Over the River and Through the Wood Poetry Study Pack

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Poem By Lydia Maria Child

This printable pack includes the full poem, vocabulary activities, poetry analysis, and answer keys.

Over the River and Through the Wood

by Lydia Maria Child

Over the river, and through the wood,
To grandfather's house we go;
The horse knows the way,
To carry the sleigh,
Through the white and drifted snow.

Over the river, and through the wood,
To grandfather's house away!
We would not stop
For doll or top,
For 't is Thanksgiving day.

Over the river, and through the wood,
Oh, how the wind does blow!
It stings the toes,
And bites the nose,
As over the ground we go.

Over the river, and through the wood,
With a clear blue winter sky,
The dogs do bark,
And children hark,
As we go jingling by.

Over the river, and through the wood,
To have a first-rate play –
Hear the bells ring
Ting a ling ding,
Hurra for Thanksgiving day!

Over the river, and through the wood –
No matter for winds that blow;
Or if we get
The sleigh upset,
Into a bank of snow.

Over the river, and through the wood,
To see little John and Ann;
We will kiss them all,
And play snow-ball,
And stay as long as we can.

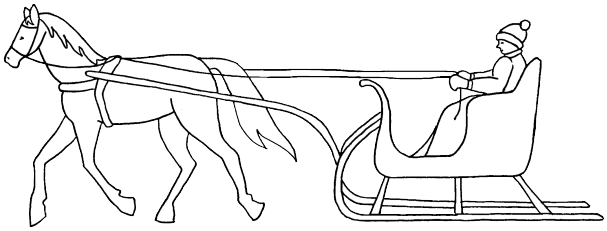
Over the river, and through the wood,
Trot fast, my dapple grey!
Spring over the ground,
Like a hunting hound,
For 't is Thanksgiving day!

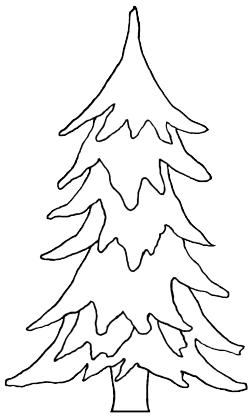
Over the river, and through the wood,
And straight through the barn-yard gate;
We seem to go
Extremely slow,
It is so hard to wait.

Over the river, and through the wood,
Old Jowler hears our bells;
He shakes his pow,
With a loud bow wow,
And thus the news he tells.

Over the river, and through the wood –
When grandmother sees us come,
She will say, Oh dear,
The children are here,
Bring a pie for every one.

Over the river, and through the wood –
Now grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurra for the fun!
Is the pudding done?
Hurra for the pumpkin pie!





"Over the River and Through the Wood"
Poem Discussion & Reflection

Name: _____ Date: _____

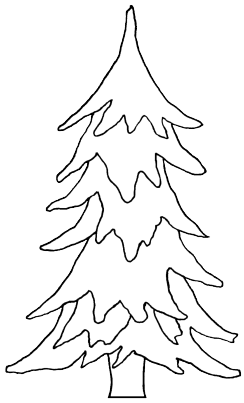
Directions: Read or sing the poem together, then use these questions to guide a class or small-group discussion. Students can write their own answers, or you can record answers as a group on a whiteboard.

1. First Impressions

- What's the first feeling or image that comes to your mind when you hear the poem?
- Does it sound more like a *song*, a *story*, or a *memory*? Why?

2. Family & Traditions

- What is the family doing in this poem?
- How do their traditions compare to yours today?
- Why do you think visiting family felt so exciting back then?



3. Senses & Imagery

- What words help you *see* or *hear* the scene?
- How do you imagine it *feels* outside?
- What sounds do you hear in your mind as it's read aloud?

4. Mood & Message

- How does this poem make you feel — happy, cozy, excited, thankful?
- What do you think the poet wanted readers to appreciate about Thanksgiving?
- Which line or phrase best captures that feeling?

5. Modern Connections

- How might this poem sound if it were written today? ("Over the freeway and through the town…")
- What are some things that have changed since 1844 — and what has stayed the same?

Old-Fashioned Words & Phrases in Over the River and Through the Wood

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions:
This poem was written in 1844, nearly 200 years ago! Some of the words and phrases sound old-fashioned today. Use context clues from the poem – and your own reasoning – to figure out what each phrase might mean.

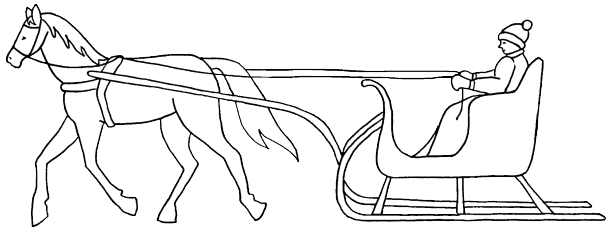
Write what you think each one means in the right column.

