



A PLAY WITH WORDS - PLAYING WITH WORDS  
ODE TO LOVE - NOTES

## WHAT IS AN 'ODE'

An ode is a poem.

The ode was a Greek form used in dramatic poetry and theatre. The Greek chorus would follow the movements of a dance while singing the words of the ode. Originally the ode, or the poem, was sung. The root of the word ode in ancient Greek is – 'I sing'.

**The ode is often a celebration of someone or something.**



There are no rules when writing an ode; their structure can be regular or irregular, long or short in length, they can rhyme or not and they can be elaborate in style or simple and familiar.

From the word 'ode' comes other words, for example 'odeon'.

Odeon (also called 'odeum', or 'odea' in the plural) is a name for ancient Greek and Roman buildings built for singing exercises, musical shows and poetry competitions.

They were generally small in size, especially when compared to a full-size open-air ancient Greek theatre.



## Butterfly Catcher's Ode

I am a butterfly catcher.

I catch butterflies.

Butterfly catcher in a fireman kind of way,  
running up the stairs of a burning building,  
knocking the door down with all my masculinity,  
winning the butterfly over with my deep strong sensuous male  
voice:

"Don't worry little lady, I'm the butterfly catcher."

The smooth butterfly catcher,

I glide into the room, slide across the dance floor, give a little twirl  
as I 'check-out' the butterflies.

My prey is in sight, I hone in, bust a move  
and the butterfly is in the butterfly catcher's net.

Just like that!

Butterfly catcher rock star;

I'm mean and they're keen,

I play and they sway,

I sweat and they scream!

The butterflies stick to my guitar  
like flies stuck in shit.

The butterflies are mine, and I'll pluck them  
and pluck them some more  
till my fingers are raw.

The boy next door type of butterfly catcher,

No, he's boring

and obviously doesn't get laid.

The 'In-Love' butterfly catcher,

no,

no, no, no

that hurts too much.

I'm the butterfly catcher,

I catch butterflies.

That's what I do!

Catch butterflies.

# CLASS ACTIVITY - CLASSY ACTIVITIES

- *Read the above ode from the play 'Ode to Love'.*
- *In class, or in smaller groups, discuss the following questions:*

*1. In the ode, what do you think the word 'butterfly' refers to?*

*2. What do you think is a 'butterfly catcher'?*

*3. What are the differences between the types of 'butterfly catchers'?*

*4. If an ode is a celebration of something or someone, 'what' or 'who' do you think the butterfly catcher is talking about?*

*5. What type of person do you think this person is? (Try and use as many adjectives as possible)*

*6. Time – the Butterfly Catcher's Ode is written in the Present Tense. As an exercise, try and change it into the past tense. Nearly all the verbs in the ode are Irregular Verbs.*



## WHAT IS A PHRASAL VERB?

Three of the verbs in the Butterfly Catchers Ode are Phrasal Verbs.

Have you heard of the term Phrasal Verbs?

Phrasal verbs combine verbs and prepositions to make new verbs with a different meaning.

Here is an example: 'To Give' / 'To Give Up'.

Example: My mum gives me money. / My mum wants to give up smoking.

The verb 'to give' in French is 'donner', but 'to give up' means 'to stop doing something',

Phrasal Verbs can be difficult. They are widely used in both written and spoken English, and new ones are formed all the time as they are a flexible way of creating new terms.

## **CLASS ACTIVITY - CLASSY ACTIVITIES**

- 1. with a partner, re-read the ode and try and find the three phrasal verbs. Sometimes the verb can be separated from the preposition.*
- 2. Now try and replace the three Phrasal Verbs with other Verbs.*

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In William Shakespeare play 'Romeo and Juliet', Juliet asks:

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet."(II, ii, 1-2)

Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet meet and fall in love but they cannot be together because their families are at war. Here Juliet is trying to find out what does a 'name' mean.

In 'Ode to Love' there are 15 characters, here are their names:

### Female Characters

Institutrice  
Henriette  
Prune  
Apple

### Male Characters

Rene  
Married-Man  
Doctor Rover / Doctor Roger  
Doctor Tiddles  
Butterfly Catcher  
Mr Nice Guy  
Guitarist  
Lead Singer  
Judge  
Voleur de Balle  
The Chorus

Most of the characters are named after what they 'do' in the play. The other characters are named after certain personal characteristics or what they represent. Some of the names are in English and some are in French.

