

# BALLAD NOTES



A ballad is a narrative poem that tells a story.

Ballads were meant to be sung and often contain “childlike” qualities.

Today, many songs are still written in ballad form.

# BALLAD NOTES



## Types of ballads:

- \* folk ballad
- \* literary ballad

Traditionally, folk ballads were written by unknown authors and handed down orally, literary ballads are a product of the writer's conscious effort, to imitate the folk-ballad style.



## **A folk ballad:**

- \* is a brief narrative poem intended to be set to music**
- \* opens abruptly**
- \* recounts a single dramatic episode – often tragic**
- \* often contains supernatural elements**
- \* implies more than it actually tells**
- \* includes dialogue, often without directly stating who is speaking**



**A folk ballad (continued):**

**\* is made up of four-line stanzas (or quatrains) in which the second & fourth lines rhyme**

**\* contains repetitions of sounds, words, and phrases (Why? For emphasis and for ease of remembering the lines)**



- \* Ballads contain are made-up of simple language – ballads use common, simple language that everyone can understand
- \* Stories – ballads are narrative in that the poem tells a story



Stanzas – ballads are written in stanzas, usually made up of four lines each, with a rhyme scheme

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> lines rhyme

A

B

A

B


or

A

B

C

B



~ Repetition – a ballad often has a refrain (repeated section) or chorus

~ Dialogue – ballads often have many characters in the storylines. Dialogue usually occurs between two or more characters

~ 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Objective Narrative – ballad narrators usually do not speak in first person and do not express emotions relating to the poem's content



A **rhyme scheme** is the pattern of rhyming lines in a poem. It is usually referred to by using letters to indicate which lines rhyme.

For example: **abab** indicates a four-line stanza in which the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> lines rhyme, as do the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>.



»»»  
Rhyme is determined by **sound**, not **spelling**, so don't get fooled. Which of these two pair of words rhyme?

puff/enough **OR** through/though

Sounds that almost rhyme are called "slant rhymes" or "near rhymes."

For example: "fat" & "can't"  
or "psalm" & "arm"