

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

CLASS: _____

SCORE: _____

LESSON 35 • POETRY & VOWEL DIGRAPH OO (ŌŌ VS. ȮȮ)

Robert Louis Stevenson's Stanza • Diacritical Marking • Words Often Mispronounced (roof, hoof, root, proof)

PAGE 23–24

🕒 PHONICS & SPELLING RULES TO REMEMBER

RULE 1 • THE TWO SOUNDS OF OO

The vowel team **oo** makes two sounds: **Long oo** /u:/ (marked **ōō** as in *gloom, room, roof, root, proof*) and **Short oo** /ʊ/ (marked **ȮȮ** as in *looks, books*).

RULE 2 • WORDS OFTEN MISPRONOUNCED

In standard educated speech, **roof, hoof, root,** and **proof** historically take **Long oo** (**ōō** /u:/). Do not shorten them carelessly to /ʊ/ (rhyming with *look*).

RULE 3 • RHYME & THE -OOK PHONOGRAM

Couplet 1 rhymes with long **ōō** (*gloom / room*); Couplet 2 rhymes with short **ȮȮ** (*looks / books*). Words ending in **-ook** reliably take short **ȮȮ**.

1 Read Robert Louis Stevenson's poem carefully, then transcribe each line neatly on the handwriting lines:

EXCERPT • A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES

Now, in the falling of the gloom,
The red fire paints the empty room ;
And warmly on the roof it looks,
And flickers on the backs of the books.

— ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

STUDENT HANDWRITING TRANSCRIPTION

Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 3: _____

Line 4: _____

2 Put the proper mark over each oo: Write the word with its diacritical mark (ōō for long /u:/, ȮȮ for short /ʊ/), then check its sound value:

gloom

- ☐ ōō (long)
- ☐ ȮȮ (short)

room

- ☐ ōō (long)
- ☐ ȮȮ (short)

roof

- ☐ ōō (long)
- ☐ ȮȮ (short)

looks

- ☐ ōō (long)
- ☐ ȮȮ (short)

books

- ☐ ōō (long)
- ☐ ȮȮ (short)

★ Words Often Mispronounced: Copy each word, place the double macron (ōō) over the letters oo, and pronounce with long /u:/:

roof

ŌŌ (LONG /u:/)

hoof

ŌŌ (LONG /u:/)

root

ŌŌ (LONG /u:/)

proof

ŌŌ (LONG /u:/)

3 Write from dictation: Listen attentively to your teacher and write the sentence neatly on the lines below:

CLASSROOM DICTATION EXERCISE (Listen and transcribe):

LESSON 35 • TEACHER ANSWER KEY & LINGUISTIC GUIDE

Robert Louis Stevenson's Stanza • Diacritical Analysis (ōō vs. öö) • Orthoepy of Mispronounced Words

PAGE 23–24 KEY

Word	Rime	Webster	Sound Value	IPA	Linguistic & Historical Phonology Rationale
gloom	-oom	glōōm	Long oo	/glu:m/	OE glōm ('twilight'); high back tense vowel /u:/ preserved before bilabial nasal /m/.
room	-oom	rōōm	Long oo	/ru:m/	OE rūm; tense /u:/ maintained steadily throughout Middle & Early Modern English.
roof	-oof	rōōf	Long oo	/ru:f/	OE hrōf; Great Vowel Shift raised ME /o:/ -> /u:/. Dialectal laxing to /ʊ/ resisted by spellers.
looks	-ook	lōōks	Short oo	/lʊks/	OE lōcian; regular 17th-century pre-velar vowel shortening before voiceless stop -k.
books	-ook	bōōks	Short oo	/bʊks/	OE bōc; standard phonological shortening before velar coda -k to lax /ʊ/.
hoof	-oof	hōōf	Long oo	/hu:f/	OE hōf; standard pronunciation /hu:f/; colloquial shortening to /hʊf/ treated as dialectal.
root	-oot	rōōt	Long oo	/ru:t/	Late OE rōt (from ON rót); high back tense /u:/; dialectal /rut/ is non-standard.
proof	-oof	prōōf	Long oo	/pru:f/	OF preuve / ME preve; vowel digraph oo adopted for fixed tense /u:/ phoneme.
empty	-empty	ēmp'ty	Short e	/'emp.ti/	OE æmtig ('vacant'); intrusive /p/ developed between bilabial /m/ and alveolar /t/.
flickers	-icker	flick'ers	Short i	/'flɪk.ərz/	Frequentative of flicker (flicorian); vivid onomatopoeic motion verb.

HISTORICAL PHONOLOGY & PEDAGOGICAL INSIGHTS:

1. Stevenson's Couplet Rhyme Architecture: In *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), Stevenson contrasts a long /u:/ rhyming couplet (*gloom* / *room*) with a short /ʊ/ rhyming couplet (*looks* / *books*). This provides young learners with an immediate musical and auditory contrast between tense and lax digraph realizations.

2. The "Words Often Mispronounced" Phenomenon: In the 18th–19th centuries, phonological vowel laxing swept through pre-velar stops (-k in *book*, *look*) and variable dentals (-d in *good*, *wood*). A secondary wave began dialectally laxing pre-fricative environments (-f in *roof*, *hoof*) and dental stops (-t in *root*). Noah Webster and 19th-century spellers deliberately marked these words with the double macron (ōō) to preserve high back tense /u:/ as the standard educated standard.

3. Diacritical Marking Guide: The double macron (ōō) denotes tense /u:/ (as in *moon*); the double breve (öö) denotes lax /ʊ/ (as in *look*). Ensure students place the diacritic across the pair of letters.

CLASSROOM DICTATION SCRIPT (10 CONTEXTUAL SENTENCES)

1. **gloom:** The cheerful campfire dispelled the evening gloom.
2. **room:** The red fire cast warm shadows across the cozy room.
3. **roof:** Dry pine needles collected in the gutter of the barn roof.
4. **looks:** The watchful lighthouse keeper looks out across the misty bay.
5. **books:** Grandmother arranged the leather-bound books upon the shelf.
6. **hoof:** The black pony lifted each iron-shod hoof with great care.
7. **root:** The deep root anchored the sturdy oak against the mountain storm.
8. **proof:** The neat arithmetic problem gave clear proof of her answer.
9. **empty:** Do not leave an empty pitcher sitting near the edge of the table.
10. **flickers:** The yellow candlelight flickers softly on the parlor wall.

DIAGNOSTIC SCORING RUBRIC (50 POINTS)

Target Skill	Criteria for Mastery	Pts
Poem Transcription	Accurate letter formation, capitalization, and punctuation (semicolon, comma, period).	/10
Diacritical Marking	Correct placement and identification of öö (3 words) and öö (2 words).	/10
Mispronounced Words	Clean transcription and long öö identification for roof, hoof, root, proof.	/12
Dictation Accuracy	Exact transcription of synthesis practice sentence from memory/dictation.	/10
Oral Articulation	Clear phonetic contrast between tense /u:/ and lax /ʊ/ during reading aloud.	/8
TOTAL SCORE:		/50

COMMON STUDENT ERRORS:

- Laxing *roof* or *root* as /rut/ or /rot/. Remind students of the Long oo rule!
- Misplacing diacritical marks on only one letter (e.g., *oö instead of öö).
- Omitting punctuation in the poem transcription (the semicolon after *room*).