POETRY. Robert Louis Stevenson. MotherGooseCaboose.com
Grades 3 and up. BLOCK CITY. Directions. Print out. Read the poem. Do the activities. Note: For younger children, just read the poem, talk about it, illustrate it or part of it, and act it out.

BLOCK CITY

1st stanza:
What are you able to build with your blocks?  a  10
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.  a  10
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,  b  10
But I can be happy and building at home.  b  11

2nd stanza:
Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,  c  12
There I’ll establish a city for me:  c  10
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,  d  11
And a harbour as well where my vessels may ride.  d  12

3rd stanza:
Great is the palace with pillar and wall,  e  10
A sort of a tower on the top of it all,  e  11
And steps coming down in an orderly way  f  11
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.  f  11

4th stanza:
This one is sailing and that one is moored:  g  10
Hark to the song of the sailors on board!  g  10
And see on the steps of my palace, the kings  h  11
Coming and going with presents and things!  h  10

(Poem cont’d on next page.)
Directions. Print out. Continue reading the poem. Answer the questions using the “Blank Lined Poetry Answer Form” on p.7. Print out as many pages as you need to answer the questions. Make sure you number your answers. Check what you have written with the answers on page 6.

5th stanza:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rhyme</th>
<th>syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now I have done with it, down let it go!</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in a moment the town is laid low.</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block upon block lying scattered and free,</td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is there left of my town by the sea?</td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6th stanza:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rhyme</th>
<th>syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yet as I saw it, I see it again,</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The kirk and the palace, the ships and then men,</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And as long as I live and where'er I may be,</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ll always remember my town by the sea.</td>
<td>l</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Questions About The Poem, “BLOCK CITY”:

1. Who is the little boy in the poem? (You have to answer this question.)

2. Was the little boy in the poem a good block builder? How do you know? (You have to answer this question.)

3. What did he build with his blocks? (Read line 2, 1st stanza; line 3, 2nd stanza; line 4, 2nd stanza; and line 3, 3rd stanza.)

4. What were the mountains? (Read line 1, 2nd stanza.)

5. What was the sea? (Read line 1, 2nd stanza.)

6. When he was finished playing, what happened? (Read the 5th stanza.)

7. What is left of the town after it gets knocked down? (Read the 6th stanza.)
Directions. Print out. Read the poem. Continue answering the questions. Do the activities, review the rhyming words, the rhyme pattern, other patterns, and syllables in the poem.

Questions About The Poem, “BLOCK CITY” cont’d:

8. Do you like block building? What are some things you build? You have to answer this question."

9. Is “Block City” a good title for this poem? Why? (You have to answer this question.)

Activities: If you have blocks, build something interesting with them; A city, a farm, an aquarium, a forest. Draw and cut out things that go with your block project. Write a story about it.

Rhyming words: 12 rhyming closed couplets. See poem.
1st stanza: (lines 1 & 2) blocks, docks; (lines 3 & 4) roam, home.
2nd stanza: (lines 1 & 2) sea, me; (lines 3 & 4) side, ride.
3rd stanza: (lines 1 & 2) wall, all; (lines 3 & 4) way, bay.
4th stanza: (lines 1 & 2) moored, board; (lines 3 & 4) kings, thing.
5th stanza: (lines 1 & 2) go, low; (lines 3 & 4) free, sea.
6th stanza: (lines 1 & 2) again, men; (lines 3 & 4) be, sea.

Rhyme pattern: 6 quatrains containing 2 rhyming closed couplets in each stanza; 1st stanza: aabb; 2nd stanza: ccdd; 3rd stanza: eeff; 4th stanza: gghh; 5th stanza: iijj; 6th stanza: kklk. Lines 1 & 2 rhyme and lines 3 & 4 rhyme in each stanza. Examples: 1st stanza – blocks (a), docks (a), roam (b), home (b); 2nd stanza – sea (c), me (c), side (d), ride (d). See poem.

Other patterns: The use of metaphor; the blocks are things. Read the poem. See definitions for “metaphor,” p. 5.

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Grades 3 and up. BLOCK CITY cont’d. p.4.
Directions. Print out. Read the poem. Review the meter in the poem. Study the definitions.

