Storyland Classics

FREE POEM GUIDE

From Poems of Childhood (1904)



- ✦ The Poem
- ✦ Try It
- ✦ Missing Words
- ✦ Put It in Order
- ✦ Handwriting
- ✦ Meet the Poet
- ✦ Word Match & Sort
- ✦ Yes or No & ABC Order
- ✦ Read It With Voices
- ✦ 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 “The Duel” by Eugene Field. Every page is ready to print, and no sign-up is needed. Pick the pages that suit your child or class.

ABOUT THE POEM

At half-past twelve one night, the gingham dog and the calico cat sit side by side on the table, wide awake. Then: “bow-wow-wow!” “mee-ow!” They have a terrible fight while the old Dutch clock hides its face and the Chinese plate wails. Next morning there is no trace of either one. Some folks think burglars stole them, but the clock and the plate say they ate each other up!

SKILL FOCUS

Point of view: who is telling the story, and can we trust them?

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.

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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

The Duel



The gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'Twas half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Nor one nor t'other had slept a wink!
The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
(I wasn't there; I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate!)

The gingham dog went "bow-wow-wow!"
And the calico cat replied "mee-ow!"
The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney-place
Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
(Now mind: I'm only telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true!)

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear! what shall we do!"
But the gingham dog and the calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfullest way you ever saw—
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!
(Don't fancy I exaggerate—
I got my news from the Chinese plate!)

Next morning, where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
(The old Dutch clock it told me so,
And that is how I came to know.)

▸ Watch the read-aloud

Scan the code to watch "The Duel" read aloud, or visit storylandclassics.com/duel-guide.

Eugene Field, Poems of Childhood (1904). Public domain.

Name _____ Date _____

MEET THE POET

Eugene Field

1850–1895 ✦ The Poet of Childhood

Eugene Field was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1850. He became a newspaper writer in Chicago, where he wrote a famous column called “Sharps and Flats.” He loved children, toys and bedtime stories, and he wrote so many poems for children that people called him “the Poet of Childhood.” His lullabies, like “Wynken, Blynken, and Nod” and “The Sugar-Plum Tree,” are still read at bedtime today.

Questions About the Poet

1. In what city was Eugene Field born?

2. What job did he have in Chicago?

3. What did people call him? Why do you think so?

Who Is Talking?

The person telling this poem was not there. Read it again, then answer.

1. How does the teller know what happened? Who told them?

2. Do you believe what the clock and the plate said? Why or why not?

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Name _____ Date _____

LET'S TALK

The Duel

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

REMEMBER

1. What time did the fight start?

2. What did the dog say, and what did the cat say?

3. What did people find the next morning?

THINK

4. Why did the old Dutch clock put its hands over its face?

5. Is this poem meant to be funny or sad? How can you tell?

CONNECT

6. What could the dog and cat have done instead of fighting?

NARRATION

Close the book and tell the poem back in your own words. What happened to the gingham dog and the calico cat?

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Name _____ Date _____

TRY IT

The Duel

SKILL FOCUS

Point of view: who is telling the story, and can we trust them?

Write what the gingham dog and the calico cat could say to make up instead of fighting.

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Name _____ Date _____

WORDS TO KNOW

Word Match

Draw a line from each word to what it means.

duel	a small fight or quarrel
gingham	a small sign that something was there
calico	a fight between two people
spat	rolled around
wailed	cotton cloth with a small printed pattern
wallowed	people who break in to steal
trace	cotton cloth with a checked pattern
burglars	cried out loudly

Word Sort: Toys or Things in the Room?

Write each word in the right box.

dog · clock · cat · plate · table · chimney-place · gingham · calico

The two toys and what they are made of	Things in the room

Name _____ Date _____

WORD SEARCH

The Duel

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

WORD BANK

- ☐ DOG
- ☐ CAT
- ☐ CLOCK
- ☐ PLATE
- ☐ TABLE
- ☐ TWELVE
- ☐ CLAW
- ☐ WINK

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Name _____ Date _____

MISSING WORDS

The Duel

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.

calico · fate · mee-ow · sat · wink · you

1. Side by side on the table _____ ;
2. Nor one nor t'other had slept a _____ !
3. Appeared to know as sure as _____
4. And the calico cat replied " _____ !"
5. With bits of gingham and _____ ,
6. (Now mind: I'm only telling _____

Make New Rhymes

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

sat _____ _____ wink _____ _____

fate _____ _____ mee-ow _____ _____

DID YOU NOTICE?

