for money · step: to walk with one foot · ferry-boat: a boat that carries people across water · across: from one side to the other

Yes or No? & ABC Order

1. Yes · 2. Yes · 3. No · 4. No · 5. Yes · 6. Yes. ABC order: boat, ferry, penny, step, water.

Missing Words

Ferry, Do, penny, you, purse, blue

Rhyme Hunt & Syllables

do: you · blue: do · purse: nurse · boat: coat · penny: many · eyes: skies. Claps: ferry 2, water 2, boatman 2, penny 2, purse 1, across 2.

Put It in Order

the girl asks to be ferried → the boatman asks for a penny → she says she has a penny → her eyes are blue → "Step into my ferry-boat" → "I'll ferry you."

Ideas to extend the lesson

- Act it out with a pretend boat made of chairs and a toy coin.
- Talk about ways to get across a river: boat, bridge, ferry, swimming.
- Read it with "The Rainbow," another Rossetti poem about rivers.

MORE FROM STORYLAND CLASSICS

Find more Christina Rossetti poems with free guides at storylandclassics.com and on YouTube at @StorylandClassics.

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FOR TEACHERS

Standards Alignment

Ferry Me Across the Water ✦ Common Core State Standards, kindergarten to grade 2

STANDARDS	WHAT CHILDREN PRACTICE	WHERE IN THIS GUIDE
RL.K.1 RL.1.1 RL.2.1	Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	Let's Talk and Yes or No?; Let's Talk
RL.K.2 RL.1.2	Retell stories and poems, including key details, and show understanding of their message.	Put It in Order and Retell
RL.K.3 RL.1.3	Identify and describe characters, settings and major events.	Let's Talk and Put It in Order
RL.K.4 RL.2.4	Understand words and phrases, including rhyme, rhythm and words that appeal to the senses.	Word Match; Rhyme Hunt (rhyme and repeated lines)
RL.2.5	Recognize types of texts and describe the overall structure (beginning, middle and end).	Put It in Order: beginning, middle and end
RL.1.6 RL.2.6	Identify who is speaking and use a different voice for each character when reading aloud.	Who Is Talking?; Read It With Voices
RL.K.10 RL.1.10	Engage in group reading of poems and stories with purpose and understanding.	The Poem and Missing Words; The Poem (reading together)
RF.K.1b RF.K.1d	Understand the organization of print (left to right, top to bottom).	Word Search; ABC Order (letters of the alphabet)
RF.K.2a RF.K.2b	Hear and work with spoken words, rhymes and syllables.	Rhyme Hunt and Make New Rhymes; Clap the Syllables
RF.K.3c RF.1.3	Read common high-frequency words by sight.	Word Search and Missing Words; Word Search
RF.1.4a RF.1.4b RF.2.4b	Read aloud with accuracy, appropriate rate and expression.	Missing Words (read with purpose); Read It With Voices and Read It Three Times
SL.K.1 SL.1.1	Take part in conversations about the text with classmates and adults.	Let's Talk and Meet the Poet (discussion); Let's Talk (discussion)
SL.K.2	Ask and answer questions about a text read aloud or presented through media.	Read-aloud video (QR code)
SL.K.6 SL.1.6	Speak audibly and express ideas clearly.	Read It With Voices and Learn It by Heart; Learn It by Heart (recite)
L.K.1a L.1.1 L.1.1a	Print upper- and lowercase letters and use common position words.	Handwriting Practice; ABC Order (alphabetize words)
L.K.2a L.1.2b	Use capital letters and end punctuation.	Handwriting checklist
L.K.4 L.1.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown words and phrases.	Word Match
L.K.5a	Sort words into categories, connect words to real life and act out shades of meaning.	Word Sort
W.K.1 W.1.1	Use drawing and writing to share an opinion and give a reason.	My Favorite Part
W.K.2	Use a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to compose informative texts.	Try It
W.1.8	With guidance and support, recall information from experiences or gather information to answer a question.	Try It

Codes are Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. Find free read-alouds and guides at storylandclassics.com.