Meter: Accented words or parts of words are underlined; unaccented words or parts of words are not underlined. See the 1st stanza of the poem below for the cadence; the slashes below the 1st stanza represent the accented words or parts of words; the dots represent the unaccented words or parts of words. (Dactylic.) See definitions for “dactyl,” “dactylic,” & “meter,” p. 5.

BLOCK CITY
1st stanza:                  rhyme pattern  syllables
What are you able to build with your blocks?         a  10
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.             a  10
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,         b  10
But I can be happy and building at home.           b  11
Dactylic.
/ . . / . . / . . / (line 1; 4 dactyls.)
/ . . / . . / . . / (line 2; 4 dactyls.)
/ . . / . . / . . / (line 3; 4 dactyls.)
. / . . / . . / . . / (line 4; 4 dactyls.)

Definitions From The Poem, “BLOCK CITY”:

comparison – n. The act or process of examining two or more people or things in order to discover similarities and differences between them.

couplet – n. Two lines of verse that form a unit alone or as part of a poem, especially two that rhyme and have the same meter. They may be open or closed. See poem. Example of two closed couplets from poem, “Block City:” (Lines 1 & 2 rhyme and lines 3 & 4 rhyme.)

1st stanza:                  rhyme pattern  syllables
What are you able to build with your blocks?         a  10
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.             a  10
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,         b  10
But I can be happy and building at home.           b  11
Directions. Print out. Read the poem. Continue studying the definitions.

Definitions From The Poem, “BLOCK CITY” cont’d.

dactyl – *n.* A metrical foot in poetry consisting of one long syllable followed by two short syllables in classical verse, or one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables in modern verse. From the Greek, “finger with one long and two short joints.” See “Meter,” p. 4 and “meter,” p. 5; “Syllables,” p. 3 & “syllables,” p. 6.

dactylic – *adj.* Relating to a dactyl or containing dactyls. See “dactyl.”

hark – *v.* To listen to something or somebody. (Line 2, 4th stanza.)

harbor – *n.* Part of a body of water near a coast in which ships can anchor safely. (Line 4, 2nd stanza.)

kirk – *n.* A church. (Line 3, 2nd stanza & Line 2, 6th stanza.)

metaphor – *n.* The application of a word or phrase to somebody that is not meant literally but to make a comparison, for example, saying that somebody is a snake. See definitions, “comparison,” p. 5. See poem.


mill – *n.* A building with equipment to grind grain into flour or meal. (Line 3, 2nd stanza.)

moor – *v.* (moored – past tense). To fix a boat, ship, or aircraft to one place with cables, chains, an anchor, or to be secured in this way. Tie up. (Line 1, 4th stanza.)

pillar – *n.* A slender, freestanding, vertical support; a column. (Line 1, 3rd stanza.)

quatrain – *n.* Any stanza unit of 4 lines, whether rhymed or unrhymed. The quatrain is the most common stanza form in English poetry. See example under “couplet.” See poem.

stanza – *n.* A number of lines of verse forming a separate unit within a poem. See example under “couplet.” See poem.
Definitions From The Poem, “BLOCK CITY” cont’d.

syllable – *n.* syllables – *n.pl.* 1. A unit of spoken language that consists of one or more vowel sounds alone, a syllabic consonant alone, or any of these with one or more consonant sounds. 2. One or more letters in a word that roughly correspond to a syllable of spoken language. Syllables are accented or unaccented in words or parts of words. See “Syllables,” p. 3; “Meter,” p. 4 and “meter,” p. 5. See poem.

vessel – *n.* (vessels – plural). A ship or large boat. (Line 4, 3rd stanza.)

where’er – *adv.* Wherever. In, at, or to any place. (Line 3, 6th stanza.)

Answers To The Questions About The Poem, “BLOCK CITY”:
2. Yes. He used the blocks in very inventive ways.
3. Castles, palaces, a temple, and docks, (line 2, 1st stanza); a kirk and a mill (line 3, 2nd stanza); a harbor (line 4, 2nd stanza); steps (line 3, 3rd stanza); a kingdom, towers, pillars.
4. The sofa. (Line 1, 2nd stanza.)
5. The carpet. (Line 1, 2nd stanza.)
6. He knocked the blocks down and they scattered. (5th stanza.)
7. He will always remember what it looked like, “the kirk, the palace, the ships, and the men; the town by the sea.” (6th stanza.)
8. & 9. You must answer these.