There’s More to Poems Than Rhyme

When the word “poem” is mentioned, we often think of rhymes. Beyond the rhyme, there can be a substantial amount of information that must be interpreted. Some poems even tell stories. Before we analyze some poems, there are terms you should know. The poetry elements described in the terms below will help you analyze the three classic poems in this unit.

Before you read the poems, and even before you study the elements of poetry below, energize your mind with the following concepts and ideas that connect to the poetic stories. These topics should generate thoughts as well as conversation.

- Robin Hood
- cremation
- Romeo and Juliet
- means of burial
- seraphs
- Klondike Gold Rush
- Edgar Allan Poe’s tormented love life
- derelict
- King George
- satire
- ways to mourn
- results and effects of jealousy/envy
- codes
- sacrifice
- revenge
- extreme weather
- fever

Poetry Elements

**prose**: writing other than poetry, everyday language, and literal

**form**: the shape a poem takes on paper – this concerns whether there is a pattern, or if the poem is in free verse; the number of stanzas; the number of lines per stanza, etc.

**stanza/verse**: a “poem paragraph” -- of consecutive lines that form a unit

**imagery**: language that appeals to the senses

**narrative poem**: a poem which contains the same elements as a story; it tells a story

**lyric**: a poem that expresses the emotions of the speaker rather than tell a story

**ballad**: a song or songlike poem that tells a story

**epic**: a long narrative poem that relates to the deeds of a heroic character

**free verse**: a poem that has no structured format, sound devices, etc.

**speaker**: the voice talking to us in the poem

**theme**: the main idea of the poem; it can be a life or moral lesson to be learned.

**tone/mood**: the attitude the author takes toward the subject matter; the mood is how the reader feels about the subject after reading it; it allows the reader to create a visual image or create the sense itself.

**figurative language**: a word or phrase used to describe or express something in terms not understood as literal or exact; descriptive language that must be interpreted by the reader to comprehend its true meaning.
Sound Devices

**Sound Devices are the techniques used in poems to make them appealing to the ear**

**Rhythm**: the “beat” a poem makes; it is made by the repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables

**Rhyme**: The repetition of ending sounds of ending words. A poem’s rhyme scheme is indicated using the letters of the alphabet. In a rhyming poem, the first line is “a”. If the ending sound of the ending word of the second letter is the same sound, then it is also “a”. If it is different, it is “b”. This continues through the stanza. Typical rhyme patterns for four line stanzas are abab, abcb, and abac.

**Internal Rhyme**: Rhyming inside of the line, not at the end

**Refrain**: A repeated sound, word, phrase, line, or group of lines.

**Onomatopoeia**: the use of a word whose sound imitates or suggests its meaning. Examples: splat, bang, swish.

**Alliteration**: the repeating of two or more beginning sounds within a phrase or sentence. Example: I love literal language like lambs love land

**Figurative Language**

*Figurative Language: A word or phrase used to describe or express something in terms not understood as literal or exact. It is descriptive language that must be interpreted by the reader to comprehend its true meaning.*

**Simile**: comparison using like or as
Example: “The roses smelled like a world of loveliness”

**Metaphor**: comparison without using like or as
Example: “The ice was a slick slide of speed.”

**Personification**: a device used in which something nonhuman performs human acts or is described in human terms.
Example: “The toaster yawned wide for the first slice of bread.”

