

VICTORIAN ENGLAND: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS



Enjoying A Laugh: : Caricatures and Limericks

WHAT WE LEARNED:

- We learned that caricatures are comical illustrations designed to poke fun at a subject.
- We learned that caricatures are generally pencil or ink line drawings, sometimes with color added, and that all caricatures have one thing in common—exaggeration.
- We explored the lives and art of three of the Victorian Era's most celebrated caricature artists: Harry Furniss, Leslie Ward, and Edward Lear

ART ACTIVITY: The Owl and the Pussycat Sculptures

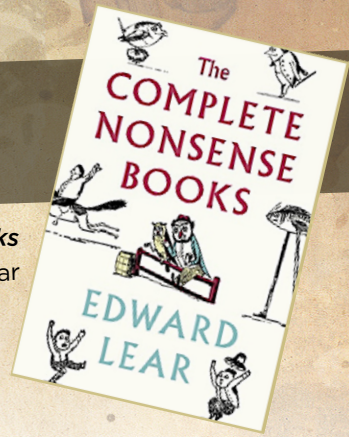
We chortled, chuckled, and laughed out loud today learning about humor during Victorian times. We began our lesson learning about famous 19th-century cartoonists and experimented with making our own funny characters.

This was also the era in which the beloved limerick was popularized. We learned about Edward Lear (poet, artist, and humorist) and read his famous work, "The Owl and the Pussycat." Afterward, your clever students were challenged to create sculptures on the same theme. They used an altered pinch pot method to create the beautiful pea green boats and unleashed their imaginations to form the little owls and kitties. We hope you enjoy viewing them as much as we enjoyed making them!



BOOK Nook

The Complete Nonsense Books
by Edward Lear



A CLOSER LOOK: Harry Furniss

In today's lesson we enjoyed how Harry Furniss "transformed" the rather ordinary looking storybook writer A. A. Milne into a hilariously funny caricature. Do you remember how he exaggerated the author's forehead, enlarging it until it resembled his famous bear's little rounded belly? Remember, too, that he included Milne's pipe, an object he commonly held in serious portraits of himself.

Here Furniss tackles another famous children's author—Lewis Carroll! You may remember that he's the author of *Alice in Wonderland*! Take time to look at both the portrait and the caricature below. As you do, think about these questions:

1. What specific features does Furniss choose to exaggerate (enlarge, elongate, "puff out," change in some way so that it becomes noticeable)?
2. Is there an object Furniss includes in the caricature that could identify Lewis Carroll?
3. The serious portrait by Hubert von Herkomer could be described as dignified or stately. Is that how you would describe Furniss' caricature of the author? Why? What word(s) would you use to describe Furniss' image? What specific details made you choose that description?
4. Now that you've examined Furniss' picture closely, what title would you give his caricature?



CONNECTIONS AT HOME: Leslie Ward



As we learned, Leslie Ward's parents were famous Royal Academy painters (in fact, M&G has a painting by his dad, [Edward Matthew Ward](#)). At first, his parents were not at all pleased about their son's fascination with making caricatures. Of course, after Leslie became one of the most admired caricature artists of the time, their "distaste" for the art form was forgotten! So, when a newsy piece about his famous father was published in *Vanity Fair*, Leslie drew this funny caricature to complement the article!

Since the writers chose to emphasize Mr. Ward's importance as a Royal Academy painter, Leslie's exaggerations of facial features, stance, and clothing were designed to make us (and his father) laugh at taking this importance *too* seriously! As Leslie knew, his father was after all much more than just a "serious painter." For example, notice the handkerchief sticking out of Mr. Ward's back pocket—a funny detail in an otherwise very carefully dressed gentleman.

Your Turn!

