

Core Curriculum Standards

Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details

- RL.7.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- RL.7.3** Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Reading Literature: Craft and Structure

- RL.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- RL.7.5** Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.
- RL.7.6** Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

Reading Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details

- RI.7.3** Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

Reading Informational Text: Craft and Structure

- RI.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- RI.7.5** Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

Writing: Texts Types and Purposes

- W.7.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing

- W.7.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

DAY NINE | Ballad

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- SL.7.4** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Lesson Goals

Outcomes

Students will learn the structure of a ballad. They will also see how a poem can also tell a narrative rather than simply describing an image. *Students will have to have completed the Day 7 lesson covering poetic devices/ figurative language in order to successfully participate in this lesson.*

Themes, Issues, Concepts

classic poem, keeping a promise, survival, man vs. nature, greed

Literary Terms

ballad form, plot, metaphor, simile, free-verse

Materials

YouTube (optional)

SchoolTube

“The Ballad of Patrick Constantine” by Maggie Fox, 2012 7GP Winner

“The Cremation of Sam McGee” by Robert W. Service

Teacher Tips — *Are some of your students reluctant to submit a poem to the contest? Here's an idea:*

- Provide an area where poems are placed anonymously for consideration. The student should label the paper “poetry contest” with his/her class period. This also helps to provide subjectivity when selecting the winning poem.
- Post the “winning” poem during that particular period for the student to claim. From my experience, the poem will be proudly claimed.

DAY NINE | Ballad

Lesson Plan

PAGE 1

DO NOW (5 minutes)

Ask students to freewrite about the following prompt: Are there any stories that your family tells that you've heard many times? Or, perhaps there is a story about yourself that you like to tell friends to entertain them. Write a summary of one of these stories for someone who had never heard that story before.

WHOLE GROUP (20 minutes)

Play one (or more) of the following videos:

“Wayfaring Stranger” by Johnny Cash on SchoolTube
www.bit.ly/12rRH17

Maggie Fox (7GP Winner, 2012) reading “The Ballad of Patrick Constantine”:
www.7gp.org/maggie-the-ballad-of-patrick-constantine

EXTRA— Additional Videos

“Wake Me Up When September Ends” by Green Day: <http://youtu.be/NU9JoFKlaZ0>

“Grapevine Fires” by Death Cab for Cutie: <http://youtu.be/H8ZUV9IBEXY>

“Home Again” by Michael Kiwanuka: <http://youtu.be/kJ4s3G7hgR4>

After the students have watched the videos, ask them what they have in common. They are all ballads! Explain the following:

- The stanza in a ballad is called a “quatrain.”
- Ballads always tell a story.
- A ballad has a rhyme scheme (Ex: abcb or aabb).
- Ballads have a repeated part. This part is called a refrain

Have students read “The Cremation of Sam McGee” by Robert W. Service. Assign parts so that the students read the poem aloud, which will allow them to hear the repetition and the musical aspect of a ballad. Have them circle any words they don't understand, underline parts or details they like, etc. Then, as a class, decipher the words they don't understand.

EXTRA — Reading “The Cremation of Sam McGee”

Watch someone reading “The Cremation of Sam McGee” on SchoolTube:
<http://bit.ly/V4TylD>

Ask students what are the characteristics and themes in “The Cremation of Sam McGee.” Responses may include: narrative, four line stanzas, rhyming pattern, repetition, dialogue, told in 1st person, keeping a promise, survival, etc.

DAY NINE | Ballad

Lesson Plan

PAGE 2

PARTNERS/SMALL GROUPS (15 minutes)

Divide the class into four sections. Each section will be assigned five or six stanzas of the poem. The students must underline/highlight examples of poetic devices/figurative language in this poem. Students will report their findings to the class.

INDEPENDENT (10 minutes)

All students will read “The Ballad of Patrick Constantine” by Maggie Fox. Again, students must underline/highlight examples of poetic devices/figurative language in this poem, and afterward, they will share what they discovered.

REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Now that they are familiar with the ballad form, what does this add to their knowledge of what makes a good poem? How does the ballad compare to forms, such as the haiku? Why write a poem in a ballad rather than a haiku, or free-verse poem?

HOMEWORK

Ask students to come up with their own definition of what poetry is to bring in for Day Ten.



Remind students this is their chance to write a poem for the contest. They are the author and they can choose any topic and any style. Winning poems are due and must be submitted to 7GP no later than January 29, 2016.

The Ballad of Patrick Constantine

by Maggie Fox (7GP Winner, 2012)

That good ol' Patrick Constantine,
But good is the wrong word.
He loved his money and was mean,
His antics were absurd!
All his wishes were our command,
His selfish spirit soared.
His dreaded rule controlled the land,
The voice of hell had roared!
How to control this brawny beast,
Was much a mystery.
"Well, we could stuff his mouth with yeast,
Then shove him up a tree!"
That was the end of Constantine,
The plan had worked out well.
No longer was this dreaded man
Creating living hell!

The Cremation of Sam McGee

by Robert W. Service (1874–1958)

*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 '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."

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