

Name: _____

Ballad

Is a narrative poem or song that follows a set rhythm and rhyme sequence.

Each stanza has four lines

Each line is set in iambic pentameter

The rhyme scheme is traditionally:

A

B

C

B

D

E

F

E

G

H

I

H

ETC

Iambic Pentameter

Iamb – metric foot

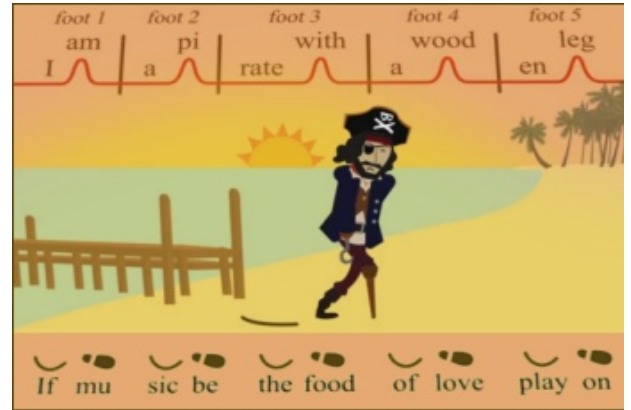
Pent – five

Meter – Rhythm in a line of poetry determined by the syllables and stresses

Let's put it all together!

Iambic Pentameter is a line of 5 stressed and unstressed syllables:

ba BUM / ba BUM / ba BUM / ba BUM / ba BUM



Think of it like a pirate walking with a peg leg.

Often times these poems weren't written down because they were passed down orally and therefore the authors are unknown.

In the Yukon we have our own oral traditional ballad that is passed down or at least recited often enough to be recognized by true sourdoughs.

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
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 musing 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 cursèd cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.
Yet 'tain't 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;
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Now let's see if you can recognize some of these stanzas below from famous ballad poems and songs.

Says I to my Missis: "Ba goom, lass! you've something I see, on your mind." Says she: "You are right, Sam, I've something. It 'appens it's on me be'ind. A Boil as 'ud make Job jealous. It 'urts me no end when I sit." Says I: "Go to 'ospittel, Missis. They might 'ave to coot it a bit." Says she: "I just 'ate to be showin' the part of me person it's at." Says I: "Don't be fussy; them doctors see sights more 'orrid than that."	Title: Poet/Artist:	The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day; The score stood four to two with but one inning more to play. And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same, A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.	Title: Poet/Artist:
Well, I grew up quick and I grew up mean. My fist got hard and my wits got keen. Roamed from town to town to hide my shame, but I made me a vow to the moon and the stars, I'd search the honky tonks and bars and kill that man that gave me that awful name.	Title: Poet/Artist:	There she weaves by night and day A magic web with colours gay. She has heard a whisper say, A curse is on her if she stay To look down to Camelot. She knows not what the curse may be, And so she weaveth steadily, And little other care hath she, The Lady of Shalott.	Title: Poet/Artist:
And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon Little boy blue and the man in the moon "When you coming home, dad?" "I don't know when" But we'll get together then You know we'll have a good time then	Title: Poet/Artist:	Dear Slim, I wrote you but still ain't callin' I left my cell, my pager, and my home phone at the bottom I sent two letters back in autumn, you must not-a got 'em There probably was a problem at the post office or somethin' Sometimes I scribble addresses too sloppy when I jot 'em	Title: Poet/Artist:
He was a boy/She was a girl Can I make it any more obvious? He was a punk/She did ballet What more can I say? He wanted her/She'd never tell Secretly she wanted him as well But all of her friends/Stuck up their nose They had a problem with his baggy clothes	Title: Poet/Artist:	There lived a certain man in Russia long ago He was big and strong, in his eyes a flaming glow Most people looked at him with terror and with fear But to Moscow chicks he was such a lovely dear He could preach the Bible like a preacher Full of ecstasy and fire But he also was the kind of teacher Women would desire	Title: Poet/Artist:
Father McKenzie Writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear No one comes near Look at him working Darning his socks in the night when there's nobody there What does he care? All the lonely people Where do they all come from? All the lonely people Where do they all belong?	Title: Poet/Artist:	She gave herself without reserve, With eagerness and joy He took her with indifference Then cast her off like a broken toy There was a girl who thought the world Was filled with gold and pearls She smiled with hazy eyes And lips that barely curled She had been taught she should believe And so her life went on And through the years she still could hear The echo of her song	Title: Poet/Artist:
Well, I took a stroll on the old long walk Of a day-I-ay-I-ay I met a little girl and we stopped to talk Of a fine soft day-I-ay-I-ay And I ask you, friend, what's a fella to do? 'Cause her hair was black and her eyes were blue	Title: Poet/Artist:	I always had that dream like my daddy before me So I started writing songs, I started writing stories Something about that glory just always seemed to bore me 'Cause only those I really love will ever really know me	Title: Poet/Artist: