

Develop a Heuristic

Continue working on compressing your poem. As you do so, develop a set of rules, or a “heuristic” that generally seems to provide good results. Record the steps of your heuristic in some way that will allow you to exchange with another group. Make sure your rules are as clear as possible, so the other group will always know what to do.

Exchange Heuristics

Trade your heuristics with another group. Are they clear and specific enough that you always know what to do? If not, provide feedback to one another and improve your heuristics to provide clearer instructions.

Test Heuristics

You should now have another group’s heuristic. Using the heuristic, attempt to compress the poems below. Record the compression rates you achieve.

Poem	Compression Rate
Pitter Patter	
A Tutor	
She Sells Sea Shells	
I Know an Old Lady	
Pease Porridge	

Record Your Conclusions

Use the data you collected to respond to the questions below.

1. Do you think it’s possible to describe (or write) a specific set of instructions that a person could follow that would always result in better text compression than your heuristic? Why or why not?
2. Is there a way to know that a compressed piece of text is compressed the most possible? If yes, describe how you could determine it. If no, why not?
3. If you send the compressed poem would your friend be able to read it? Why is the dictionary important?