

ANIMAL DITTIES Study Guide

This guide was compiled by Jewel Winds for free distribution to classrooms, libraries and other centers of learning.

May be photocopied and used for educational purposes in preparing for concert listening experiences.

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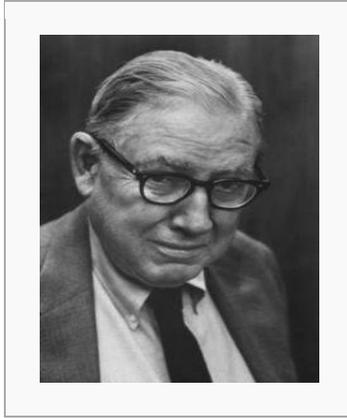
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Please contact Jewel Winds at cconeil@verizon.net with questions or comments about this study guide.

Ogden Nash



Frederic Ogden Nash (August 19, 1902 – May 19, 1971) was an American poet well known for his light verse. At the time of his death in 1971, the *New York Times* said his "droll verse with its unconventional rhymes made him the country's best-known producer of humorous poetry".

Nash was born in Rye, New York. His father owned and operated an import-export company, and because of business obligations, the family relocated often. His family lived briefly in Savannah, GA in a carriage house owned by Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts; he wrote a poem about Mrs. Low's House. After graduating from St. George's School in Middletown, Rhode Island, Nash entered Harvard University in 1920, only to drop out a year later. He returned to St. George's to teach for a year and left to work his way through a series of other jobs, eventually landing a position as an editor at Doubleday publishing house, where he first began to write poetry.

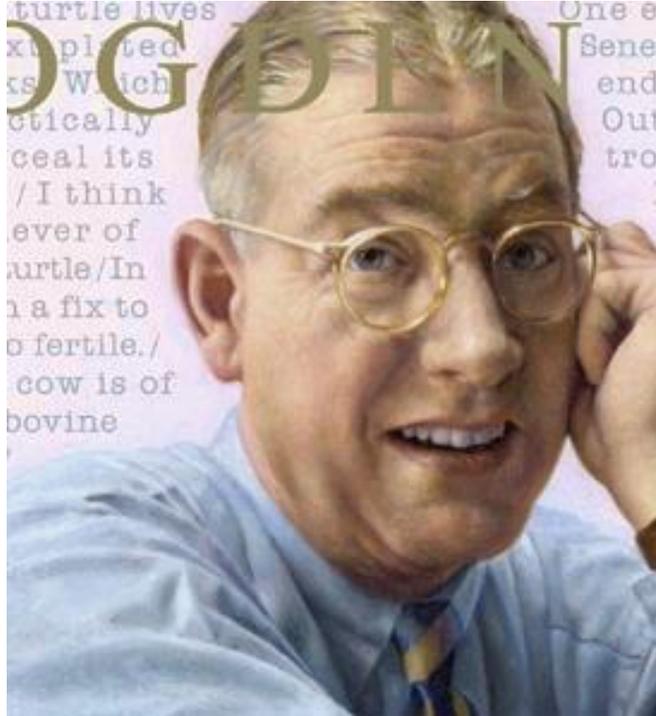
Nash moved to Baltimore, Maryland, three years after marrying Frances Leonard, a Baltimore native. He lived in Baltimore from 1934 and most of his life until his death in 1971. Nash thought of Baltimore as home. After his return from a brief move to New York, he wrote "I could have loved New York had I not loved Baltimore."

His first job in New York was as a writer of streetcar card ads. Nash loved to rhyme. "I think in terms of rhyme, and have since I was six years old," he stated in a 1958 news interview. He had a fondness for crafting his own words whenever rhyming words did not exist, though admitting that crafting rhymes was not always the easiest task.

In 1931 he published his first collection of poems, *Hard Lines*, earning him national recognition. When Nash wasn't writing poems, he made guest appearances on comedy and radio shows and toured the United States and England, giving lectures at colleges and universities. Nash was regarded respectfully by the literary establishment. He was also the lyricist for a Broadway musical and for the 1952 revue *Two's Company*.

Nash and his love of the Baltimore Colts were featured in the December 13, 1968 issue of *Life*,^[3] with several poems about the American football team matched to full-page pictures. Entitled "My Colts, verses and reverses," the issue includes his poems and photographs by Arthur Rickerby. "Mr. Nash, the league leading writer of light verse (Averaging better than 6.3 lines per carry), lives in Baltimore and loves the Colts" it declares. The comments further describe Nash as "a fanatic of the Baltimore Colts, and a gentleman." Featured on the magazine cover is defensive player Dennis Gaubatz, number 53, in midair pursuit with this description: "That is he, looming 10 feet tall or taller above the Steelers' signal caller...Since Gaubatz acts like this on Sunday, I'll do my quarterbacking Monday." Memorable Colts Jimmy Orr, Billy Ray Smith, Bubba Smith, Willie Richardson, Dick Szymanski and Lou Michaels contribute to the poetry.