Old-Fashioned Phrase	What Do You Think It Means?
"To grandfather's house we go"	_____
"The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh"	_____
"It stings the toes and bites the nose"	_____
"Hear the bells ring, ting-a-ling-ling"	_____
"Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!"	_____
"Now Grandmother's cap I spy"	_____
"Is the pudding done?"	_____
"Over the river and through the wood"	_____

Choose one of the phrases above and rewrite it in your own modern words.

_____

_____



Over the River and Through the Wood
Poetry Analysis Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the poem carefully, then answer the following questions about structure, style, and meaning.

1. Rhyme Scheme & Repetition

a. What is the rhyme scheme of the stanza? _____

b. What word or phrase is repeated for effect? _____

c. Why do you think the poet repeats this line so many times?
_____

2. Sound Devices (check all that apply):

□ Alliteration
□ Internal rhyme
□ Onomatopoeia
□ Repetition

Write one example from the poem:
_____

3. Imagery & Sensory Language

Circle words in the poem that help you picture, hear, or feel the scene.
Write one example of each below:

Sight: _____
Sound: _____
Touch/Feeling: _____

4. Mood & Tone

a. How does the poem make you feel?
(circle one): Excited / Joyful / Calm / Nostalgic / Other: _____

b. What words or phrases create that feeling?

_____

5. The Poem's Message

What do you think the author wanted readers to remember or feel about Thanksgiving?

_____

_____

6. Themes

Check all themes you notice in this poem:
□ Family and tradition
□ Gratitude
□ The beauty of nature
□ Travel and adventure
□ Holiday excitement
□ Other _____

7. Creative Challenge

Write your own short verse about traveling to Thanksgiving using rhyme or repetition.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Over the River and Through the Wood – Literary Device Scavenger Hunt

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions:
Search the poem *Over the River and Through the Wood* by Lydia Maria Child. For each literary device listed below, find one example in the poem and write it down. You can use a line, phrase, or partial quote.

Literary Device	Find an Example in the Poem
Alliteration	_____
Onomatopoeia	_____
Internal Rhyme	_____
Repetition	_____
Imagery	_____
Symbolism	_____
Personification	_____
Mood Word	_____
Allusion	_____

Need a reminder?

- **Alliteration** – Repeating beginning consonant sounds
- **Internal Rhyme** – Rhyming within the same line
- **Repetition** – Words or phrases repeated for effect
- **Imagery** – Language that creates a picture in your mind
- **Symbolism** – Something that stands for something else
- **Personification** – Giving human traits to objects or animals
- **Mood** – The feeling the poem creates (sad, creepy, calm, etc.)
- **Allusion** – A reference to another story, myth, or famous idea

Rhythm, Rhyme, & Music Study: Read It Like Music!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions:
This poem has a strong rhythm — almost like a song! That's because Lydia Maria Child wrote it in a pattern that matches how we speak and move.

1. **Clap or tap** the rhythm while reading aloud:
   O-ver the riv-er and through the wood, to grand-fa-ther's house we go...

2. **Count the syllables** in one line of the poem: _____

3. **Find a rhyme:**
   Write two words from the poem that rhyme:
   _____ and _____

4. **Notice repetition:**
   Which line or phrase is repeated many times? _____

5. **Sing or listen:**
   Play a sung version of the poem:
   - The Good and the Beautiful Kids YouTube Version
   - The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square

6. How does the rhythm or music make the poem *feel*?
   □ Calm □ Joyful □ Excited □ Nostalgic

7. **Creative Challenge:**
   Write a short verse or chorus inspired by the poem:
   "Over the highway and through the town, to Grandma's house we go..."

_____

_____

_____

Teacher Guide & Answer Keys

Poem Discussion & Reflection:

Use this page as a class conversation guide before students complete individual reflection writing or art. It's especially engaging right before Thanksgiving break when you want meaningful discussion without heavy written work.

Old-Fashioned Words & Phrases

Phrase	Modern Meaning
"To grandfather's house we go"	Traveling to visit family for the holidays.
"The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh"	The horse can find the snowy path without help.
"It stings the toes and bites the nose"	The cold air feels sharp or freezing.
"Hear the bells ring, ting-a-ling-ling"	The sound of sleigh bells jingling.
"Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!"	A cheerful celebration — "Yay! It's Thanksgiving!"
"Now Grandmother's cap I spy"	I can see Grandma's hat in the distance.
"Is the pudding done?"	Asking if dessert or dinner is ready.
"Over the river and through the wood"	Traveling through the countryside toward home.