**Hyperbole**: extreme exaggeration
Example: “I’m so hungry, I could eat a horse.” (Also a cliché)

**Idiom**: a phrase that means something different from the meaning of the individual words.
Example: “She wears her heart on her sleeve”

**Cliché**: overused figurative expression
Example: “It’s raining cats and dogs”

**Slang**: language or dialect peculiar to a particular group
Example: “Y’all for you all” or “coke” for any soft drink

**Jargon**: the specialized vocabulary of a particular profession or group
Example: byte, ram, crash, hack (computer jargon)

**Pun**: a play on multiple meanings of a word or on two words that have different meanings but sound alike. It is meant to be humorous
Example: Saying your eggs are “eggselelent” The play is on the word egg

**Euphemism**: making something negative sound neutral or even positive
Example: “Passed away” for “died”. 
“The Highwayman”
Poetry Analysis

Directions: Answer the questions using the poem. (Use the hints in parentheses to assist with the correct answer)

1. Who is the author? Who is the speaker?

2. What kind of poem is it?

3. How is the poem formed?
   Stanzas:
   Lines per stanza:
   Rhyme scheme(s):

4. To whom can the Highwayman and his actions be compared?

5. To whom can the Highwayman and Bess (star-crossed lovers) be compared?

6. “Dumb as a dog he listened” is an example of… (figurative language, sound device)

7. The last lines of each stanza have the beat of horses’ hooves. What is this an example of? (sound device)

8. The first stanza is repeated again at the end of the poem. What is this called? (sound device)

9. “The road was a ribbon of moonlight...” is an example of… (figurative language, sound device)

10. How did King George know the Highwayman’s intentions and plan?
“The Highwayman”
Poetry Analysis

11. “There was death at every window; And hell at one dark window” represents the soldiers guarding each window intending on killing the Highwayman and the one window where Bess will see him riding. What is this an example of? (figurative language)

12. What is “Tlot-Tlot” an example of? (sound device)

13. What is “Her face was like a light” an example of? (figurative language)

14. What is “Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs…” an example of? (two sound devices)

15. What is “…the road smoking behind him” an example of? (figurative language)

16. What color is claret?

17. What is a word to best represent Tim’s feelings toward Bess and the Highwayman?

18. What is a word to best represent Bess’s actions?

19. What is “… And the hours crawled by like years…” an example of? (two types of figurative language)

20. What is “…and his face grew gray to hear…” an example of? (Two: figurative language/ sound device)
“Annabel Lee”
Poetry Analysis

Directions: Answer the questions using the poem. (Use the hints in parentheses to assist with the correct answer)

1. Who is the author?

2. Who is the assumed speaker?

3. What is the setting?

4. What is the format?
   a. stanza(s):
   b. lines per stanza:
   c. rhyme scheme(s):

5. What lines inform you of Annabel’s death? (number)

6. According to the speaker, why did Annabel die? Put the lines that support this answer.

7. What line addresses the young age of the two loves?

8. What does “coveted” (synonym from poem) mean, and who portrayed this action?

9. What is a synonym for the word “angel”?

10. In the 4th stanza, what sound device is “chilling and killing” an example of?

11. What is a synonym for tomb or crypt? Use a word from the poem.
“Annabel Lee”
Poetry Analysis

12. The speaker states that his and Annabel’s love is stronger than what two groups of people? Write the number of the two lines that support this statement or write the lines.

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

13. What is a synonym for “separate”?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

14. Line 34 is an example of what sound device?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

15. Where are the angels located? Demons?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

16. Where does the speaker spend most of this time after the death of Annabel?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

17. The speaker seems to have difficulty forgetting his love; what lines support his inference? Write the number or the lines.

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

18. What names does the speaker refer Annabel as?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

19. How did the speaker describe Annabel Lee?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

20. Which line does not make “sense” when dealing with the senses?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

21. Lines 30-33 have a regular beat (same amount of stressed and unstressed syllables) What does this refer to?

______________________________________________________________
“The Cremation of Sam McGee”
Poetry Analysis

Directions: Answer the questions using the poem. (Use the hints in parentheses to assist with the correct answer)

1. Who is the author?

2. Who is the speaker?

3. What is the format?
   a. stanza(s):
   b. Lines per stanza:
   c. Rhyme scheme(s):

4. What type of poem is this?

5. What is the setting of the poem?

6. Where was Sam McGee from?

7. What was Sam in search of?

8. What did Sam despise the most?

9. What lines support the extreme cold?

10. Why did the speaker risk a lot to cremate Sam?

11. Where was Sam cremated?
“The Cremation of Sam McGee”
Poetry Analysis

12. “And the dogs were fed, and the stars o’erhead, were dancing heel and toe
is an example of which sound device?

