



How to write *proper* Limericks

by
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(self appointed limerick expert)

Most limericks find no public praise,
For turning of a priceless phrase,
Some folks do not,
Like them a lot,
Nor often find them in essays.

So then found I (though somewhat late),
A limerick's syllables abate,
To match just so,
You need to show,
Lines one and two and five are eight.

That leaves lines three and four to go,
Those should be rhymed as well you know,
That's all you need,
But structures heed,
Just keep them shorter for good flow.

Note too my ribald lines are few,
Nor cheapened verse with sapphire hue,
Though Burns they ain't,
Wordsworth might faint,
And Browning never had a clue.

It's Limerick Hall of Fame you might,
Just qualify by what you write,
With poet gift,
Or wordy thrift,
Your rhymes now famous but not trite.

So if you've read this far I think,
We somewhat experts just might blink,
To find we know,
Yet earn no dough,
The stuff we write a waste of ink.

However...

Some limericks you might like to change,
In fact you just might rearrange,
It's such fun sometimes to do,
After all it is from you,
Without this form it might sound strange.¹

Instead of syllables that must be eight,
Try ten; they might work out just really great,
The numbers are of little note,
But balance must be what you wrote,
To keep this Limerick Law be au fait.²

While poets are thought a genteel lot,
And that we abhor those who are not,
It's true we've often been maligned,
Though not at all for words unrhymed,
But for poetry now seldom taught.³

To be in print on bathroom wall
The easy verses to recall
Are those of 8-8-6-6-8,
Whilst not of knowledge very great,
These rhymes most popular of all.⁴

¹Syllables 8-8-7-7-8

²10-10-7-7-10

³9-9-8-8-9

⁴8-8-8-8-8