Poetry Analysis Worksheet

1. **Rhyme Scheme:**
    - Most stanzas follow an **AABB** rhyme pattern.
    - Repeated phrase: *"Over the river and through the wood."*
2. **Sound Devices Examples:**
    - Alliteration: "Through the white and drifted snow."
    - Onomatopoeia: "Ting-a-ling-ling."

- Repetition: “Over the river and through the wood.”

3. **Imagery & Sensory Language Examples:**
    - Sight: “Now Grandmother’s cap I spy.”
    - Sound: “Hear the bells ring.”
    - Touch: “It stings the toes and bites the nose.”
4. **Mood:** Joyful, excited, nostalgic.
   Tone Words: Playful, warm, and energetic.
5. **Message:** The poem celebrates family, gratitude, and the joy of holiday traditions.
6. **Themes:**
    - Family and tradition
    - Gratitude
    - Nature and travel
    - Holiday excitement
    -

7. Creative Challenge: Open-ended – look for rhyming and rhythm patterns.

Literary Device Scavenger Hunt

Teacher Introduction:
Encourage students to reread the poem aloud while searching for examples of each literary device. This poem is rich in rhythm and repetition, so many examples overlap – that’s part of its charm!

Younger students can find one clear example per category, while advanced learners can look for two or three and explain how each enhances the poem’s sound, rhythm, or meaning.

Use this scavenger hunt to draw attention to how sound devices create motion – the rhythm of the words mimics the movement of the sleigh and the excitement of the journey.

Extension idea: Have students underline examples in color — one color for repetition, another for rhyme, etc. Or, perform the poem with sound effects (bells, claps, stomps) to emphasize rhythm and onomatopoeia.

Literary Device Examples

Alliteration: Repetition of beginning consonant sounds to create rhythm and flow.

Examples:

- "Through the **white** and **drifted** snow"
- "**Hear** the **bells** ring, ting-a-ling-ling"
- "**Hurrah** for the **fun**, is the **pudding** done?"
- "**Bites** the **nose**"
- "**Over** the **river** and **through** the **wood**" (soft consonant repetition adds to rhythm)

Onomatopoeia: Words that imitate real sounds.

Examples:

- "Ting-a-ling-ling" — the sound of sleigh bells
- "Hurrah!" — a shout of excitement
- "Crack!" or "Snap!" (if included in later verses in musical versions — sometimes added in oral readings)

Repetition: Words or phrases repeated for rhythm and emphasis.

Examples:

- "Over the river and through the wood" — repeated in nearly every stanza
- "To grandfather's house we go" — echoes the song's refrain
- "Hurrah for Thanksgiving Day!" — joyful refrain closing multiple verses

Imagery (Sight): Descriptive language that helps readers visualize a scene.
Examples:

- "Now Grandmother's cap I spy" – vivid visual of arrival
- "Through the white and drifted snow" – wintry landscape
- "Over the river and through the wood" – motion and scenery

Imagery (Sound): Language that appeals to hearing.
Examples:

- "Hear the bells ring, ting-a-ling-ling" – sleigh bells
- "Hurrah for the fun!" – cheerful shouts of joy
- "To grandfather's house we go" – repetitive, musical rhythm

Rhyme: Words with matching ending sounds that give the poem musical quality.
Examples:

- "Play / Day"
- "Spy / Pie"
- "Snow / Go"
- "Wood / Good"

Mood: The feeling the poem creates.
Examples:

- Cheerful
- Joyful
- Nostalgic
- Excited

- Warm
  The poem's steady rhythm and repetition create a sense of eager anticipation.

Personification: Giving human characteristics to objects or animals.
Examples:

- "The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh" – the horse "knows" the path like a person
- "The wind it blows and bites" – wind described as acting intentionally

Symbolism: Using an object, character, or action to represent something more.
Examples:

- The **journey** – symbolizes excitement to gather with family
- The **river and wood** – represent nature and the passage of time
- The **bells** – symbolize joy, celebration, and togetherness
- The **homecoming** – symbolizes gratitude and love

Rhythm, Rhyme & Music Study

1. **Rhythm pattern:** Steady beat of 8 syllables per line (O-ver the riv-er and through the wood).
2. **Rhyming pairs:** wood/good, play/day, pie/spy.
3. **Repeated phrase:** "Over the river and through the wood."
4. **Mood:** Joyful or Excited.
5. **Creative verse:** Open-ended (check for rhythm and rhyme).