13. The speaker regretted at times that he committed to cremating Sam. What
lines support this? (you may put the number of the lines or write the lines)

14. “…the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell” What two types of
figurative language is this an example of?

15. What line supports the notion that Sam was hallucinating with fever?

16. “And he wore a smile, you could see a mile” What is this an example of?
(two types of figurative language and one example of sound device)

17. “The Northern Lights have seen queer sights” is an example of which type of
figurative language?

18. What is “And the stars came out, and they danced about..” an example of?

19. What are the various names that the speaker called Sam or used to refer to
him?

20. What was the name of the derelict?

21. What line supports that the speaker was going against the rules to carry Sam
and cremate him?

22. What is symbolic about the “cremation” in relation to Sam?
Answer Guide

“The Highwayman”
1. Alfred Noyes, Narrator author
2. Narrative
3. 17 stanzas, 6 lines, aabcdb rhyme scheme
4. Robin Hood
5. Romeo and Juliet
6. simile/alliteration
7. rhythm, meter
8. refrain
9. metaphor, alliteration
10. Tim the Ostler
11. symbolism
12. onomatopoeia
13. simile
14. alliteration, onomatopoeia
15. personification
16. deep red
17. jealousy, hate
18. sacrificial
19. personification/simile
20. idiom, alliteration

“Annabel Lee”
1. Edgar Allan Poe
2. Edgar Allan Poe or the husband of Annabel
3. Kingdom by the sea
4. 6 stanzas / 6 to 8 lines per stanza/Narrative Poem/rhyme scheme ababcb
5. Lines 15 and 26 “…chilling and killing…”
6. Lines 11 and 12 “…went envying her and me…yes-that was the reason (as all men know)…”
7. Line 7 “…I was a child, and she was a child…”
8. envied, angels/seraphs
9. seraphs
10. internal rhyme
11. sepulcher
12. wiser and older, lines 28 and 29
13. dissever
14. internal rhyme
15. Heaven above, down under the sea
16. down by the side of Annabel’s grave
17. Lines 34 and 36, “…for the moon never beams… “…And the stars never rise…”
18. beautiful, maiden, Annabel Lee, child, her, darling, my life, my bride
19. beautiful
20. “I feel the bright eyes”
21. “…the sounding sea..”
“The Cremation of Sam McGee”
1. Robert W. Service
2. Cap
3. 14, (8/1st stanza) (4 in remaining stanzas) 2-14 (aabb)
4. Narrative
5. The North Pole, Dawson Trail, Winter, Snow, Klondike Gold Rush, etc.
6. Tennessee, Plumtree
7. Gold
8. Cold
9. “Talk of your cold, through the parka’s fold, it stabbed like a driven nail”
10. He made a promise
11. Derelict, The Alice May
12. Internal Rhyme
13.“With a corpse half hid, that I couldn’t get rid...”, ...in my heart how I cursed that load”, “the trail was bad, and I felt half mad...”, “...and I’d often sing to the hateful thing”, “...O-Man! How I loathed the thing..” etc..
14. personification, simile
15. “...and he raved all day...”
16. idiom, hyperbole, internal rhyme
17. personification
18. personification, rhyme
19. Pal, thing, quiet clay, Sam McGee, corpse, last remains, load, hateful thing, etc.
20. The Alice May
21. “Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code”
22. heat, warmth, Sam wanted warmth, etc.
The Highwayman
by Alfred Noyes

Part One

I
The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight, over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding-
   Riding-riding-
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

II
He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
   His pistol butts a-twinkle,
   His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

III
Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
   Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

IV
And dark in the old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
   The landlord's daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say-

V
"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

VI
He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
   (Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.
The Highwayman
Part Two
I
He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching-
    Marching-marching-
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

II
They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
    And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through the casement, the road that he would ride.

