

First and Second Grade Poetry Selections

1. LONG, LONG AGO

Winds through the olive trees
Softly did blow,
Round little Bethlehem
Long, long ago.

Sheep on the hillside lay
Whiter than snow;
Shepherds were watching them,
Long, long ago.

Then from the happy sky
Angels bent low,
Singing their songs of joy,
Long, long ago.

For in a manger bed,
Cradled we know,
Christ came to Bethlehem
Long, long ago.

2. MANNERS

By Florence A. Richardson
Water and soap will make you sweet;
Brush and comb will keep you neat;
But "Thank you," "Please," and "Pardon me,"
Will make a sweeter child of thee.

With clothes that have no spot or rent,
With shoes that shine, be not content,
But polish up your manners, too;
Make courtesy a part of you.

3. BEST OF ALL

I love the sweet wildflowers that bloom
Within the woodland way;
I love the little birds that sing,
And carol at their play.
I love the brook - the babbling brook,
The trees so strong and tall;
But my dear Lord, who loveth me,
I love Him best of all.

4. MY FRIEND

By Lela Birky
Before I go to bed at night,
I like to kneel and pray;
And it is very nice to know
That God hears what I say.

I always tell Him, "Thank You, God,
For all Your gifts to me."
I like to tell Him everything,
For He's my Friend, you see.

I never need to be afraid,
For God is always near;
I always try to please my Friend;
And then I never fear.

5. A CHILD'S SONG

I'm thankful for the sunshine bright,
For rain and for the stars at night.
I'm thankful for each flower and tree
And all the beauty that I see.

I'm grateful for our singing birds,
And for my mother's gentle words.
I'm grateful for kind friends and true;
Help me to be a good friend, too.

6. THE WIND

By Christina Rossetti
Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you.
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I.
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

7. TIME

Sixty seconds in a minute;
How much good can I do in it?
Sixty minutes in an hour;
I All the good that's in my power.
Twenty hours and four, a day;
Time to work and sleep and play.

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8. MY GIFT

By Christina Rossetti

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would give Him a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man.
I would do my part;
What can I give Him?
I'll give Him my heart.

9. THE SECRET

How does the busy squirrel know
The place where nuts and acorns grow?
What makes him pick them from the ground
And hide them where they can't be found?

How does he know on winter days
Just where his winter storehouse lays?
We know the secret, every whit;
God tells the squirrel all of it.

10. OVERHEARD IN AN ORCHARD

By Elizabeth Cheney

Said the Robin to the Sparrow:
"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so."

Said the Sparrow to the Robin;
"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me."

11. A MATTER OF TASTE

By Eve Merriam

What does your tongue like the most?
Chewy meat or crunchy toast?
A lumpy bumpy pickle or tickly pop?
A soft marshmallow or a hard lime drop?

Hot pancakes or a sherbet freeze?
Celery noise or quiet cheese?
Or do you like pizza
More than any of these?

11. THE END

By A.A. Milne

When I was One,
I had just begun.

When I was two,
I was nearly new.

When I was Three.
I was hardly Me.

When I was Four,
I was not much more.

When I was Five,
I was just alive.

But now I am Six, I'm as clever as clever.
So I think I'll be six now for ever and ever.

12. THE JOLLY WOODCHUCK

By Marion Edey and Dorothy Grider

The woodchuck's very, very fat
But doesn't care a pin for that.

When nights are long and the snow is deep,
Down in his hole he lies asleep.

Under the earth is a warm little room
The drowsy woodchuck calls his home.

Rolls of fat and fur surround him,
With all his children curled around him,

Snout to snout and tail to tail.
He never awakes in the wildest gale;

When icicles snap and the north wind blows
He snores in his sleep and rubs his nose.

14. GRIZZLY BEAR

By Mary Austin

If you ever, ever, ever meet a grizzly bear,
You must never, never, never ask him where
He is going,
Or what he is doing;
For if you ever, ever dare
To stop a grizzly bear,
You will never meet another grizzly bear.

