

Name:

Date:

The Fairies

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen¹,
We daren't go-a-hunting,
for fear of little men.
Wee² folk, good folk³,
Trooping⁴ all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather.



Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home.
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam⁵;
Some in the reeds⁶ of the black
mountain lake,
With frogs for their watchdogs⁷,
All night awake.

William Allingham

Glossary

- ¹ A narrow valley
- ² Very small
- ³ People
- ⁴ Walking like soldiers
- ⁵ The seawater as it flows onto the beach
- ⁶ Thick grassy plant that grows near lakes and rivers
- ⁷ Guard dogs. Dogs that protect the owner.

Decide if the following sentences are true or false.

1. The poem is set in the mountains.
2. The people mentioned in the poem are tall.
3. The men are wearing green hats.
4. The little people are good folk.
5. There are more than one of these little people.
6. The little men could be gnomes, or elves, or dwarves or fairies. The poem doesn't say exactly.
7. They have white owl's feather.
8. None of the little men lives by a lake.
9. The frogs protect them.
10. The frogs keep them awake singing all night.

Answer the following questions using full sentences.

1. Who is saying 'We daren't go-a-hunting for fear of little men'? Why do you think this?

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2. Can you describe the wee folk? What impression do you have of them? Are they good or bad in your opinion?

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3. Why do you think the wee folk have frogs for watchdogs? Do you think a frog would make a good watchdog? Why or why not?

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4. Who or what do you think the wee folk are?

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Learn the poem by heart and fill in the blanks.

The Fairies

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Down the rushy ,
We daren't go-a-hunting,
for fear of
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping
Green jacket, red cap,
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Down along the rocky
Some make their home.
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Of yellow tide-foam;
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With frogs for their ,
All night.....

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The Faires – answers

True or false

T, F, F, T, T, T, T, F, T, F

Reading comprehension

1. Humans 'daren't go-a-hunting' suggesting that there is something a little sinister about these small men.
2. The men's clothes are described in detail: green jacket red cap and white owl feather, and how they troop together suggests a sense of unity. However, where they live and the type of personality they have is mysterious. They could be thought of as 'good' if you enjoy nature or 'bad' if you consider how people are frightened of them.
3. A frog is a perfect watchdog for the wee folk because of their small size and large staring eyes. Also, they stay awake all night leaving the wee men free to rest and sleep.
4. The wee folk could be gnomes, elves, dwarves or fairies. It is left to the reader's imagination.

Teacher's notes

1. Use the PPT to help analyse the language used in the poem before asking the children to tackle the reading comprehension tasks.
 - a. **Rhyme scheme** – find the rhyming pairs e.g. *Glen* and *men*.
 - b. **Rhythm** – do you read the poem at a fast or slow pace? Does it have a steady rhythm or does it go up and down? Which words help give it the rhythm? Can you find words that are repeated? Identify how the pace is fast and exciting and that words like ‘trooping’ give it pace. Also, the repetition of the prepositions gives it a sing-song rhythm e.g. ‘*Up* the airy mountain’ and ‘*Down* the rushy glen’.
 - c. **Imagery** – how do you feel when you read this poem? Can you picture the little men clearly? How are you able to do that? Which words in the poem help you conjure up a picture in your mind? The pace is fast and exciting. Words like trooping give it pace.
 - d. **Colour** – identify the colours used in the poem: green, red, yellow, white, black

2. Have fun learning the poem by heart with these suggestions.
 - a. Divide the class into four teams and allocate a line each, so:
Team 1: Up the airy mountain
Team 2: Down the rushy glen
Team 3: We daren't go-a-hunting
Team 4: For fear of little men.
Team 1: Wee folk, good folk ...and so on.
The second time, give each team a funny accent to do. They will surely want to play a third time with more accents and they'll have learnt it by heart.
 - b. Class mingle. Write the lines out onto separate strips of paper. Distribute. The children must mingle and stand next to the person whose line is before theirs. Read the poem out line by line to check.
 - c. Calligraphy. Assign a line or part of the poem to each child. Have them write it out neatly onto a full A4 sheet. Put the poem together like a jigsaw with everyone's line and beautiful writing styles. Display as a poster in the classroom. Learn two lines off by heart each day. Repeat at start and end of the lesson.

3. Draw a picture or create a painting of the poem to explore the images children picture when they read the poem.

4. Make cross-curricular links by learning about mountains, and perhaps writing a poem about them.