

Grades 3 and up. MY SHADOW by Robert Louis Stevenson. Directions. Print. Read the poem. Study the poem.. Note: For younger children, just read the poem, talk about it, illustrate it or part of it, and act it out. **p.1.**

MY SHADOW

1st stanza:

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

2nd stanza:

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow,
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

3rd stanza:

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

4th stanza:

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
He stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

- Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894).
Scottish essayist, novelist, poet.

Definitions

arrant - *adj.* Notorious in a way that is disapproved of; well-known. (Line 3, 4th stanza.)

coward - *n.* Somebody who is too easily or too greatly frightened. (line 3, 3rd stanza.)

notion - *n.* 1. An idea, opinion, concept. 2. A vague understanding or impression. (Line 1, 3rd stanza.)

nurse - **nursie** - *n.* A person's nurse, caretaker, or babysitter. Robert Louis Stevenson had a nurse nicknamed "Cummie." Her name was Alison Cunningham and he dedicated "A Child's Garden of Verses" to her, "My second mother, my first wife." (Line 4, 3rd stanza.)

shadow - *n.* A darkened shape on a surface that falls behind somebody or something blocking light. (line 1, 1st stanza; line 4, 3rd stanza; line 3, 4th stanza.)

quatrain - *n.* Any stanza unit of 4 lines, whether rhymed or unrhymed. The quatrain is the most common stanza form in English poetry.

stanza - *n.* A number of lines of verse forming a separate unit within a poem.

couplet: *n.* Many poems contain couplets. 1. A closed couplet: two lines that rhyme, one after the other, usually equal in length, and form a complete sentence or unit of meaning; and/or 2. An open couplet: two lines that rhyme but are separated by other lines in between.

RHYMES & POETRY

rhyme pattern: Every poem has a rhyme pattern. Each line is given a letter in the alphabet. When two lines rhyme, the letter is the same.

couplets: Many poems contain couplets - two lines that rhyme, one after the other, usually equal in length, and form a complete sentence or unit of meaning (called a closed couplet); or two lines that rhyme but are separated by other lines in between (called an open couplet). *Example of two closed couplets from the poem, "My Shadow:"* (Lines 1 & 2 rhyme and lines 3 & 4 rhyme.)

MY SHADOW

1st stanza:

	<u>rhyme pattern</u>
I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,	a
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.	a
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;	b
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.	b

2nd stanza:

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow,	c
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;	c
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,	d
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.	d

3rd stanza:

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,	e
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.	e
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;	f
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!	f

4th stanza:

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,	g
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;	g
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,	h
He stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.	h

- Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)/Scottish essayist, novelist, poet.

RHYMES & POETRY

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Rhyme Pattern cont'd.

NAME _____

Rhyme pattern in the poem:

The poem "My Shadow" has 4 quatrain stanzas containing 2 rhyming closed couplets in each stanza. Lines 1 & 2 rhyme and lines 3 & 4 rhyme in each stanza. *Examples:*

1st stanza: aabb; aa - me, see; bb - head, bed.

2nd stanza: ccdd; cc - grow, slow; dd - ball, all.

3rd stanza: eeff; ee - play, way; ff - see. me.

4th stanza: gghh; gg - up, buttercup; hh - sleepy-head, bed..

perfect rhyme: Sometimes called exact, full or true, this rhyme is the typical rhyme where the ending sounds match. Examples are cat and hat, egg and beg, ink and pink, boo and true, soap and dope. Write the rhyming words from the poem.

1st stanza: _____

2nd stanza: _____

3rd stanza: _____

4th stanza: _____

RHYMES & POETRY

Grades 3 and up. MY SHADOW by Robert Louis Stevenson. Syllables. p.5.

MY SHADOW

1st stanza:

	<u>syllables</u>
I <u>have</u> a <u>lit-tle</u> <u>sha-dow</u> <u>that</u> <u>goes</u> <u>in</u> and <u>out</u> with <u>me</u> ,	14
And <u>what</u> <u>can</u> <u>be</u> the <u>use</u> of <u>him</u> is <u>more</u> than <u>I</u> can <u>see</u> .	14
He is <u>ver-y</u> , <u>ver-y</u> <u>like</u> me <u>from</u> the <u>heels</u> <u>up</u> to the <u>head</u> ;	15
And I <u>see</u> him <u>jump</u> <u>be-fore</u> me, when I <u>jump</u> <u>in-to</u> my <u>bed</u> .	15

2nd stanza:

The <u>fun-niest</u> <u>thing</u> <u>a-bout</u> him <u>is</u> the <u>way</u> he <u>likes</u> to <u>grow</u> ,	14
Not at <u>all</u> like <u>pro-per</u> <u>children</u> , <u>which</u> is <u>al-ways</u> <u>ver-y</u> <u>slow</u> ;	15
For he <u>some-times</u> <u>shoots</u> <u>up</u> <u>tall-er</u> like an <u>in-dia-rub-ber</u> <u>ball</u> ,	15
And he <u>some-times</u> <u>gets</u> so <u>lit-tle</u> <u>that</u> there's <u>none</u> of <u>him</u> at <u>all</u> .	15

3rd stanza:

He <u>has-n't</u> <u>got</u> a <u>no-tion</u> of <u>how</u> <u>chil-dren</u> <u>ought</u> to <u>play</u> ,	14
And can <u>on-ly</u> <u>make</u> a <u>fool</u> of <u>me</u> in <u>eve-ry</u> <u>sort</u> of <u>way</u> .	15
He <u>stays</u> so <u>close</u> <u>be-side</u> me, <u>he's</u> a <u>cow-ard</u> <u>you</u> can <u>see</u> ;	14
I'd think <u>shame</u> to <u>stick</u> to <u>nur-sie</u> as that <u>sha-dow</u> <u>sticks</u> to <u>me</u> !	15