Every missing word comes at the end of a line, and each one rhymes with another line in the poem. Find its rhyming partner!

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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 dog and cat sit on the table. Yes No
2. The fight starts at noon. Yes No
3. The old Dutch clock covers its face. Yes No
4. The Chinese plate is happy about the fight. Yes No
5. Next morning no one can find the dog or cat. Yes No
6. The teller saw the whole fight. Yes No

ABC Order

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

dog cat plate table wink

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.

calico · fate · mee-ow · sat · wink · you

cat _____ think _____

plate _____ bow-wow-wow _____

so _____ true _____

LISTEN

Listen for the sound words: "bow-wow-wow" and "mee-ow." Say them in a fighting voice!

Clap the Syllables

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

gingham claps: ___	calico claps: ___	clock claps: ___
burglars claps: ___	table claps: ___	terrible 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 gingham dog says “bow-wow-wow!”
- ◯ The dog and cat sit side by side on the table.
- ◯ Next morning there is no trace of them.
- ◯ The calico cat says “mee-ow!”
- ◯ The old Dutch clock covers its face.
- ◯ The clock says they ate each other up!

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

Reader | The dog and the cat | The Chinese plate

One **reader** reads the poem. A **dog** says “bow-wow-wow!” and a **cat** says “mee-ow!” The **Chinese plate** wails, “Oh, dear! what shall we do!” Everyone whispers the lines in brackets, like gossip.

TIPS FOR READING ALOUD

Read it like a funny story you heard from a friend. Get faster during the fight and slow down for the surprise ending.

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.

The gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'Twas half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Nor one nor t'other had slept a wink!
The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate
Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.

- [ ] 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 "The Duel" by heart!

by Eugene Field

Name _____ Date _____

Heard by _____

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Name _____ Date _____

HANDWRITING PRACTICE

The Duel

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.

The gingham dog and the calico cat

The gingham dog and
the calico cat

Side by side on the table sat;

Side by side
on the table sat;

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

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FOR GROWN-UPS

Answer Key & Ideas

Who Is Talking?

The teller says, “I wasn’t there”; the news came from the Chinese plate and the old Dutch clock. Answers to the second question will vary.

Let’s Talk

1. Half-past twelve. 2. The dog said “bow-wow-wow!” and the cat said “mee-ow!” 3. No trace of dog or cat. 4–6. Answers will vary (the clock dreaded a family row; it is a funny, tall tale).

Word Sort

The toys and what they are made of: dog, cat, gingham, calico. Things in the room: clock, plate, table, chimney-place.

Word Search

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

Word Match

duel: a fight between two people · gingham: cotton cloth with a checked pattern · calico: cotton cloth with a small printed pattern · spat: a small fight or quarrel · wailed: cried out loudly · wallowed: rolled around · trace: a small sign that something was there · burglars: people who break in to steal

Yes or No? & ABC Order

1. Yes · 2. No · 3. Yes · 4. No · 5. Yes · 6. No. ABC order: cat, dog, plate, table, wink.

Missing Words

sat, wink, fate, mee-ow, calico, you

Rhyme Hunt & Syllables

cat: sat · think: wink · plate: fate · bow-wow-wow: mee-ow · so: calico · true: you. Claps: gingham 2, calico 3, clock 1, burglars 2, table 2, terrible 3.

Put It in Order

sit side by side on the table → the dog says “bow-wow-wow!” → the cat says “mee-ow!” → the clock covers its face → no trace next morning → they ate each other up!

Ideas to extend the lesson

- Find gingham and calico cloth (or pictures of them) and compare the patterns.
- Act out the duel with two stuffed animals, then make them friends again.
- Read it with “Little Boy Blue,” another Eugene Field poem about toys.

MORE FROM STORYLAND CLASSICS

Find more Eugene Field poems with free guides at storylandclassics.com and on YouTube at @StorylandClassics.

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FOR TEACHERS

Standards Alignment

The Duel ✦ 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.

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