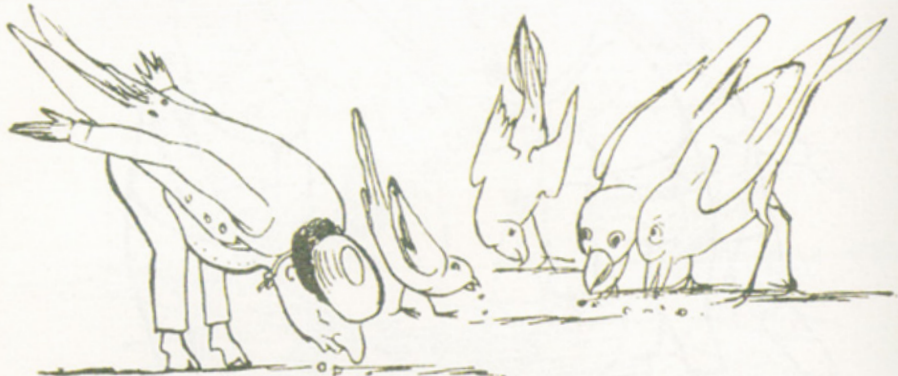
Create a funny cartoon of one of your family members. To get started, have a family brainstorming session (maybe in front of a warm fire or over dinner). First, ask them what they find humorous, odd, or even annoying about themselves: "I'm a worrywart." "I love daydreaming." "I'm always forgetting things!" Next, discuss how you might show those characteristics in a picture (e.g., frowning mouth, wrinkled forehead, half-closed eyes). Finally, before putting pencil to paper take time to review the lesson video on how to draw cartoon faces by clicking [HERE](#). And for additional inspiration on drawing specific expressions click [HERE](#). Have fun and be sure to share your caricature with family and friends!

FOR Parents

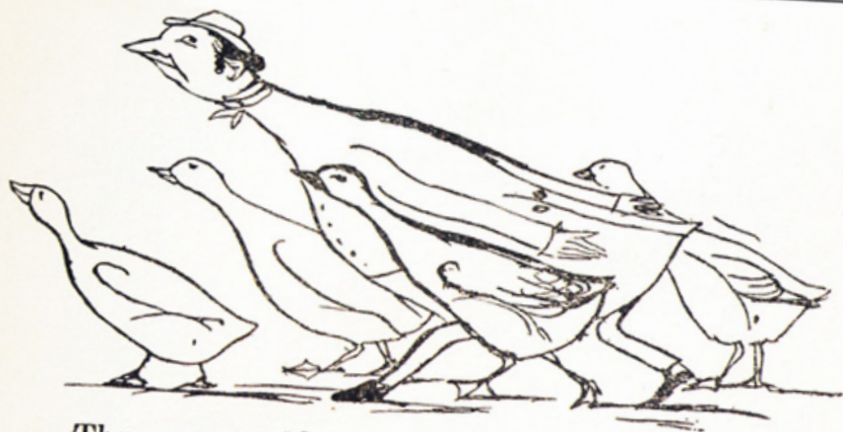
The Victorian era was not only the golden age of children's literature but also of magazine publishing. The satirical weekly *Punch*, started in 1841 by the English journalist and reformer Henry Mayhew, was wildly popular as was Thomas Gibson Bowles' later publication *Vanity Fair*. The popularity of these magazines was in large part due to the caricatures that accompanied the droll political and cultural news articles. The visual commentary provided by Harry Furniss, Leslie Ward, and Edward Lear would raise caricatures into a valued art form, paving the way for the political and cultural caricaturists and cartoonists we so enjoy today.

BLURRING THE LINES: Edward Lear

Remember “The Owl and the Pussycat”? In this wonderful poem Edward Lear has the animals behave like humans—talking, singing, going on an adventure together. This storytelling technique is called **anthropomorphism**. It’s been used in lots of famous children’s books: *Winnie the Pooh*, *Peter Rabbit*, and *Charlotte’s Web* to name a few. However, in some of his limericks, Lear sometimes reverses this technique by having his human characters behave in very animal-like ways. As the examples below illustrate, this technique, known as **zoomorphism**, highlights the humor in each rhyme.



There was an old man of El Hums,
Who lived upon nothing but crumbs,
Which he picked off the ground, with the other birds round,
In the roads and the lanes of El Hums.



There was an old person of Nice,
Whose associates were usually Geese.
They walked out together in all sorts of weather,
That affable person of Nice!

ADDITIONAL Resources

- **How to Draw Super-Exaggerated Cartoons** with Christopher Hart
- **How to Draw a Funny Expression** with Christopher Hart
- **How to Draw a Silly Dad Cartoon** with Christopher Hart
- Listen to a reading of **The Owl and the Pussycat by Edward Lear, Illustrated by Jan Brett**
- Enjoy one of Edward Lear's alphabet rhymes: **A Was Once an Apple Pie**
- **Cartoon Faces: How to Draw Heads, Features, and Expressions** by Christopher Hart

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