III
They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her.
    She heard the dead man say-
Look for me by moonlight;
    Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

IV
She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
    Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

V
The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
    Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

VI
    Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
    Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up strait and still!
VII
*Tlot-tlot,* in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
   Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

VIII
He turned; he spurred to the West; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew grey to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
   The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

IX
Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
   Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.

X
*And still of a winter's night, they say,* when the wind is in the trees,
*When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,*
*When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,*
A highwayman comes riding—
   Riding—riding—
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

XI
*Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard,*
*And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;*
*He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there*
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
   Bess, the landlord's daughter,
*Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.*
Annabel Lee
by Edgar Allen Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love-
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me-
Yes!- that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we-
Of many far wiser than we-
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.
The Cremation of Sam McGee
by Robert W. Service

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
   By the men who toil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
   That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
   But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
   I cremated Sam McGee.

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton blooms and blows.
Why he left his home in the South to roam 'round the Pole, God only knows.
He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell;
Though he'd often say in his homely way that "he'd sooner live in hell."

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our way over the Dawson trail.
Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold it stabbed like a driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze till sometimes we couldn't see;
It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night, as we lay packed tight in our robes beneath the snow,
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing heel and toe,
He turned to me, and "Cap," says he, "I'll cash in this trip, I guess;
And if I do, I'm asking that you won't refuse my last request."

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no; then he says with a sort of moan:
"It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.
Yet 'taint being dead--it's my awful dread of the icy grave that pains;
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair, you'll cremate my last remains."

A pal's last need is a thing to heed, so I swore I would not fail;
And we started on at the streak of dawn; but God! he looked ghastly pale.
He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day of his home in Tennessee;
And before nightfall a corpse was all that was left of Sam McGee.

There wasn't a breath in that land of death, and I hurried, horror-driven,
With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid, because of a promise given;
It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say: "You may tax your brawn and brains,
But you promised true, and it's up to you to cremate those last remains."

Now a promise made is a debt unpaid, and the trail has its own stern code.
In the days to come, though my lips were dumb, in my heart how I cursed that load.
In the long, long night, by the lone firelight, while the huskies, round in a ring,
Howled out their woes to the homeless snows—O God! how I loathed the thing.
And every day that quiet clay seemed to heavy and heavier grow;
And on I went, though the dogs were spent and the grub was getting low;
The trail was bad, and I felt half mad, but I swore I would not give in;
And I'd often sing to the hateful thing, and it hearkened with a grin.

Till I came to the marge of Lake Lebarge, and a derelict there lay;
It was jammed in the ice, but I saw in a trice it was called the “Alice May.”
And I looked at it, and I thought a bit, and I looked at my frozen chum;
Then “Here,” said I, with a sudden cry, “is my cre-ma-tor-eum.”

Some planks I tore from the cabin floor, and I lit the boiler fire;
Some coal I found that was lying around, and I heaped the fuel higher;
The flames just soared, and the furnace roared—such a blaze you seldom see;
And I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal, and I stuffed in Sam McGee.

Then I made a hike, for I didn’t like to hear him sizzle so;
And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled, and the wind began to blow.
It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled down my cheeks, and I don’t know why;
And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak went streaking down the sky.

I do not know how long in the snow I wrestled with grisly fear;
But the stars came out and they danced about ere again I ventured near;
I was sick with dread, but I bravely said: “I’ll just take a peep inside.
I guess he’s cooked, and it’s time I looked;” . . . then the door I opened wide.

And there sat Sam, looking cool and calm, in the heart of the furnace roar;
And he wore a smile you could see a mile, and he said: “Please close that door.
It’s fine in here, but I greatly fear you’ll let in the cold and storm—
Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee, it’s the first time I’ve been warm.”

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who moil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
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