Ogden Nash



(1902-1971)

American poet and writer

Humorous poems

Made up words for funny rhymes

Misspelled words on purpose

Poems about animals, people, life, baseball, many things

Wrote one-line quotes, lyrics for Broadway shows

Respected as a writer and published regularly

Appeared as a lecturer and as a guest in comedy and radio shows

Picture on postage stamp in 2002 (centennial)

Anthony Plog, composer



Anthony Plog began studying music at the age of 10, and by the age of 19 he was playing extra trumpet with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under conductors such as Zubin Mehta, James Levine, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Claudio Abbado, to name a few. His first orchestral position was Principal Trumpet with the San Antonio Symphony from 1970-1973 and was followed by a 2 year stint with the Utah Symphony as Associate Principal. He left the Utah Symphony in 1976 to pursue a solo and composition career, and while living in Los Angeles from 1976-1988 supported himself by playing Principal Trumpet with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the Pacific Symphony and by occasionally playing in the film studios, for movies such as *Star Trek 1*, *Gremlins*, *Rocky 2*, *Rocky 3*, *Altered States*, and several others.

In 1990 he moved to Europe to play trumpet in professional orchestras in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Stockholm and Buenos Aires. As a trumpet soloist, Anthony Plog has toured throughout the U.S., Europe, Australia, and Japan. He has numerous recordings to his credit, and has recorded many solo albums. In addition to his solo career, Mr. Plog has made chamber music an important part of his musical life. He is a founding member of the Fine Arts Brass Quintet and the Summit Brass, and has performed with such chamber music organizations as the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Chamber Music Northwest, St. Louis Brass Quintet, and others.

Since 1976, Anthony Plog has taught at various institutions around the world, including California State University at Northridge, the University of Southern California, the Music Academy of the West, the Schola Cantorum (Basel, Switzerland), the Malmo Music Academy (Malmo, Sweden) and the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Italy.

Anthony Plog retired from the concert stage in 2001 in order to pursue a full time composition career. He has written many works for orchestra, soloists, chamber ensembles, and opera. He has written several "Animal Ditties". *Animal Ditties #6 for Woodwind Quintet* includes movements titled The Kangaroo, The Fly, The Ostrich, The Canary and Guppies. Each is based on poems of Ogden Nash, and includes the poetry as narration for the music.

Anthony Plog



Living American composer

Orchestral trumpet player in America and Europe

University teacher

Many compositions for brass, also:

Children's operas

Orchestral pieces

Works for Wind Ensemble

Concerti (solos)

Chamber music

Kangaroo



Oh kangaroo, oh kangaroo,
Be grateful that you're in the zoo.
And not transmuted by a
boomerang....
To zestful, tangy....
Kangaroo meringue.

The Fly



God in His wisdom made the fly.
And then forgot to tell us why.

The Canary



The song of canaries never varies,
And when they're molting,
They're pretty revolting.

The Ostrich



The Ostrich roams the great Sahara.
Its mouth is wide, its neck is narra.
It has such long and lofty legs,
I'm glad it sits....to lay its eggs.

Guppies



Whales have calves

Cats have kittens

Bears have cubs

Bats have bitterns

Swans have cygnets

Seals have puppies

But guppies –

Just have little guppies.

Suggestions for Activities

1. Study the Poems of Ogden Nash

Go to the site http://www.ogdennash.org/ogden_nash_poems.htm to read more about Ogden Nash and to read many of his poems, including those about animals.

Visit the website http://writingfix.com/poetry_prompts/ogdennash1.htm for an excellent lesson plan for inspiring students to write poems and light verse in the style of Ogden Nash.

2. Listen to Music of Anthony Plog

Go to the site <http://www.anthonyplog.com/> to read more about Anthony Plog, and to hear sound clips from his children's operas.

Search "Animal Ditties by Anthony Plog" on www.youtube.com to find more examples of Plog's music, including the various works titled "Animal Ditties".

3. Try a Music Composition Activity – see attached lesson plan for grades 2-6.

4. Try the Music Movement Activity – see attached lesson plan for grades PK-1.

Lesson Plan #1 – MUSIC COMPOSITION ACTIVITY

Objective: Students will compose an eight-measure melody depicting characteristics of an animal of their choice.

Time Needed: Approx. two thirty minute class periods.

