

Poems about Knights

Hugh Chesterman was an English poet and writer. He was born in 1884. Sir Walter Scott was born in Scotland in 1771 — he wrote novels, poems and plays. Both of these poems focus on knights, but Chesterman and Scott have created two very different images in their poems...

Sir Nicketty Nox

Sir Nicketty Nox was an ancient knight,
So old was he that he'd lost his sight.
Blind as a mole, and slim as a fox,
And dry as a stick was Sir Nicketty Nox.

- 5 His sword and buckler were old and cracked,
So was his charger* and that's a fact.
Thin as a rake from head to hocks*,
Was this rickety nag of Sir Nicketty Nox.

- A wife he had and daughters three,
10 And all were as old, as old could be.
They mended the shirts and darned the socks
Of that old Antiquity, Nicketty Nox.

Sir Nicketty Nox would fly in a rage
If anyone tried to guess his age.

- 15 He'd mouth and mutter and tear his locks,
This very pernickety* Nicketty Nox.

Hugh Chesterman

Lochinvar (an extract)

Oh, young Lochinvar is come out of the West, —
Through all the wide Border his steed* was the best,
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none, —
He rode all unarm'd and he rode all alone.

- 5 So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stay'd not for brake*, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none,
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,

- 10 The bride had consented, the gallant came late;
For a laggard* in love and a dastard* in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

Sir Walter Scott



Glossary

charger — horse

hocks — rear legs

pernickety — fussy

steed — a horse that's being ridden

brake — bushes

laggard — someone who moves slowly

dastard — a coward

1 Give two differences between the knights Sir Nicketty Nox and Lochinvar.

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2 marks

2 The phrase "slim as a fox" in line 3 of *Sir Nicketty Nox* is an example of (circle one):

- a. onomatopoeia b. personification c. a metaphor d. a simile

1 mark

3 What does the phrase "dry as a stick" in line 4 of *Sir Nicketty Nox* suggest about Nicketty Nox's appearance?

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1 mark

4 What is the rhyming pattern of *Sir Nicketty Nox*?

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1 mark

5 What do you think the word "dauntless" in line 5 of *Lochinvar* means? Check your answer in a dictionary.

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1 mark

6 Why was Lochinvar in a hurry to get to Netherby gate? What happened when he didn't arrive in time?

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2 marks

7 Would you prefer to meet Sir Nicketty Nox or Lochinvar? Explain your answer.

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.....
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2 marks

Total
out of 10

Poems about Knights



Question Book:
Year 5, pages 22-23

Author / Source:
Hugh Chesterman
Sir Walter Scott

Genre:
Classic poetry

Cross-curricular links:

- Art (designing shields)

Introduction

Sir Nicketty Nox is one of many children's poems published in the early twentieth century by the English poet and writer Hugh Chesterman. *Lochinvar* by Sir Walter Scott is an eight-stanza poem, of which the first two stanzas are reproduced here. *Lochinvar* was first published in 1808 as part of Scott's much longer poem, *Marmion*. *Sir Nicketty Nox* and *Lochinvar* describe two very different fictional knights, giving pupils an opportunity to compare the characters of Sir Nicketty Nox and Lochinvar, as well as the different poetic techniques used by the two poets.

Answers

1. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Sir Nicketty Nox is old, but Lochinvar is young. Sir Nicketty Nox is married, but Lochinvar is not.
2. d. a simile
3. E.g. It suggests that he's shrivelled and wrinkly.
4. AABB
5. E.g. brave; fearless; daring; bold
6. E.g. Because he wanted to marry Ellen. When he didn't arrive in time, she married someone else.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I would prefer to meet Lochinvar because he is loyal and brave, and the poem says there never was a knight like him. Nicketty Nox, on the other hand, sounds boring and grumpy.

Extra Activities

- As a class, compare the form of the two poems. Ask pupils to identify the rhyme scheme of *Sir Nicketty Nox* and compare it with that of *Lochinvar*. How many syllables are there in each line of *Lochinvar*? How does this compare with the number of syllables per line in *Sir Nicketty Nox*?
- In *Lochinvar*, Scott often uses unusual word order and old-fashioned language. Ask pupils to rewrite the poem in prose, using modern language and standard English grammar. Encourage them to use a dictionary to find out the meaning of any words they are unfamiliar with.
- Ask pupils to think about which of the two poems they prefer. They should write a review of their preferred poem, explaining why they like it and discussing any aspects of it that they don't like.
- Get pupils to invent their own knightly character. They should write and illustrate an acrostic poem based on their knight's name. Ask them to include some animal-based similes like those in line 3 of *Sir Nicketty Nox* to describe their knight's defining characteristics.
- Ask pupils to design shields for Sir Nicketty Nox and Lochinvar. Encourage them to think about how they can represent the knights' characters that are mentioned in the poems on their shields.

