



Exploring 'Great Women of Sport Clerihews' by Lorraine Mariner

Key topics: Sport · Poetic form · Rhyme · Class poem · Individual writing

Resource written by Rachel Piercey

Getting to know the poems and the Great Women of Sport

Display 'Great Women of Sport Clerihews' (see below) and read them aloud. It's likely these sports stars won't all be familiar, so introduce your class to these brief biographies.

Lily Parr was a trailblazing footballer who scored nearly 1,000 goals in her long career, renowned for having "a kick like a mule". She started playing during the First World War, when she was a teenager, and quickly became a sensation. She carried on playing and scoring for three decades, despite the Football Association banning women from playing professionally in 1921. There's a Horrible Histories snippet about Lily Parr here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-KH4NmJ6D4>

Martina Navratilova is one of the greatest tennis players of all time – among many other achievements, she won the singles trophy at Wimbledon a record-breaking nine times. Tennis players compete on different surfaces (grass, clay, carpet, and hard courts) and Navratilova dominated on the grass courts of Wimbledon for many years. However, in 1988 and 1989, she lost the Wimbledon singles final to Steffi Graf, another of the greatest tennis players of all time. Watch Martina Navratilova winning her twentieth Wimbledon title here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZU5lMNVWBHs>

Jessica Ennis (now Jessica Ennis-Hill and retired) is a champion heptathlete and 100 metre hurdler. A heptathlon consists of a staggering seven events: 100 metres hurdles, High jump, Shot put, 200 metres sprint, Long jump, Javelin throw, and an 800 metres running race. In the 2012 Olympics held in London, Jessica Ennis won the gold medal for heptathlon by a significant margin of points, to rapturous applause from the crowd – you can watch her winning performances here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5okU3ueZto>

Simone Biles is one of the greatest gymnasts of all time – she has won the most awards of any gymnast in history! She is famous for her skilled performance of extremely difficult routines, and she has several moves (skills known as 'gymnastic elements') named after her. She is 4 feet 8 inches tall – but "a gymnast of epic proportions" indeed. You can watch one of Simone Biles's amazing floor routines here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fdp8SVOSF4>

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Read the poems again. Which lines did they particularly like? Which was their favourite four-line poem and why? There are no wrong answers!

Have they ever read poems like these ones before? Go through and identify what unites each poem: four lines long; a person's name in first line; the second line rhymes with the first line, and the third line rhymes with the fourth line. This kind of poem is called a **clerihew**.

Clerihews

A clerihew is a poetic form created by writer Edmund Clerihew Bentley when he was at school in the early 1900s. It is always four lines long, with a famous person's name in the first line, and real or imaginary biographical details in the following three lines. The rhyme scheme is AABB. The lines don't have to be the same length – that's part of the fun! So is thinking of creative rhymes for your name. It doesn't matter if they are a bit silly: clerihews are all about humour and wordplay.

Class writing

Write a list of famous names on the board – include some from history as well as current times, and some fictional characters as well! As a class, have fun coming up with wacky rhymes for some of the surnames. Then choose one of the names and create your own clerihew.

Individual writing

Invite your pupils to choose someone new to write about, inspired by Lorraine's poems – it can be someone on the class list or someone new.

Encourage them to be creative with rhyme and to redraft, scribble out and change things – poets almost never get their poem right first time and their notebooks tend to be very messy! When they're ready to write it up neatly, you may like to use the print-out template below. What will they choose as their title?

Explain that if you have written a poem inspired by someone else, it's important to acknowledge them – and the easiest way to do this is with a short line underneath the title (see below).

We would love to see what your pupils come up with! Tag us on Twitter @tygertygermag with a picture or email us on tygertygermagazine@gmail.com for some personalised feedback.



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A clerihew inspired by Lorraine Mariner

by





Great Women of Sport Clerihews

Lily Parr:
football star.
The men went off to the First World War
and she took her chance to score.

Martina Navratilova
won Wimbledon over and over.
It was hard to beat her on grass
until along came Steffi Graf.

Jessica Ennis
didn't play tennis.
But competing in another seven
she took the London crowd to heaven.

Simone Biles:
small in size.
But her triple doubles and bodily contortions
make her a gymnast of epic proportions.

by Lorraine Mariner