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15. MARY HAD A PRETTY BIRD

Mother Goose

Mary had a pretty bird.
Feathers bright and yellow,
Slender legs; upon my word,
He was a pretty fellow.

The sweetest notes he always sang,
Which much delighted Mary;
And near the cage she'd ever sit
To hear her own canary.

16. FRIENDS

by Dorothy Aldis

Children who are friends do not
Always see each other;
If it rains or they are bad
They stay home with their mother.

But twice a day and every day,
No matter what the weather.
Little toothbrushes and teeth
HAVE to play together.

17. YOUR PLACE

by John Oxenham

Is your place a small place?
Tend it with care!—
He set you there.

Is your place a large place?
Guard it with care!
He set you there.

Whate'er your place, it is
Not yours alone,
but His Who set you there.

18. THE PANTHER

by Ogden Nash

The panther is like a leopard,
Except it hasn't been peppered,
Should you behold a panther crouch,
Prepare to say OUCH.
Better yet, if called by a panther,
Don't anther.

19. LITTLE TALK

by Aileen Fisher

Don't you think it's probable
that beetles, bugs, and bees
talk about a lot of things-
you know, such things as these:

The kind of weather where they live
in jungles tall with grass
and earthquakes in their villages
whenever people pass!

Of course, we'll never know if bugs
talk very much at all,
because our ears are far too big
for talk that is so small.

20. MOUTHS

by Dorothy Aldis

I wish I had two little mouths
Like my two hands and feet-
A little mouth to talk with
And one that just could eat.

Because it seems to me mouths have
So many things to do-
All the time they want to talk
They are supposed to chew!

21. THE SQUIRREL

Anonymous

Whisky, Frisky,
Hippity hop,
Up he goes
To the tree top!

Whirly, twirly,
Round and round,
Down he scampers
To the ground.

Furly, Curly,
What a tail!
Tall as a feather,
Broad as a snail!

Where's his supper?
In the shell,
Snap, cracky,
Out it fell.

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22. THE WORM

by Ralph Bergengren

When the earth is turned to spring
The worms are fat as anything.
And birds come flying all around
To eat the worms right off the ground.
They like worms just as much as I
Like bread and milk and apple pie.
And once, when I was very young,
I put a worm right on my tongue.
I didn't like the taste a bit,
And so I didn't swallow it.
But oh, it makes my Mother squirm
Because she thinks I ate that worm!

23. WINTER COATS

by Dorothy Aldis

In October, when they know-
That very soon there will be snow

Cows and horses, sheep and goats
Start to grow their winter coats.

Each year they grow them, fine and new
(And fitting very nicely too)
But with no button to undo

Nor pockets for a handkerchief.
And so they have to snort and sniff.

24. MR. RABBIT

by Dixie Willson

Mr. Rabbit has a habit
That is very cute to see.

He wrinkles up and crinkles up
His little nose at me.

I like my little rabbit,
And I like his little brother,

And we have a lot of fun
Making faces at each other!

25. VELVET FIELD MOUSE

by Nona Keen Duffy

Velvet, field mouse, soft and sweet,
Has four pussywillow feet!

Has a soft and silky coat
And a furry, silver throat
See him sit on two hind feet
See him hold the food and eat!
He likes seeds of many kinds
Eats the plumpest that he finds.
Tiny, timid, velvet mouse
Has a haystack for his house.

26. FUZZY, WUZZY, CREEPY CRAWLY

by Lillian Schultz Vanada

Fuzzy, wuzzy, creepy crawly
Caterpillar funny
You will be a butterfly
When the days are sunny.

Winging, flinging, dancing, springing
Butterfly so yellow
You were once a caterpillar,
Wiggly, wiggly fellow.

27. IF ALL THE SEAS WERE ONE SEA

Anonymous

If all the seas were one sea,
What a great sea that would be!
And if all the trees were one tree,
What a great tree that would be!
And if all the axes were one axe,
What a great axe that would be!
And if all the men were one man,
What a great man that would be!
And if the great man took the great axe,
And cut down the great tree,
And let it fall into the great sea,
What a splish splash that would be!

