

## Jabberwocky

- Aim:** To raise awareness English suffixes, their grammar functions and similarities and differences with French
- Materials:** Student worksheet "Jabberwocky"  
Various prefixes and suffixes
- Vocabulary:** *nonsense, monster, blade*

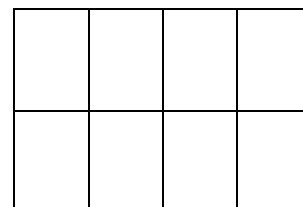
**Note:** The lesson uses an excerpt from the famous nonsense poem by Lewis Carroll, author of "Alice in Wonderland". The entire "Jabberwocky" poem appears at the end of the plan below.

### Procedure:

1. Ask students what they remember about other poems they have read in French or English. This one is in English but it has some *nonsense* words in it. The poem also has a *monster* in it and a sword with a sharp *blade*. Clarify these vocabulary items as needed.
2. Pass out the student "Jabberwocky" sheet. Read out the excerpt dramatically - several times if needed. Students listen and follow along. Explain that the 'he' in the poem is a boy and 'the Jabberwock' is a monster. The listening focus question is: What happened to the monster? Answer: The boy killed it, cut off its head.
3. Point out that even though there are nonsense words in the poem, we can still get a good idea of what happened.
4. Discuss what *snicker-snack* might mean. Answers may vary, but it seems to be a word that captures the sound of the sword like *whack!* or *bam!* Option: discuss English words that sound like their meanings, e.g. *bang, splash, buzz, zoom, drip, etc.*
5. Lead into the chart activity at the bottom of the sheet by asking the students about *uffish* in the first line. Is it a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, or something else? Answer: adjective. How can we tell? The suffix *-ish* is an adjective marker. Remind students of the brownish, pinkish yellowish skin in the 'Colors'

poem (Mini Lesson 1). Another clue is its place in the sentence (before the noun *thought*.)

6. Then discuss possible meanings of *uffish*. Suggestions: *worried, watchful, sleepy, quiet, nervous, etc.*
7. Give students a few minutes to complete the chart on their own or with a partner. Students who finish quickly can read the poem to a partner - in the original or with substituted real words.
8. Discuss answers. The point of the exercise is for students to see that *-ing* and *-ed* are verb endings and that *-al* and *-ey* or *-y* are often adjective endings.
9. For *-al*, make the connection to French *-ale* by asking, "What are *musical, final* and *normal* in French? Answer *musicale, finale* and *normale*. They are all adjectives, just as in English. There is also some similarity between English adjectives ending in *-y* and French adjectives ending in *é* like *occupé, agé, privé*, etc.
10. Optional expansion: Tell the students (or each pair) to take a sheet of paper and fold it to make eight boxes. Do this by folding the paper in half, then into quarters, and again into eighths. Unfold and draw lines along the folds so that the paper looks like this.



11. While they are preparing their papers, write the following 40 words on the board:

useful breakable information education forgetful  
careful valuable headless hairy thinker  
closeness niceness fishy sleepless talker  
smoker careless situation openness transportation  
agreeable special colourful homeless original  
easy shoeless lucky nation traveler  
natural busy loveable usual lateness  
happiness responsible user beautiful national

12. The students' task is to fill each box with five words that have the same suffix. For example, *useful* and *careful* belong in the same box because they both end with *-ful*. This can be done as a race.

13. The eight sets are as follows:

useful forgetful careful colourful beautiful	breakable valuable agreeable loveable responsible	information education situation transportation nation	headless sleepless careless homeless shoeless
hairy fishy easy lucky busy	thinker talker smoker traveller user	closeness niceness openness lateness happiness	special original natural usual national

14. Check answers and discuss each set. Ask about each:

Is the suffix a noun-maker or an adjective-maker?

Is there a similar ending in French that works the same way? Test by translating some of the words.

Does the suffix have a special meaning?

15. Answers:

<u>useful</u> etc.  Adjective-maker. No obvious French equivalent.	<u>breakable</u> etc.  Adjective-maker. Exactly as in French. Many French adjectives use it.	<u>information</u> etc.  Noun-maker. Exactly as in French. Many French nouns use it.	<u>headless</u> etc.  Adjective-maker. Has special meaning <i>without</i> . No suffix exactly like this in French. How to translate? Use <i>sans</i> + noun.
<u>hairy</u> etc.  Adjective-maker. Used a <u>lot</u> in English. No close French equivalent but the somewhat similar <i>é</i> can also be an adjective-maker.	<u>thinker</u> etc.  Noun-maker It is much like <i>-eur</i> in French. In both languages, the suffix makes it into a person. See also Mini-lesson 3	<u>closeness</u> etc.  Noun-maker French has somewhat similar <i>esse</i> which is also a noun-maker. See also Mini-lesson 2.	<u>special</u> etc.  Adjective-maker. Corresponds closely to French <i>-ale</i> (as discussed earlier in this lesson)

## JABBERWOCKY

Lewis Carroll

(from *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, 1872)

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:  
Long time the manxome foe he sought --  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"  
He chortled in his joy.

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.