4th stanza:

One <u>morn-ing</u> , <u>ver-y</u> <u>ear-ly</u> , <u>be-fore</u> the <u>sun</u> was <u>up</u> ,	13
I <u>rose</u> and <u>found</u> the <u>shin-ing</u> <u>dew</u> on <u>eve-ry</u> <u>but-ter-cup</u> ;	14
But my <u>laz-y</u> <u>lit-tle</u> <u>sha-dow</u> , <u>like</u> an <u>ar-rant</u> <u>sleep-y-head</u> ,	15
He <u>stayed</u> at <u>home</u> <u>be-hind</u> me and was <u>fast</u> <u>a-sleep</u> in <u>bed</u> .	14

- Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)/Scottish essayist, novelist, poet.

syllable - *n.* syllables - *n.pl.* 1. A unit of spoken language that consists of one or more vowel sounds alone, a syllabic consonant alone, or any of these with one or more consonant sounds. 2. One or more letters in a word that roughly correspond to a syllable of spoken language. Syllables are accented or unaccented in words or parts of words.

RHYMES & POETRY

Grades 3 and up. MY SHADOW by Robert Louis Stevenson. Meter. p.6.

meter - *n.* An arranged pattern of natural rhythm in a line of verse, having accentual patterns of long and short syllables. Accented words or parts of words are underlined; unaccented words are not underlined. Symbols used are . for an unaccented word or part of a word, and / for an accented word or a part of a word.

1st stanza:

. / . / . / . / . / . / (line 1; 7 iambs.)
. / . / . / . / . / . / (line 2; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . / . / . / (line 3; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . . / . / . / (line 4; 6 iambs.)

2nd stanza:

. / . / . / . / . / . / (line 1; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . / . / . / (line 2; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . / . / . / (line 3; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . / . / . / (line 4; 7 iambs.)

3rd stanza:

. / . / . / . / . / . / (line 1; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . / . / . / (line 2; 7 iambs.)
. / . / . / . / . / . / (line 3; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . . / . / . / (line 4; 6 iambs)

4th stanza:

. / . / . / . . / . / . / (line 1, 6 iambs)
. / . / . / . / . / . / (line 2; 7 iambs.)
. . / . / . / . / . / . / (line 3; 7 iambs.)
. / . / . / . . / . / . / (line 4; 6 iambs)

iamb - *n.* A metrical foot in poetry, consisting of one short or unstressed syllable or group followed by one long stressed syllable, for example, the word "to-day" has one iamb (. /).

Grades 3 and up. MY SHADOW cont'd. Questions.

p.7.

Directions. Print out. Read the poem. Answer the questions using the "blank lined answer form" on pp.8 or 9. Print out as many pages as you need to answer the questions. Make sure you number your answers. Check what you have written with the answers on page 10.

QUESTIONS:

1st stanza:

1. Where does the shadow go and with whom? (Read the line 1.)
2. Does the person in the poem think the shadow is important? (Read line 2.)
3. What happens when the person in the poem jumps on the bed? (Read line 4.)

2nd stanza:

1. What is the funniest thing about the shadow? (Read line 1.)
- 2.a. Does the shadow grow like children? 2.b. How do children grow? (Read line 2.)
- 3.a. How does the shadow grow? When the shadow shoots up tall, what is it like? (Read line 3.) 3.b. When it is small, what is it like? (Read line 4.)

3rd stanza:

1. Does the shadow know how children ought to play? (Read line 1.)
2. Who does the shadow stick close to and seem like? (Read line 3.)
3. How would the person in the poem feel about sticking close to his nurse the way his shadow does? (Read line 4.)

4th stanza:

1. What happened to the shadow before the sun was up? (Read the 4th stanza.)

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever seen your shadow? When? Where?
2. What does "arrant" mean? (Line 3, 4th stanza.) (See definitions)
3. What is a notion? (Line 1, 3rd stanza.) (See definitions)
4. Who is "nursie"? (Line 4, 3rd stanza.) (See definitions)
5. What is a "couplet," "stanza," & "quatrain"? (See definitions)

RHYMES & POETRY

NAME _____

Blank lined answer form with multiple sets of primary-ruled lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for writing.

RHYMES & POETRY

Check your answers with the answers here.

1st stanza:

1. The shadow goes in and out with the person in the poem. (Line 1.)
2. No, he does not see of what use the shadow is. (Line 2.)
3. He sees the shadow jump before him. (Line 4.)

2nd stanza:

1. The way he grows. (Line 1.)
- 2.a. No; 2.b. Slow. (Line 2.)
- 3.a. An India-rubber ball (balls bounce high) (Line 3.); 3.b. None of him at all. (Line 4.)

Note: Shadows can vary in size from almost nothing to very big.

3rd stanza:

1. No, he hasn't a notion or idea. (Line 1.)
2. He stays so close to the person in the poem he seems like a coward. (Line 3.)
3. He'd feel ashamed. ((Line 4.)

4th stanza:

1. It could not be seen, unavailable like someone home in bed sleeping. (Line 4.)

General Answers About The Poem, "MY SHADOW":

1. You have to answer this question.
- 2-5. See definitions for "arrant," "notion," "nursie," "couplet," "stanza" & "quatrain."