



# The Lewis Carroll Writing Competition 2021

## Alice Goes to School

By Cecilia Axon (under 10 Competition)

*This is the chapter after "A Mad Tea Party" in the 'Alice in Wonderland' story. Cecilia supplied her own illustrations for her entry and said she liked the recent Chris Riddell books.*

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As Alice walked along winding paths, through green grass and abundant flower beds, she came across three gardeners carefully painting a white rose a deep scarlet. It was most unlike the rest of the neat grounds. The rose wound and towered high above the treetops - seeming to disappear into the clouds.

"How very strange," thought Alice. "I have admired many roses but never one as imposing as that." Then Alice remembered a tale that she had read about a boy that had climbed a beanstalk and found himself in a most unusual predicament in the sky. Alice considered this for a few moments, then she tentatively tested a low branch and began to clamber up.

When she had climbed about as high as the tallest tower on the Queen of Hearts castle, a mist surrounded her and rubbing her eyes there was not a painterly petal to be seen.

Thump! She landed in a small hard backed chair attached to a little desk. Before her, at the blackboard stood a studious looking Mad Hatter, dressed in spectacles, cape and holding an open book. Around her were rows of little desks scattered with slates and chalk.



Sat, however disorderly, was a creature each one making a raucous racket. A hedgehog, a porcupine, a lizard, birds of all shapes and sizes and a small dormouse all seemed to be learning. They were chanting the 'times tables' but they were not quite the 'times tables' Alice knew. They went like this:

$5 \times 5 = 1$   
 $10 \times 5 = 2$   
 $15 \times 5 = 3$   
 $20 \times 4 = 6$   
 $35 \times 5 = 7$

And so it went on for some time, until they had got themselves in more of a jumble than when they had started. Intermittently the Mad Hatter would call out: "Oh dear nearly wrong!" and "That is completely right - try again!" When the class quietened down, the teacher

scolded: "Noise! I expect to hear noise at all times, class" More than once Alice had to duck as an inkpot flew across the room. Fortunately, it missed and hit a befuddled looking bird behind her, drenching the poor creature head-to-toe in ink. After arithmetic the rowdy rabble were instructed to recite a poem but it was not like any poem Alice had ever heard. It went like this...

“ Man naturally loves delay,  
And to procrastinate,  
Business put off from day  
Is a thing to celebrate

Let every hour be no place  
Ne'er fixed,  
Always loosely shift,  
And well enjoy the vacant space,  
As though a birthday gift.

And when the hour arrives, be nowhere  
Where 'er that "there" may be;  
Uncleanly hands or ruffled hair  
Let everybody see.

If dinner at "half-past" be placed,  
At "half-past" be undressed.  
If at a quarter past make no haste,

To be down with the rest.

Better to be behind your time,  
Than e're to be ahead;  
To open the door after striking the chime,  
Declaring punctuality is dead.

Moral:

Let not punctuality and care  
Seize every glittering hour,  
So shalt though call a flowered fair,  
E'en from a fading flower.

”

“This is ridiculous!” cried Alice indignantly. “You are saying it all wrong.” For she had learned the poem with her Governess and could recite it by heart. Alice made to get up and leave this school of bedlam but the Hatter stopped her.

“But everything’s ridiculously wrong here,” he exclaimed. “It is how we learn”.



“This is nothing like my lessons at home” thought Alice. “But then nothing is like at home here.” At that moment a book came flying across the classroom. “Charlotte, that was quite off aim,” chastised the Hatter. “Try it again. Girls should be educated in all aspects of learning and throwing. You must have extra practice, I quite insist.” This confused poor Alice further. “Girls are here too?” Alice wondered. “What would they say at home?”

After English came History. “Repeat after me class,” announced the Hatter. “Anglo-Saxons, Georgians, Tudors, House of York, Stuarts, Plantagenets, Victorians, House of Lancaster, Normans aaaaand Wonderland.”

Alice’s head was spinning. “That’s a complete muddle,” she shouted. “Wrong from beginning to end!”

And with that she got up, left the classroom and ran for the giant rose! At the top she paused to take in all of Wonderland. It was rather a pretty sight Alice thought. The Duchess’s house nestled in the green Wonderland Wood. The March Hare’s quaint cottage, the Hatter’s run-down thatched dwelling, the White Rabbit’s elegant townhouse and the

Queen of Heart's grand, sprawling estate. She could even see the waves crashing on the rocks but the one thing that was missing was the rabbit hole which had brought her here.

As she looked, she suddenly found herself being blown downwards like a dandelion in the wind.

"Thank goodness," Alice called as she tumbled. "I would not have liked to go to school there."

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Chapter Not-Quite Eight  
ALICE GOES TO SCHOOL

By Cecilia Axon  
Aged eight  
To be inserted after  
A Mad Tea-Party

