

English Literature – Ballads

Year 7 Autumn Term



Key Ballads:

The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner by Coleridge.
The death of an albatross curses a ship trapped in the middle of the ocean

Charlotte Dymond by Causley.
The real-life story of an 18-year-old girl who was murdered in 1894 on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall.

Gresford Disaster by Anonymous.
A real-life story of Gresford Colliery in Wales, 1934 where an explosion and underground fire killed 266 men.

The Highwayman by Alfred Noyes.
Set in 18th century rural England, it tells the story of an unnamed highwayman who is in love with Bess, a landlord's daughter

The Lady of Shalott by Tennyson.
A Lady, trapped in a tower, is cursed when she looks out of the window.

Lofty and Ned by Crust.
The story of two crooks who plan to rob a bank

Language:

Onomatopoeia: a word that sounds similar to its sound “tlot, tlot”.

Personification: giving an inanimate object human attributes.

Metaphor: referring to person or object by connecting it with something similar: “The moon *was* a ghostly galleon.”

Simile: comparing 2 things using ‘like’ or ‘as’ “hair *like* mouldy hay.”

Imagery/figurative writing:
this is when the poet uses creative language and techniques such as similes, metaphors and personification to convey an idea.

Overlap

Tragedy: an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress, such as a serious accident, crime, or natural catastrophe.

Tragic: The adjective used to describe a tragedy

Structure

Repetition: repeating a word or phrase “riding - Riding—riding—”.

Meter/Rhythm: a strong regular repeated pattern.

Rhyme: similar sounding words that are linked together.

Stanza: an arrangement of a certain number of lines, usually four or more, in a poem

Refrain: a phrase which is repeated in different stanzas

A ballad should contain a regular rhyming pattern, a strong, regular meter and a refrain. It should tell a story.

Key Themes

Love; Honour; Crime; Superstition; Magic

Context

Oral tradition: Ballads were traditionally passed down through the generations by being told aloud. They were often set to music and sung.

Some ballads are based on real-life events, others can be mythical or allude to famous stories from Literature.

Key words

Highwayman - a man, typically on horseback, who held up travellers at gunpoint in order to rob them

Collier – a coal miner

Mariner – a sailor

Albatross – a large white bird usually found in the southern oceans

Camelot – The legendary castle of King Arthur

Example Exam Questions

Question 3: How does the writer use language and structure to present the highwayman?

Question 4: ‘The highwayman is a hero’ how far do you agree?

Question 5/6: Write an extra stanza about what happens to Tim the Ostler after the events in the poem.

