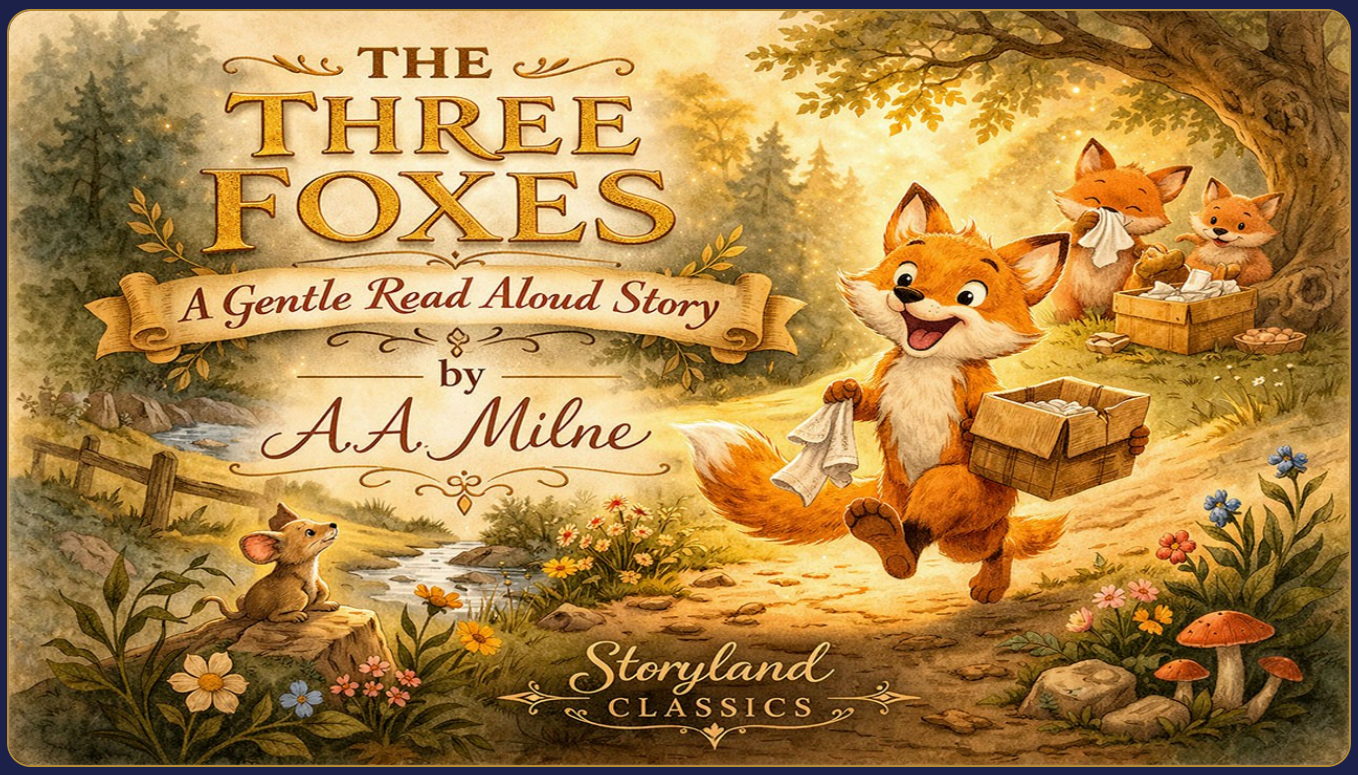
Storyland Classics

FREE POEM GUIDE

From When We Were Very Young (1924)



- ✦ 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 Three Foxes” by A. A. Milne. Every page is ready to print, and no sign-up is needed. Pick the pages that suit your child or class.

ABOUT THE POEM

Three little foxes live in the forest in three little houses. They don’t wear socks or coats, but they do keep handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes. They play with mice, go fishing and visit a Fair. Milne has fun making silly plurals like “sockses,” “mouses” and “wopses” so that every line rhymes.

SKILL FOCUS

Silly plurals: words that end in “-ses” for fun

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 Three Foxes



Once upon a time there were three little foxes
Who didn't wear stockings, and they didn't wear sockses,
But they all had handkerchiefs to blow their noses,
And they kept their handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes.