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28. HOW DOTHTHE LITTLE CROCODILE

by Lewis Carroll

How doth the little
crocodile

 Improve his shining
tail,

And pour the waters of the Nile
 On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
 How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in
 With gently smiling jaws!

30. HOLDING HANDS

by Lenore M. Link

Elephants walking
Along the trails

Are holding hands
By holding tails.

Trunks and tails
Are handy things

When elephants walk
In Circus rings.

Elephants work
And elephants play

And elephants walk
And feel so gay.

And when they walk-
It never fails

They're holding hands
By holding tails.

31. FATHER, WE THANK THEE

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

For flowers that bloom about our feet,
 Father, we thank Thee,
For tender grass so fresh and sweet,
 Father, we thank Thee,
For the song of bird and hum of bee,
For all things fair we hear or see,
 Father in heaven, we thank Thee.

32. KIND WORDS

by Henry W. Longfellow

Kind hearts are the gardens,
 Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flowers,
 Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of the gardens,
 And keep them from weeds.
Fill, fill them with flowers,
 Kind words and kind deeds.

33. WHISTLE

by Dorothy Aldis

I want to learn to whistle,
I've always wanted to;
I fix my mouth to do it,
but The whistle won't come through.

I think perhaps it's stuck and so
I try it once again;
Can people swallow whistles;
Where is my whistle then?

34. BUGS

by Dorothy Aldis

I like bugs.
Black bugs,
Green bugs,
Bad bugs.
Mean bugs,
Any kind of bug.
A bug in a rug.
A bug in the grass,
A bug on the sidewalk,
A bug on the glass,
I like bugs.

Round bugs,
Shiny bugs,
Fat bugs,
Buggy bugs,
Big bugs,
Lady bugs,
I like bugs.

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35. THE ELEPHANT

Author Unknown

The elephant walks
like this and like that.

He's very tall,
and he's very fat.

He has no fingers,
but he does have toes,

And goodness gracious,
What a nose!

36. BOATS SAIL ON THE RIVERS

Christina Rosetti

Boats sail on the rivers,
And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
Is prettier far than these.

37. INDIAN CHILDREN

Annette Wynne

Where we walk to school each day
Indian children used to play-
All about our native land,
Where the shops and houses stand.

And the trees were very tall,
And there were no streets at all,
Not a church and not a steeple-
Only woods and Indian people.

Only wigwams on the ground,
And at night bears prowling round-
What a different place today
Where we live and work and play!

38. IN THE HEART OF A SEED

Kate Brown

In the heart of a seed,
Buried deep, so deep,
A dear little plant
Lay fast asleep.

"Wake," said the sunshine,
"And creep to the light."
"Wake," said the voice
Of the raindrops bright.

The little plant heard;
And it rose to see
What the wonderful
Outside world might be.

39. GOD GAVE ME EYES

Olive Burt

God gave me eyes
That I might see
The wonder of a blossoming tree;
My dolly's face,
My story book,
And how the various creatures look.

God gave me ears
That I might hear
The laugh of brooklets ringing clear,
My kitten's purr,
A violin,
And Mother when she calls me in.

God gave a tongue
That I might know
The flavor of all fruits that grow,
The taste of honey
From the bee,
And good things Mother cooks for me.

I thank you, God,
For making me
So that I hear and feel and see;
And since these good things
Come from You,
I'll use them as you want me to.

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40. THE WONDERFUL WORLD

William B. Rands

“Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
With the wonderful water around you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,-
World, you are beautifully dressed.

“The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree,-
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the top of the hills.

“You friendly Earth! how far do you go
With the wheat-fields that nod and the rivers
that flow,
With cities and gardens, and cliffs, and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of
miles?”

41. THE BROWN THRUSH

Lucy Larcom

There’s a merry brown thrush sitting up in
the tree.

“He’s singing to me! He’s singing to me!”
And what does he say, little girl, little boy?

“Oh, the world’s running over with joy!

Don’t you hear? Don’t you see?

Hush! Look! In my tree,

I’m as happy as happy can be!”

