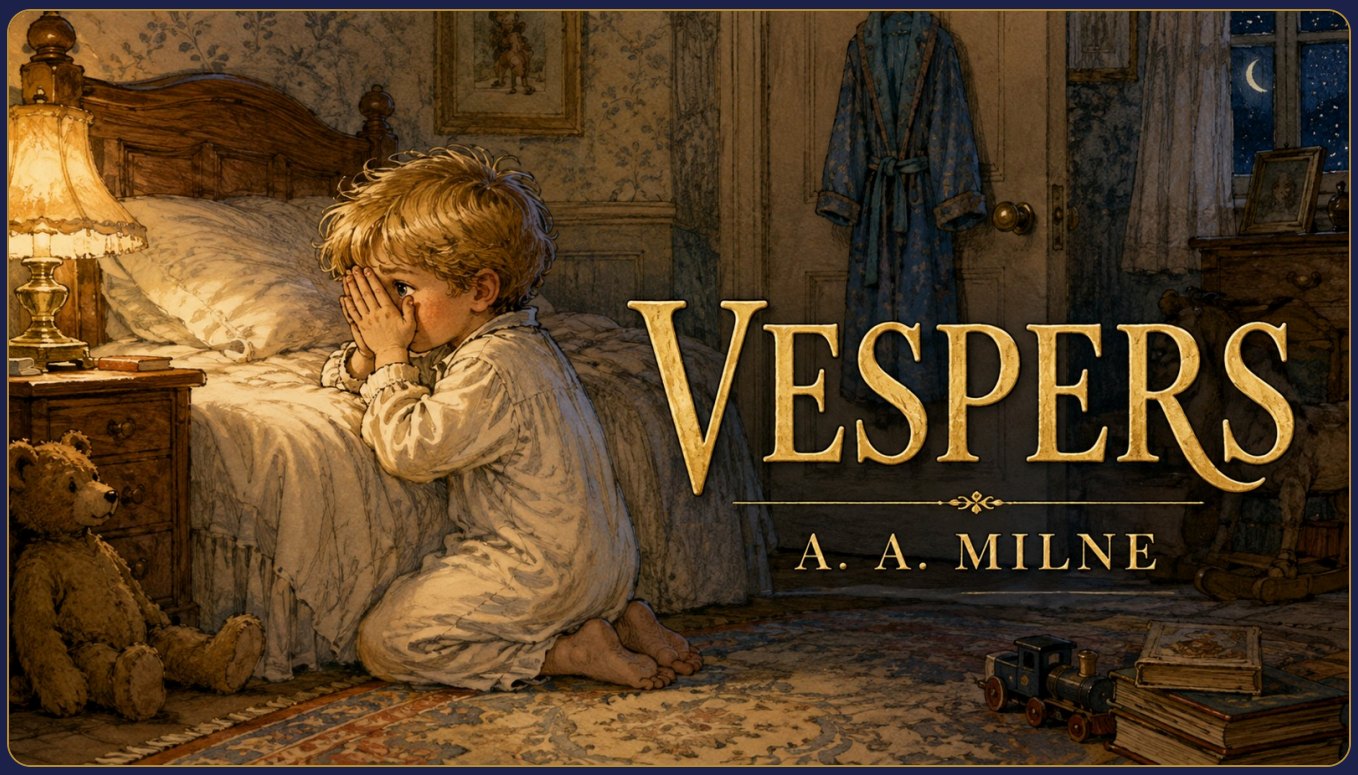
Storyland Classics

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 “Vespers” 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

It is bedtime, and Christopher Robin kneels by his bed to say his prayers. But his thoughts keep wandering: to his bath, to Nanny’s blue dressing-gown on the door, to his own dressing-gown with a hood he can hide in. The quiet first and last verses are told by someone watching him, and the middle verses are Christopher Robin’s own thoughts.

SKILL FOCUS

Narrator and character: the poem has two voices

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

Vespers



Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.

God bless Mummy. I know that's right.
Wasn't it fun in the bath to-night?
The cold's so cold, and the hot's so hot.
Oh! God bless Daddy—I quite forgot.

If I open my fingers a little bit more,
I can see Nanny's dressing-gown on the door.
It's a beautiful blue, but it hasn't a hood.
Oh! God bless Nanny and make her good.

Mine has a hood, and I lie in bed,
And pull the hood right over my head,
And I shut my eyes, and I curl up small,
And nobody knows that I'm there at all.

Oh! Thank you, God, for a lovely day.
And what was the other I had to say?
I said "Bless Daddy," so what can it be?
Oh! Now I remember it. God bless Me.

Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.

▸ Watch the read-aloud

Scan the code to watch "Vespers" read aloud, or visit storylandclassics.com/vespers.

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?

Two voices are in this poem. Write **N** for the narrator who is watching, or **C** for Christopher Robin's own thoughts, next to each line.

"Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed."	☐
"Wasn't it fun in the bath to-night?"	☐
"I can see Nanny's dressing-gown on the door."	☐
"Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!"	☐
"And nobody knows that I'm there at all."	☐
"Christopher Robin is saying his prayers."	☐

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Name _____ Date _____

LET'S TALK

Vespers

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

REMEMBER

1. Where does Christopher Robin kneel?

2. What does he see when he opens his fingers?

3. What does his own dressing-gown have that Nanny's doesn't?

THINK

4. Christopher Robin keeps forgetting what to say. Why do you think his thoughts wander?

5. Why do the first and last verses ask us to "Hush"?

CONNECT

6. What do you do at bedtime? What do you think about as you fall asleep?

NARRATION

Close the book and tell the poem back in your own words. What was Christopher Robin doing, and what did he think about along the way?

