A mysterious story poem



Read this **poem** aloud.

The Listeners

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,

Above the Traveller's head:

And he smote upon the door again a second time; "Is there anybody there?" he said.

But no one descended to the Traveller;

No head from the leaf-fringed sill

Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,

Where he stood perplexed and still.

But only a host of phantom listeners

That dwelt in the lone house then

Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight

To that voice from the world of men:

Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,

That goes down to the empty hall,

Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken By the lonely Traveller's call.

> And he felt in his heart their strangeness, Their stillness answering his cry,

While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,

'Neath the starred and leafy sky;

For he suddenly smote on the door, even

Louder, and lifted his head: -

"Tell them I came, and no one answered,

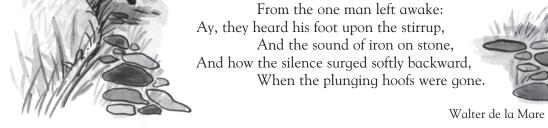
That I kept my word," he said.

Never the least stir made the listeners,

Though every word he spake

Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house





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Answer these questions about the **poem** *The Listeners*. Where does this part of the story happen? When does it happen (day or night)? Which words tell you this? In your opinion, who or what are "The Listeners"? The Traveller speaks in this **poem**. What are his words? How does the first line of the **poem** make you feel? What do you notice about the sounds in the third and fourth lines, And his horse in the silence champed the grasses Of the forest's ferny floor and what does this tell you about the horse's behavior? Make a list of the adjectives that are used to describe the Traveller. Remember: An adjective is a describing word.



Answer these further questions about the **poem** *The Listeners*.

Find the meanings of the old-fashioned words in the poem . Then write down why you think the poet chose these words.
Read the poem again, looking at the lines and listening for the rhymes . How would you describe the rhyming pattern ?
Count the syllables in the first eight lines – can you find a rhythmic pattern ? What is it? Remember : A syllable is a word or part of a word that is one beat long.
Writing practice Choose a section from the poem and write it here. Remember: Join your letters carefully and space your words evenly. Begin new lines in the same places as in the printed poem.
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"Tell them I came, and no one answered,

That I kept my word," he said.

Never the least stir made the listeners, Though every word he spake

Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house

From the one man left awake:

Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,

And the sound of iron on stone,

And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.



Walter de la Mare

This **poem** seems to be part of a longer mystery story. Why is it mysterious? The poem seems mysterious because neither the Traveller nor the reader

know why the people who live in the house are not there.

Listen to your child read the poem, helping where necessary with any difficult words. Encourage him or her to reread the poem, this time thinking about its meaning. Accept any answer that can be justified by some aspect of the poem.







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Answer these questions about the poem <i>The Listeners</i> .
Where does this part of the story happen?
This part of the story happens by a house in a forest.
When does it happen (day or night)? Which words tell you this?
It happens at night. The words moonlit, moonlight, moonbeams, dark, starred, shadowiness, and left awake tell me so.
In your opinion, who or what are "The Listeners"?
The Listeners are ghosts. Answers
The Traveller energies in this near What are his words?
The Traveller speaks in this poem . What are his words?
"Is there anybody there?"
"Tell them I came, and no one answered, That I kept my word."
How does the first line of the poem make you feel?
The first line makes me feel curious to know if anybody is there.
What do you notice about the sounds in the third and fourth lines, And his horse in the silence champed the grasses Of the forest's ferny floor and what does this tell you about the horse's behavior?
There are a lot of "s" and "f" sounds in the third and fourth lines. The horse's eating
made soft sounds in the quiet night.
Make a list of the adjectives that are used to describe the Traveller. Remember : An adjective is a describing word.
grey (eyes), perplexed, still, lonely
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The questions on this page encourage your child to look at the words of the poem carefully and help him or her to develop comprehension skills. Some answers require a subjective response and are acceptable as long as they can be justified.







Answer these further questions about the **poem** *The Listeners*.

Find the meanings of the old-fashioned words in the poem . Then write down why you think the poet chose these words.
smote - hit; dwelt- lived; hearkening - listening; 'neath - beneath; spake - spoke;
ay – always. The poet chose these words because they give the poem a sense of
Answers may vary
something happening long ago.
Read the poem again, looking at the lines and listening for the rhymes . How would you describe the rhyming pattern ?
The poem has a regular pattern of rhyming pairs. Every second line rhymes. Answers may vary
Count the syllables in the first eight lines — can you find a rhythmic pattern ? What is it? Remember: A syllable is a word or part of a word that is one beat long.
,
The poem follows a rhythmic pattern of a long line followed by a shorter line.
Writing practice Choose a section from the poem and write it here. Remember: Join your letters carefully and space your words evenly.
Begin new lines in the same places as in the printed poem .
g F F
Vacanore men nerv
Answers may vary

These exercises relate to the poem *The Listeners*. Defining old words can help improve dictionary skills. Looking at the rhyme and rhythm reveals the poem's structure. Check that your child has copied a section correctly, and check his or her handwriting.