And the brown thrush keeps singing, “A nest
do you see,

And five eggs, hid by me in the juniper tree?

Don’t meddle! Don’t touch, little girl, little boy,

Or the world will lose some of its joy!

Now I’m glad! Now I’m free!

And I always shall be,

If you never bring sorrow to me.”

42. A THANK YOU PRAYER

Author Unknown

For milk to drink and food to eat;
For eyes and ears and hands and feet;
Thank You, God.

For mother, father, and their care;
For our house and clothes to wear;
Thank You, God.

For friends with whom I run and play;
For sun and rain and night and day;
Thank You, God.

For all the things you give to me
Help me to always thankful be.
Thank You, God.

43. THE LAMB

William Blake

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed
By the stream and o’er the mead?
Gave thee clothing of delight-
Softest clothing, woolly, bright?
Gave thee such a piping voice,
Making all the fields rejoice?

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I’ll tell thee-
Little lamb, I’ll tell thee.
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb;
He is meek, and He is mild.
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.

Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

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44. WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, & NOD

Eugene Field

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night

Sailed off in a wooden shoe,-

Sailed on a river of crystal light

Into a sea of dew.

“Where are you going, and what do you wish?”

The old moon asked the three.

“We have come to fish for the herring-fish

That live in this beautiful sea;

Nets of silver and gold have we,”

Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,

As they rocked in the wooden shoe;

And the wind that sped them all night long

Ruffled the waves of dew;

The little stars were the herring-fish

That lived in the beautiful sea.

“Now cast you nets wherever you wish,-
Never afraid are we!”

So cried the stars to the fishermen three,

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

All night long their nets they threw

To the stars in the twinkling foam,-

Then down from the skies came the wooden
shoe,

Bringing the fishermen home:

‘Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed

As if it could not be;

And some folk thought ‘twas a dream
they’d dreamed

Of sailing that beautiful sea;

But I shall name you the fishermen three:

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,

And Nod is a little head,

And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies

Is a wee one’s trundle-bed;

So shut your eyes while Mother sings

Of wonderful sights that be,

And you shall see the beautiful things

As you rock in the misty sea

Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen

three:-

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

45. THE SUGAR-PLUM TREE

Eugene Field

Have you ever heard of the Sugar-Plum
Tree?

‘Tis a marvel of great renown!

It blooms on the shore of the Lollypop Sea

In the garden of Shut-Eye Town;

The fruit that it bears is so wondrously
sweet

(As those who have tasted it say)

That good little children have only to eat

Of that fruit to be happy next day.

When you’ve got to the tree, you would
have a hard time

To capture the fruit which I sing;

The tree is so tall that no person could
climb

To the boughs where the sugar-plums
swing!

But up in that tree sits the chocolate cat,

And a gingerbread dog prowls below-

And this is the way you contrive to get at

The sugar-plums tempting you so.

You say but the word to that gingerbread
dog

And he barks with such terrible zest

That the chocolate cat is at once all agog,

As her swelling proportions attest.

And the chocolate cat goes cavorting
around

From this leafy limb unto that,

And the sugar-plums tumble, of course,
to the ground,

Hurrah for the chocolate cat!

There are marshmallows, gumdrops, and
peppermint canes,

With stripings of scarlet or gold,

And you carry away of the treasure that
rains

As much as your apron can hold!

So come, little child, cuddle closer to me

In your dainty white nightcap and gown,

And I’ll rock you away to that Sugar-Plum
Tree

In the garden of Shut-Eye Town.

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46. THE LAMPLIGHTER

Robert L. Stevenson

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left
the sky.

It's time to take the window to see Leerie
going by;

For every night at tea-time and before you
take your seat,

With lantern and with ladder he comes
posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to
sea,

And my papa's a banker and as rich as he
can be;

But I, when I am stronger and can choose
what I'm to do,

O Leerie, I'll go 'round at night and light the
lamps with you!

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before
the door,

And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so
many more;

And oh! before you hurry by with ladder and
with light,

O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him
tonight!

47. THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

Robert L. Stevenson

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home, and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read,
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away,
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of Story-Books.