

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class / Grade: _____ Score: _____

LESSON 23. POETRY • SOUNDS OF I AND Y

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Phonological Study: Contrast long *ī* and *ȳ* (/aɪ/) with the short *ĭ* sound of *y* in unstressed syllables (*sunny*, *noisy*). Detect silent letters in Mary Howitt's poem.

POETRY • SOUNDS OF I & Y

1. Copy the following carefully.

Read the poem aloud with rhythmic expression, then transcribe each line neatly on the guidelines:

*See! the lark is soaring high
In the bright and sunny sky.
In the elms — a noisy crowd!
All the birds are singing loud;
And the first white butterfly
In the sunshine dances by.*

— MARY HOWITT

2. Mark each y or i which has the long sound:

Put a macron (¯) over the letter with long sound /aɪ/:

high → h ____ gh bright → br ____ ght sky → sk ____

white → wh ____ te butterfly → butterfl ____

sunshine → sunsh ____ ne by → b ____

3. Find a word in which y has the sound of short i:

Word 1: _____

Word 2: _____

(Hint: Look for 2-syllable words ending in -y that rhyme with each other).

4. Phonological Discovery Question: Silent Letters

What silent letters do you find in the above lines?

In *high* and *bright*, the silent letters are: _____

In *white* and *sunshine*, the silent letter is: _____

PHONICS & SPELLING RULES TO REMEMBER

★ 1. Long Sounds of 'i' and 'y'

Both letters **i** and **y** make long /aɪ/. In **high**, **bright**, long **ī** pairs with silent **gh**. In **white**, **sunshine**, silent **e** marks long **ī**. In **sky**, **by**, **butterfly**, **ȳ** is long!

★ 2. 'y' as Short ĭ in Endings

At the end of two-syllable words (**sunny**, **noisy**), unstressed **y** makes the short **ĭ** sound (/ɪ/ or /i/). Notice the contrast in **sunny sky**: short **ĭ** in **sunny**, long **ȳ** in **sky**!

★ 3. Silent Letters 'gh' and 'e'

In **high** and **bright**, the letters **gh** make no sound (silent **gh**). In **white** and **sunshine**, the final letter **e** is silent, signaling the preceding vowel to say its long name!

LESSON 23: POETRY • SOUNDS OF I AND Y — MASTER KEY

Phonological Analysis of Mary Howitt's Poem, Diacritical Marking & Silent Letters Guide

Official Solution

1. COMPLETE POEM ANNOTATION & PHONETIC SCANSION (MARY HOWITT)

Line 1: *See! the lark is soaring high*

Line 2: *In the bright and sunny sky.*

Line 3: *In the elms — a noisy crowd!*

Line 4: *All the birds are singing loud;*

Line 5: *And the first white butterfly*

Line 6: *In the sunshine dances by.*

Rhyme A • /haɪ/ (silent gh, long ī)

Rhyme A • /skaɪ/ (silent gh in *bright*; contrast *sunny* /ɪ/ vs. *sky* /aɪ/)

Rhyme B • /kraʊd/ (diphthong ow /aʊ/; noisy final -y = /ɪ/)

Rhyme B • /laʊd/ (r-controlled ir /ɜːr/; singing double short ī)

Rhyme C • /bʌtəflaɪ/ (silent final e in *white*; compound *butterfly* ends in /aɪ/)

Rhyme C • /baɪ/ (split digraph i_e in *sunshine*; open monosyllable by = /aɪ/)

Structure: Rhymed couplets in iambic/trochaic tetrameter (AABBCC). Notice that 4 out of 6 lines (1, 2, 5, 6) terminate in the long vowel sound /aɪ/.

2. MASTER ANSWERS FOR TEXTBOOK EXERCISES

Exercise 2 (Mark each y or i with the long sound):
Students should identify and mark a total of **7 words** with a macron (¯):
• **Long i (ī) [4 words]:** **high** • **bright** • **white** • **sunshine**
• **Long y (ȳ) [3 words]:** **skȳ** • **butterflȳ** • **bȳ**

Exercise 3 (Find a word in which y has the sound of short i):
→ **sunny** (/ˈsʌni/) and/or **noisy** (/ˈnɔɪzi/).
[Pedagogical Note: In 19th-century phonics (Webster/Wheeler), the unstressed open syllable ending in -y was classified as the short ī sound. Line 2 presents a deliberate contrast: sunny (short ī) vs. sky (long ȳ)].

Discovery Question: "What silent letters do you find in the above lines?"
→ **Official Answer:**
1. Silent **gh** in **high** and **bright** (consonant trigraph -igh).
2. Silent final **e** in **white** and **sunshine** (split digraph i_e signaling long /aɪ/).
3. (Optional advanced credit): Silent **h** in **white** (in modern standard pronunciation /waɪt/); silent **e** in base word *dance* (soft-c indicator).

THE DUAL PHONOLOGICAL ROLE OF 'Y'

Letter y serves two vital vocalic functions in English orthography determined strictly by stress and syllable structure:

- **Stressed open monosyllables:** y functions as long /aɪ/ (*sky, by, try, fly*).
- **Unstressed open syllables:** y reduces to lax short /ɪ/ (traditionally) or /i/ (modern "happy-tensing"). Wheeler places "sunny sky" in juxtaposition so children directly internalize this fundamental phonotactic rule.

MARY HOWITT & POETIC PEDAGOGY

Mary Howitt (1799–1888) was a prominent Victorian author and translator of Hans Christian Andersen. Her lyric celebration of spring integrates vivid pastoral imagery (skylark, elm trees, white butterfly) with structured phonetic contrasts. Children practice penmanship and orthographic scrutiny within an emotionally uplifting literary landscape.

4. ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (25 POINTS TOTAL)

Task Focus	Instructional Standard & Criteria	Scoring
1. Poem Copywork	Legible, baseline-aligned transcription of all 6 lines with proper punctuation (!, ;, ,).	6 pts (1 pt / line)
2. Long Vowel Marking	Accurately identifying and placing macrons over long i and y in all 7 target words.	7 pts (1 pt / word)
3. Short i Discovery	Correctly identifying sunny and/or noisy as examples of y taking the short ī sound.	4 pts (2 pts / word)
4. Silent Letter Analysis	Accurately isolating silent gh in high/bright and silent final e in white/sunshine.	5 pts (2.5 pts / pattern)
5. Oral Reading Fluency	Expressive, rhythmic oral recitation of the poem with clear differentiation of /aɪ/ and /ɪ/.	3 pts (mastery standard)