

Lending the Lawnmower



This writing idea is to promote some fun in creating a poem based on Adrian Mitchell's *Ten Ways to Avoid Lending Your Wheelbarrow to Anybody*.

Instead of using a wheelbarrow, you will be avoiding the lending of an object of your choice and you will be doing so in a variety of attitudes. The following example uses a lawnmower as its object of rejection:

Six Ways to Avoid Lending Your Lawnmower to Anybody

1. Humorous

May I borrow your lawnmower?
Have you heard the one about the lawnmower and the artificial turf?

2. Sarcastic

May I borrow your lawnmower?
If I can borrow £50.

3. Overbearing

May I borrow your lawnmower?
It really does require considerable skill and I'm not sure you have this.

4. Aggressive

May I borrow your lawnmower?
The blades are razor sharp.

5. Diplomatic

May I borrow your lawnmower?
I think my grass might be just a tad longer than yours, so how about my using it first?

6. Psychological

May I borrow your lawnmower?
So what makes you think it's mine to give?

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Writing the Poem

First stage: Adrian Mitchell's poem uses a wheelbarrow as its object not to be lent and the example you have seen uses a lawnmower. You need to decide what your object is going to be.

You can keep it realistic and select an object that someone would commonly want to borrow. This could be any garden equipment, tools, household appliances like a vacuum cleaner, sugar or milk for coffee and so on. You could think about things that are borrowed at school like pens, rubbers or someone else's homework!

You could make your object more abstract like friendship, love, peace of mind and so on. This could make your poem very unusual.

Second stage: You now need to decide on the attitudes with which you will reject the request to borrow your chosen object. Mitchell's original poem used the following: *patriotic, snobbish, overweening, pious, melodramatic, pathetic, defensive, sinister, philosophical.*

Decide on how many attitudes you want to write about. You might decide to write about a number of objects and so limit the number of attitudes per poem. Whatever you choose to do, try to be as creative as you can with your interpretation of these.

You can use attitudes from Mitchell's poem or the example you have seen. The following are a few more ideas to help you:

<i>suspicious</i>	<i>antagonistic</i>	<i>obsequious</i>	<i>ambivalent</i>	<i>tired</i>
<i>dismissive</i>	<i>eager</i>	<i>arrogant</i>	<i>pretentious</i>	<i>noisy</i>
<i>pedantic</i>	<i>soporific</i>	<i>temperamental</i>	<i>tacit</i>	<i>reluctant</i>
<i>silly</i>	<i>caustic</i>	<i>lovey-dovey</i>	<i>inspirational</i>	<i>cautious</i>
<i>pompous</i>	<i>teacherly</i>	<i>indecisive</i>	<i>manic</i>	<i>forgetful</i>

Use a dictionary to work out unfamiliar words and/or to find some more of your own.

Final stage: Once you are clear about what the attitudes you have chosen mean, write your poem. Each opening line will be a request to borrow your chosen object. You then turn this down with just the right amount of attitude!