They lived in the forest in three little houses,
And they didn't wear coats, and they didn't wear trousies.
They ran through the woods on their little bare tootsies,
And they played "Touch last" with a family of mouses.

They didn't go shopping in the High Street shopses,
But caught what they wanted in the woods and copses.
They all went fishing, and they caught three wormses,
They went out hunting, and they caught three wopses.

They went to a Fair, and they all won prizes—
Three plum-puddingses and three mince-pieses.
They rode on elephants and swang on swingses,
And hit three coco-nuts at coco-nut shieses.

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THE POEM, CONTINUED

That's all that I know of the three little foxes
Who kept their handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes.
They lived in the forest in three little houses,
But they didn't wear coats and they didn't wear trousies,
And they didn't wear stockings and they didn't wear sockses.

▸ Watch the read-aloud

Scan the code to watch "The Three Foxes" read aloud, or visit storylandclassics.com/foxes.

A. A. Milne, When We Were Very Young (1924). Public domain.

Name _____ Date _____

MEET THE POET

A. A. Milne

1882–1956 ✦ The poet who wrote Winnie-the-Pooh

A. A. Milne was born in London, England, in 1882. He wrote plays, stories and funny pieces for magazines. When his son, Christopher Robin, was little, Milne began writing poems about the things a small child sees, wonders about and plays. They were collected in *When We Were Very Young* in 1924, and children have loved them ever since. A few years later he wrote *Winnie-the-Pooh*, about Christopher Robin and his toy bear.

Questions About the Poet

1. In what city was A. A. Milne born?

2. Who was Christopher Robin?

3. What famous bear did Milne write about?

Who Is Talking?

This poem is told by a storyteller. Read it again, then answer.

1. Who is telling this poem, one of the foxes or someone else? Which words tell you?

2. Find the line where the storyteller says “That’s all that I know.” Why do you think the poem ends that way?

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Name _____ Date _____

LET'S TALK

The Three Foxes

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

REMEMBER

1. What did the foxes keep in cardboard boxes?

2. Who did the foxes play "Touch last" with?

3. What prizes did the foxes win at the Fair?

THINK

4. Why do you think Milne wrote "sockses" and "mouses" instead of "socks" and "mice"?

5. Would you like to live like the three little foxes? Why or why not?

CONNECT

6. If you went to a Fair, which ride or game would you try first?

NARRATION

Close the book and tell the poem back in your own words. Where did the foxes live, and what did they do?

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Name _____ Date _____

TRY IT

The Three Foxes

SKILL FOCUS

Silly plurals: words that end in “-ses” for fun

Make up your own silly plurals like “sockses” and “wopses.” Write three of them, then use one in a sentence.

Name _____ Date _____

WORDS TO KNOW

Word Match

Draw a line from each word to what it means.

handkerchief	a playful word for toes or feet
stockings	a fun outdoor event with rides, games and prizes
trousies	a small cloth for blowing your nose
tootsies	a silly word for wasps
copses	a silly word for trousers, or pants
wopses	a small pie filled with fruit and spices
Fair	small groups of trees
mince-pie	long socks

Word Sort: Silly Words or Real Words?

Write each word in the right box.

sockses · socks · mouses · mice · wormses · worms · wopses · wasps

Milne's silly words	Real words

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Name _____ Date _____

WORD SEARCH

The Three Foxes

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

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

WORD BANK

- ☐ FOXES
- ☐ BOXES
- ☐ HOUSES
- ☐ FOREST
- ☐ FAIR
- ☐ PRIZES
- ☐ MOUSES
- ☐ SWINGSES

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Name _____ Date _____

MISSING WORDS

The Three Foxes

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.

boxes · copses · mouses · sockses · wopses

1. Who didn't wear stockings, and they didn't wear _____ ,
2. And they kept their handkerchiefs in cardboard _____ .
3. And they played "Touch last" with a family of _____ .
4. But caught what they wanted in the woods and _____ .
5. They went out hunting, and they caught three _____ .