Example: 'Prune' / 'Apple'

In French we say 'la prunelle des mes yeux' and in English we say 'the apple of my eye'. So we could say that the characters Prune and Apple are very much loved by someone.

Example: 'Doctor Rover' / 'Doctor Tiddles'

In English the name 'Rover' is a common name for a dog. The name Rover means "someone who wanders, from the verb to rove" and it makes a great name for a curious dog that likes to roam. (But my first dog was called Roger, so this character has two names.)

Tiddles is a very common name for a cat. It comes from a very old English verb ,To Tiddle, which means "to use with tenderness; to fondle". A perfect name for a cat that likes cuddles.



## **CLASS ACTIVITY - CLASSY ACTIVITIES**

*In class, or in smaller groups, try the following activity:*

*1. In English re-name everyone in the class. Use your imagination and experiment with different words and verbs, you can always use a dictionary. (I always use the dictionary and thesaurus when I'm writing a play!). Remember to try and base the new name on something that is true to that person.*

*2. Now as a class, you must try and guess which name belongs to which person.*

## **WHAT IS 'RHYMING SLANG'?**

Rhyming Slang is a form of slang in spoken and written English in which a word is replaced by a rhyming word or a rhyming phrase.

Example: 'Apples and pears' are stairs.

Running up the stairs of a burning building. / Running up the apple and pears of a burning building.

The origin of Rhyming Slang is not clear, but we do know it started evolving in London since the sixteenth century. Today Rhyming Slang is in use in everyday life and it is so common that sometimes most people are not aware that they are using it. In France there is 'le verlan' and in England we have Rhyming Slang.

### **How does it work?**

'Adam and Eve' sounds like the verb 'to believe'.

So instead of saying the sentence 'I don't believe it', you can say 'I don't Adam and Eve it'.

'Rabbit and Pork' sounds like the verb 'to talk'.

So instead of saying the sentence 'Are you going to talk all night?', you can say 'Are you going to rabbit and pork all night?'.

But then we shorten the sentence and say 'Are you going to rabbit all night?'"

Therefore:

To Talk = Rabbit and Pork = To Rabbit  
and a new verb is created.

### **Common Rhyming Slang Examples**

There are thousands of Rhyming Slang expressions with new ones coming all the time. Rhyming Slang is very popular in the English street culture, in English music (e.g. Lilly Allen, Rap music) and in English films (especially in the films by Guy Ritchie).



Here are a few example:

To Believe = Adam and Eve

Stairs = Apples and Pears

Look / Having a look = Butcher's Hook = Having a butcher's

Word = Dicky Bird

Years = Donkey's Ears = Donkey's

Lies = Pork Pies = Porkies

To Talk = Rabbit and Pork = To Rabbit

Alone = Jack Jones = my Jack

Face = Boat Race = Boat

## **CLASS ACTIVITY - CLASSY ACTIVITIES**

1. From the above list, try and find the correct Rhyming Slang expression for the following five sentences.

a - I haven't heard a \_\_\_\_\_ about the new gossip.

b - I wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_ her!

c - This weekend, I'm on my \_\_\_\_\_ because my parents and brother have gone on holiday without me.

d - Lesley is a very old friend but I haven't seen her in \_\_\_\_\_.

e - He always tells \_\_\_\_\_ to his parents.

2. With a partner create new sentences using all of the Rhyming Slang expressions, or maybe one very long sentence with all of the Rhyming Slang expressions.

## **CLASS ACTIVITY - CLASSY ACTIVITIES**

1. To write an ode. Use all of the above notes as a base to compose your own ode. Remember odes can be short or long, can rhyme if you want and can use either eloquent language or very simple language. There are no rules!

## FOR TEACHERS

You are more than welcome to read the play 'Ode to Love' with your class and to try and open up the general understanding of the play.

I hope the above notes are useful and interesting. If they are slightly too difficult do not hesitate to adapt them.

I would also strongly suggest that you invite your students to find out a little more regarding the French playwright Georges Feydeau, as his play 'Fiancés en herbe' is central within 'Ode to Love'.

When describing 'Ode to Love' I often refer to the story 'Alice in Wonderland' by Lewis Carroll, which facilitates people's understanding of the play.

Finally if you have any questions or suggestions please contact me.

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