Materials: Music Composition Activity Sheet (attached – Version A for younger students and Version B for older elementary students), pencils, access to recording of “Animal Ditties 6” or access to internet and following website which contains audio clips:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/recsradio/radio/B000ERVIT6/ref=pd_krex_dp_001_002?ie=UTF8&track=002&disc=001, posters of the poems Kangaroo, Ostrich, Canary, Fly and Guppies included in this study guide, large board or chart paper and appropriate writing implement, crayons or markers for each student.

Procedure:

- Display the posters of the five Ogden Nash poems included in “Animal Ditties 6”. Read each poem to the class as they see the poster.
- Listen to all or excerpts of the five movements of Anthony Plog’s “Animal Ditties 6” (located in part at http://www.amazon.com/gp/recsradio/radio/B000ERVIT6/ref=pd_krex_dp_001_002?ie=UTF8&track=002&disc=001 or in full recording on the cd “Bremen Town Musicians by the Powers Woodwind Quintet, recorded on Centaur Records.
- After students listen to each movement or clip, ask them to tell you a few words that describe the animal in the music. You may want to withhold saying the title of each movement and have students guess what sort of animal is being depicted. (Of course you can’t let them hear the narration if you want them to guess what the animal is, so if you’re using the full recording, be sure to turn it down before the narration.) List all descriptive words given to you on a board, screen or chart paper so that all students can see.
- Ask each student to say what animal is their favorite and to give one descriptive word about that animal.
- Distribute pencils and Music Composition Activity Sheets to all students (choose A or B depending on age and ability level of students.
- Help students follow directions on the Sheet, including writing the animal name, descriptive words and melody notes for their animal.
- Perform melodies for the students on piano.
- Guide students in illustrating a sketch or picture of their animals in the appropriate place on the Sheet.

Assessment:

- 4 – Student completed all steps including writing animal name, at least three descriptive words, melody and illustration.
- 3 – Student completed all steps except the illustration.
- 2 – Student wrote an animal name, at least three descriptive words, and a partial melody (less than eight measures).
- 1- Student wrote an animal name, less than three descriptive words and a partial or no melody.

Extension: Invite a local composer to visit and discuss and demonstrate his or her creative method.

What is your favorite animal?

Please write at least three words that describe this animal.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Use the staff below to write a melody that portrays your animal.

The notes you will use will be *do, re, mi*.

Use a quarter note for each sound and a quarter rest for each silence.

Use a total of two notes, or two rests, or one note and one rest in each measure.

Mi	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Re								
Do	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Illustrate your animal in the box below.

What is your favorite animal?

Please write at least three words that describe this animal.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Use the staff below to write a short melody that portrays your animal.

The notes you will use will be *do, re, mi, fa, sol*.

Use quarter notes, eighth notes and quarter rests.

Use a total of two beats per measure (ie., 2 quarter notes, or two quarter rests, or one quarter note and two eighth notes, etc...) in each measure.

Sol							
Fa							
Mi							
Re							
Do							

Illustrate your animal in the box below.

Lesson Plan #2
Music Movement Activity for Grades PK-1

Objective: Students will reflect musical style by performing motions and body movements.

Time Needed: Approximately one thirty-minute music class, or less.

Materials: Recording of “Animal Ditties 6” on the cd “Bremen Town Musicians” by the Powers Woodwind Quintet, recorded on Centaur Records, or access to the Internet and the following website which contains audio clips:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/recsradio/radio/B000ERVIT6/ref=pd_krex_dp_001_002?ie=UTF8&track=002&disc=001; and posters containing pictures and poems *Kangaroo, Ostrich, Canary, Fly and Guppies* included in this study guide.

Procedure:

-Display the five posters. Read the poems to the class. After each poem, ask students to demonstrate how each animal might move, what sounds each animal might make and any other information they might know about each animal.

-Play excerpts from the each five sections of “Animal Ditties”. Have students guess which animal is being depicted in the recording.

-Play all of each of the five movements; have students demonstrate with motions how each animal will move (ie, kangaroo – hopping; canaries – fluttering high and low; fly – swooping, buzzing; ostrich – jerky head motions, nervous movement; guppies – swimming quickly).

Assessment:

4 – Student participates readily in discussion and physical activity, and performs age-appropriate motions/movements.

3 – Student participates if prompted in discussion and activity, and performs age-appropriate motions/movement.

2 – Student doesn’t participate in discussion but participates appropriately in movement activity.

1 – Student doesn’t participate in discussion or activity.

Extension/Variation:

Add ‘props’ to some animal motions, such as colored scarves, one in each hand, which dart around wildly as the guppies; ribbon sticks as the canaries, which can swirl and fly high and low; pre-made hand puppets for the fly, which can swoop and stop on arms or other objects.