

Jabberwocky – Portmanteaus & meanings

Use these to make sense of Jabberwocky. Make notes on your copy of the poem.

Bandersnatch: A swift moving creature with snapping jaws. Capable of extending its neck.

Borogove: A thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round, something like a live mop.

Brillig: Four o'clock in the afternoon: the time when you begin boiling things for dinner.

Burbled: A mixture of "bleat", "murmur", and "warble".

Chortled: Combination of chuckle and snort.

Frabjous: A blend of fair, fabulous, and joyous.

Frumious: Combination of "fuming" and "furious."

Galumphing: Perhaps a blend of "gallop" and "triumphant." (Used to describe a way of "trotting" downhill, while keeping one foot further back than the other. This enables the Galumpher to stop quickly).

Gimble: To make holes like a gimlet.

Gyre: To go round and round like a gyroscope, or to scratch like a dog.

Jubjub: A desperate bird that lives in perpetual passion.

Manxome: Combination of "monstrous" and "fearsome", or possibly "manly" and "buxom".

Mimsy: Combination of "miserable" and "flimsy."

Mome: Short for "from home".

Outgrabe: (past tense; present tense outgribe) – Something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle.

Rath: A sort of green pig.

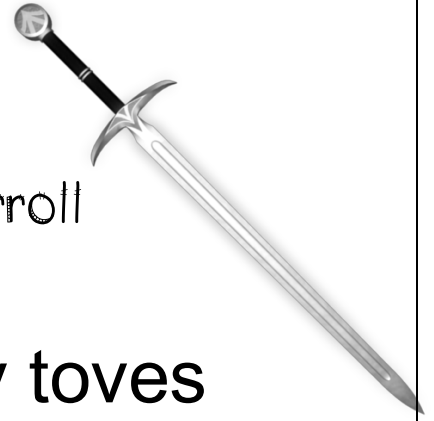
Slithy: Combination of "slimy" and "lithe".

Toves: A combination of a badger, a lizard, and a corkscrew. They are very curious looking creatures which make their nests under sundials. They live on cheese.

Uffish: A state of mind when the voice is gruffish, the manner roughish, and the temper huffish.

Wabe: The grass plot around a sundial. It is called a "wabe" because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it, and a long way beyond it on each side.

Jabberwocky by Lewis Carroll



'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 hast 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.