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Name _____ Date _____

TRY IT

Vespers

SKILL FOCUS

Narrator and character: the poem has two voices

Christopher Robin thinks about the bath and Nanny's dressing-gown. Write about something you think about at bedtime.

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Name _____ Date _____

WORDS TO KNOW

Word Match

Draw a line from each word to what it means.

kneels	be very quiet
droops	a soft cover for the head
hush	rests on the knees
dares	make yourself small and round
dressing-gown	a robe worn over pajamas
hood	hangs down low
Nanny	a person who helps care for children
curl up	is brave enough to

Word Sort: People or Things?

Write each word in the right box.

Mummy · dressing-gown · Daddy · hood · Nanny · bed · Christopher Robin · door

People	Things

Name _____ Date _____

WORD SEARCH

Vespers

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

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

WORD BANK

- [ ] BED
- [ ] HOOD
- [ ] DADDY
- [ ] MUMMY
- [ ] NANNY
- [ ] BATH
- [ ] DOOR
- [ ] DAY

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Name _____ Date _____

MISSING WORDS

Vespers

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.

all | door | forgot | head | prayers | to-night

1. Droops on the little hands little gold _____ .
2. Christopher Robin is saying his _____ .
3. Wasn't it fun in the bath _____ ?
4. Oh! God bless Daddy—I quite _____ .
5. I can see Nanny's dressing-gown on the _____ .
6. And nobody knows that I'm there at _____ .

Make New Rhymes

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

head _____ _____ prayers _____ _____

to-night _____ _____ forgot _____ _____

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. Christopher Robin kneels at the foot of the bed. Yes No
2. He forgets to bless Daddy at first. Yes No
3. Nanny's dressing-gown is red. Yes No
4. Christopher Robin's dressing-gown has a hood. Yes No
5. He thanks God for a lovely day. Yes No
6. He shouts his prayers very loudly. Yes No

ABC Order

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

bed hood daddy mummy nanny

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.

all · door · forgot · head · prayers · to-night

bed _____ dares _____

right _____ hot _____

more _____ small _____

LISTEN

This poem rhymes in pairs, like a lullaby. Read it very softly and listen for the rhyme at the end of every two lines.

Clap the Syllables

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

prayers claps: ___	Christopher claps: ___	Nanny claps: ___
beautiful claps: ___	bed claps: ___	remember 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.

- ◯ He sees Nanny's blue dressing-gown on the door.
- ◯ Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed.
- ◯ He remembers at last: "God bless Me."
- ◯ He thinks about his bath: the cold's so cold, and the hot's so hot.
- ◯ He thinks about hiding in his own hood.
- ◯ He says thank you for a lovely day.

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

Narrator (soft voice) | Christopher Robin

The **Narrator** reads the first and last verses in a whisper. **Christopher Robin** reads the middle verses as if he is thinking out loud, a little sleepy and easily distracted. Everyone whispers "Hush! Hush!" together.

TIPS FOR READING ALOUD

This is a quiet poem, perfect for bedtime. Read slowly and softly. Let Christopher Robin's voice perk up on "Oh!" each time he remembers something, then settle back down.

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.

Little Boy kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.

- [ ] 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 “Vespers” by heart!

by A. A. Milne

Name _____ Date _____

Heard by _____

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Name _____ Date _____

HANDWRITING PRACTICE

Vespers

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.

Thank you for a lovely day.

Thank you

for a lovely day.

Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!

Hush! Hush!

Whisper who dares!

☐ 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?

Narrator: “Little Boy kneels…”, “Hush! Hush!…” and “Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.” · Christopher Robin: the bath, Nanny’s dressing-gown and “nobody knows that I’m there at all.”

Let’s Talk

1. At the foot of his bed. 2. Nanny’s blue dressing-gown on the door. 3. A hood. 4–6. Answers will vary (he is sleepy and his thoughts drift; the narrator wants us to be quiet so we don’t disturb him).

Word Sort

People: Mummy, Daddy, Nanny, Christopher Robin. Things: dressing-gown, hood, bed, door.

Word Search

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

Word Match

kneels: rests on the knees · droops: hangs down low · hush: be very quiet · dares: is brave enough to · dressing-gown: a robe worn over pajamas · hood: a soft cover for the head · Nanny: a person who helps care for children · curl up: make yourself small and round

Yes or No? & ABC Order

1. Yes · 2. Yes · 3. No · 4. Yes · 5. Yes · 6. No. ABC order: bed, daddy, hood, mummy, nanny.

Missing Words

head, prayers, to-night, forgot, door, all

Rhyme Hunt & Syllables

bed: head · dares: prayers · right: to-night · hot: forgot · more: door · small: all. Claps: prayers 1, Christopher 3, Nanny 2, beautiful 3, bed 1, remember 3.

Put It in Order

kneels at the foot of the bed → thinks about his bath → sees Nanny’s dressing-gown → thinks about hiding in his hood → thanks for a lovely day → remembers “God bless Me.”

Ideas to extend the lesson

- Make a “Thank You for a Lovely Day” page: draw and write one happy thing from your day.
- Talk about bedtime routines. Put your own bedtime steps in order.
- Read it with “Halfway Down” and “The Island” and compare Milne’s quiet, thinking 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

Vespers ✦ 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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