CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

The Diverting History of John Gilpin

William Cowper · *1782 · English original, as hosted (from PG #3698)*

John Gilpin was a citizen of credit and renown. So this complete comic ballad begins. His spouse speaks of twice ten tedious years with no holiday seen, and of a repair unto 'The Bell' at Edmonton. William Cowper, 1782, complete as hosted. The source volume is PG #3698, The Task, and Other Poems, but this file is the Gilpin poem itself, not The Task. For grades 3–8, often read aloud. Comedy, not cruelty; a ride farther than he intended, and a safe coming home. Quote this wording.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read this file as Cowper's complete comic ballad of a citizen of credit and a ride to The Bell at Edmonton, rather than as The Task, or as a later shortened school retelling only?

"John Gilpin was a citizen Of credit and"
Opening

William Cowper's The Diverting History of John Gilpin, 1782, complete as hosted. The source volume is Project Gutenberg #3698, The Task, and Other Poems, but this file is the Gilpin poem itself, not The Task. It opens: John Gilpin was a citizen of credit and renown. His spouse speaks of twice ten tedious years with no holiday seen, and of a repair unto 'The Bell' at Edmonton. For grades 3–8, often read aloud. Comedy, not cruelty. A ride farther than he intended, and a safe coming home. Quote this wording.

KEY CHARACTERS

John Gilpin
A citizen of credit and renown, and a linen-draper, who rides farther than he intended, and comes safe home again

Mistress Gilpin
Who speaks of twice ten tedious years with no holiday seen, and of a repair unto The Bell at Edmonton

William Cowper
The author of this complete comic ballad

HOW TO BEGIN JOHN GILPIN

"John Gilpin was a citizen Of credit and"
Opening

"Unto 'The Bell' at Edmonton, All in a"
The holiday planned

Grades 3–8
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Citizen of Credit and Renown

OPENING

John Gilpin was a citizen of credit and renown. The ballad begins by naming a citizen, and a credit, before a horse is mentioned.

- Keep "citizen" and "credit and renown."
- 3–8, often read aloud.
- A complete short ballad.
- Quote this wording.

"John Gilpin was a citizen Of credit and"
Opening

02

Of Credit and Renown

OPENING

Of credit and renown, a train-band captain eke was he of famous London town. The first stanza already gives a place, and an office.

- Keep "credit and renown."
- 3–8.
- The opening stanza, as this file prints it.
- Quote this wording.

"Of credit and renown, A"
Opening

03

His Spouse Said to Her Dear

THE HOLIDAY PLANNED

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear, "Though wedded we have been these twice ten tedious years, yet we no holiday have seen." The ride begins as a holiday long put off.

- Keep "twice ten tedious years" and "no holiday have seen."
- 3–8. Comedy, not cruelty.
- Quote this wording, including "To-morrow" if you continue.
- A complete poem.

"John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear, "Though"
The holiday planned

04

Unto The Bell at Edmonton

THE HOLIDAY PLANNED

Unto 'The Bell' at Edmonton, all in a chaise and pair. The inn is named as this file prints it, with the quotation marks around The Bell.

- Keep "Unto 'The Bell' at Edmonton."
- 3–8.
- The planned inn, before the ride goes farther than he intended.
- Quote this wording.

"Unto 'The Bell' at Edmonton, All in a"
The holiday planned

05

Cowper, 1782, the Poem, Not The Task

THE EDITION

William Cowper, 1782, complete as hosted. The source volume is Project Gutenberg #3698, The Task, and Other Poems, but this file is the Gilpin poem itself, not The Task. For grades 3–8, often read aloud. Comedy, not cruelty. A ride farther than he intended, and a safe coming home. Quote this wording. One short complete ballad; do not invent what the file does not say.

- Name Cowper, 1782, and this file as Gilpin, not The Task.
- 3–8, often read aloud.
- A citizen, a holiday, and The Bell at Edmonton.
- Quote this English.

"John Gilpin was a citizen Of credit and"
Opening

A citizen of credit and renown | A holiday long put off | The Bell at Edmonton | A ride farther than intended | Comedy, and a safe coming home

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 3–8

1. It opens: "John Gilpin was a citizen of credit and renown."
2. His spouse speaks of "twice ten tedious years" with "no holiday have seen," and of a repair "Unto 'The Bell' at Edmonton."
3. William Cowper, 1782, complete as hosted. The source volume is Project Gutenberg #3698, The Task, and Other Poems, but this file is the Gilpin poem itself, not The Task. Name the file you are in.
4. For grades 3–8, often read aloud. Comedy, not cruelty. A ride farther than he intended, and a safe coming home. Quote this wording.