Make New Rhymes

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

sockses _____ _____ boxes _____ _____

mouses _____ _____ copses _____ _____

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. There are three little foxes. Yes No
2. The foxes wear stockings and socks. Yes No
3. They keep their handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes. Yes No
4. They live in the town. Yes No
5. They play “Touch last” with a family of mouses. Yes No
6. They ride on elephants at the Fair. Yes No

ABC Order

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

foxes boxes houses prizes mouses

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.

boxes · copses · mouses · pieses · sockses · wopses

foxes _____ houses _____

shopses _____ wormses _____

prizes _____ noses _____

LISTEN

Milne bends words to make them rhyme: "mice" becomes "mouses" and "wasps" becomes "wopses." Can you make up a silly word of your own that rhymes with "foxes"?

Clap the Syllables

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

foxes claps: ___	handkerchiefs claps: ___	elephants claps: ___
forest claps: ___	boxes claps: ___	fox 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 foxes go to a Fair and win prizes.
- ◯ Three little foxes keep handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes.
- ◯ The foxes go fishing and hunting in the woods.
- ◯ The storyteller says, “That’s all that I know.”
- ◯ The foxes live in three little houses and play with mouses.
- ◯ The foxes ride on elephants and swing on swings.

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

Fox 1 | Fox 2 | Fox 3 | Everyone (the -es words)

Take turns: **Fox 1**, **Fox 2** and **Fox 3** each read one line, going round and round. **Everyone** joins in loudly on every silly "-es" word: *sockses, trousies, mouses, shopses, wormses, wopses!*

TIPS FOR READING ALOUD

Read with a bouncy, sing-song rhythm, like a nursery rhyme. Stretch out the silly words and smile on them. Slow down for the last verse, as if the story is coming to an end.

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.

Once upon a time there were three little foxes
Who didn't wear stockings, and they didn't wear sockses,
But they all had handkerchiefs to blow their noses,
And they kept their handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes.

- [ ] 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 Three Foxes" by heart!

by A. A. Milne

Name _____ Date _____

Heard by _____

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Name _____ Date _____

HANDWRITING PRACTICE

The Three Foxes

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.

Once upon a time there were three little foxes

Once upon a time
there were three little foxes

They lived in the forest in three little houses,

They lived in the forest
in three little houses,

☐ 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?

Someone else is telling it, a storyteller who talks about the foxes as “they” and begins “Once upon a time.” The storyteller has told everything they know, so the poem stops.

Let’s Talk

1. Their handkerchiefs. 2. A family of mouses (mice). 3. Three plum-puddings and three mince-pies. 4–6. Answers will vary (the silly words make every line rhyme and make the poem funny).

Word Sort

Milne’s silly words: sockses, mouses, wormses, wopses. Real words: socks, mice, worms, wasps.

Word Search

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

Word Match

handkerchief: a small cloth for blowing your nose · stockings: long socks · trousies: a silly word for trousers, or pants · tootsies: a playful word for toes or feet · copses: small groups of trees · wopses: a silly word for wasps · Fair: a fun outdoor event with rides, games and prizes · mince-pie: a small pie filled with fruit and spices

Yes or No? & ABC Order

1. Yes · 2. No · 3. Yes · 4. No · 5. Yes · 6. Yes. ABC order: boxes, foxes, houses, mouses, prizes.

Missing Words

sockses, boxes, mouses, copses, wopses

Rhyme Hunt & Syllables

foxes: boxes · houses: mouses · shopses: copses · wormses: wopses · prizes: pieses · noses: sockses. Claps: foxes 2, handkerchiefs 3, elephants 3, forest 2, boxes 2, fox 1.

Put It in Order

handkerchiefs in boxes → three little houses and playing with mouses → fishing and hunting → the Fair and prizes → elephants and swings → “That’s all that I know.”

Ideas to extend the lesson

- Make a list of your own silly plurals: one hat, two hatses! Read them to a friend.
- Count by threes: three foxes, three houses, three wormses, three wopses, three puddings. How many things in all?
- Read it with “Puppy and I” and compare the animals in the two poems.

MORE FROM STORYLAND CLASSICS

Find more A. A. Milne poems with free guides at storylandclassics.com and on YouTube at @StorylandClassics.

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FOR TEACHERS

Standards Alignment

The Three Foxes ✦ 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.K.1c L.1.1 L.1.1a	Print upper- and lowercase letters and use common position words.	Handwriting Practice; Word Sort; 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
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.