

The Highwayman

Y5/6 Reading Booklet

Part One



2g - Language choices

Name :



The Highwayman

Learning objective:

To use line-by-line reading to explore the language used to create atmosphere and foreshadowing by the poet in Part One of the Highwayman by Alfred Noyes.

Shared reading focus:

Establish meaning by ensuring pupil attentiveness to specific language choices and details given and implied by the author, allowing opportunity to confirm and revise predictions as the read continues. Zoom in on the specific language choices to explore how Noyes creates a dark and sinister atmosphere in Part One.

Text: **The Highwayman** (Part One) by Alfred Noyes

The Highwayman

By Alfred Noyes

PART ONE

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.

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.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard.
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.

And dark in the dark 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 red-lipped daughter.
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say-

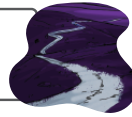
"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar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

He rose upright in the stirrups. He scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair in 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,
(O, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.

Vocabulary

torrent

a heavy, rushing stream



galleon

a large three-masted sailing ship



moor

an area of open, rolling land



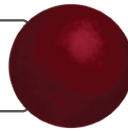
French
cocked-hat

a hat with three corners that used
to be worn with some uniforms



claret

a dark purplish red colour



breeches

trousers that reach to the knee



doe-skin

the skin of a deer



rapier

a narrow-bladed, sharp-pointed sword
used in the eighteenth century



hilt

the part of the sword where it is held



ostler

a man employed to look after the
horses of the people staying at an inn



stirrups

loops of metal, wood or leather hung from
a saddle to support the rider's feet



Background information

From 1650 to 1800, when wealthier people needed to travel across the country, they rode in stagecoaches. These were large horse-drawn vehicles.

As wealthy people often travelled with items of value, like jewellery and coins, they became the target of highwaymen and women – robbers on horseback.



Artist's impression of a highwayman robbing a stagecoach

Lesson 1

Do now

a) galleon b) torrent c) claret

a dark purplish red colour

a large three-masted sailing ship

a heavy, rushing stream

Stop and jot 1 - Making predictions

Which section of the poem?

All of part one

Both the Highwayman and
Tim the ostler love Bess.
What do you think Tim the
ostler will do after hearing the
Highwayman's plans?

Prediction

Evidence

What has helped you to make
this prediction?

After reading the full text:

YES

☐

NO

☐

The poet uses lots of pronouns to refer to characters in the text, rather than repeating their names. 'Thee' means 'you' in old-fashioned English. Using your understanding of the text, complete the following task:

Stop and jot 2 - establish meaning - referent question - pronoun focus

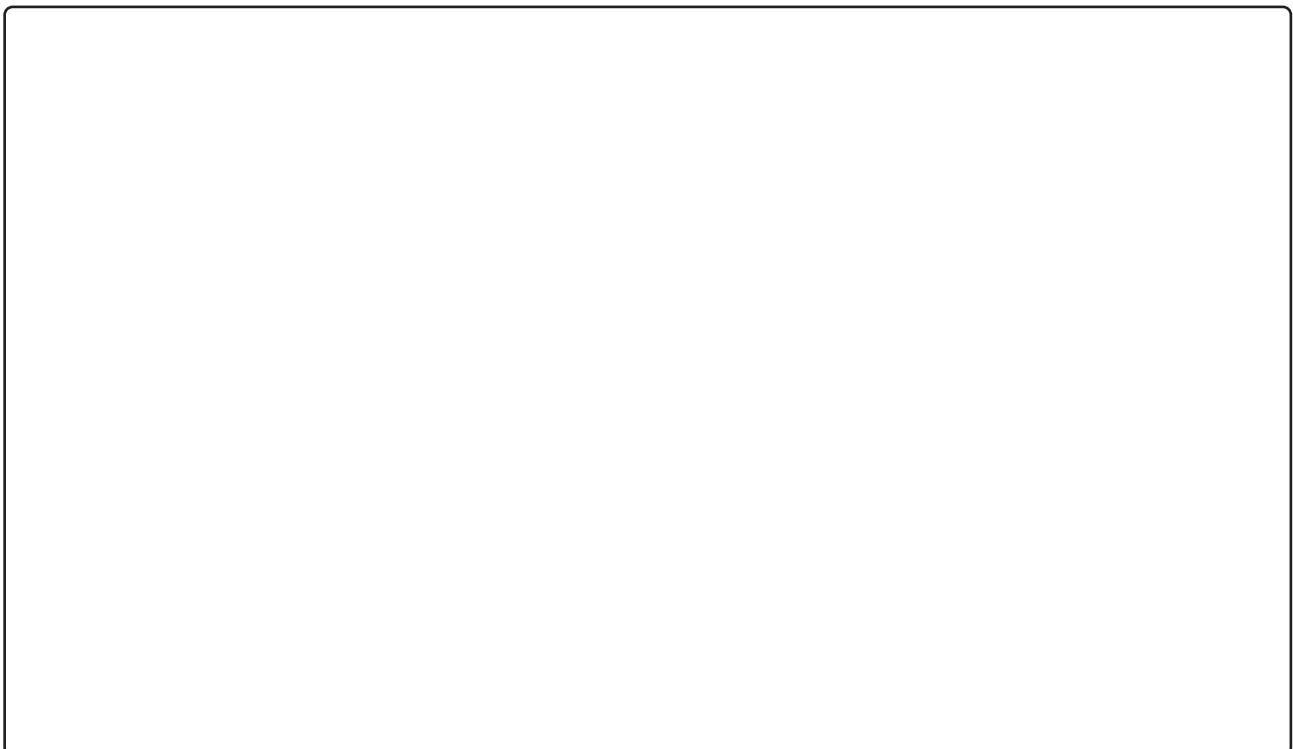
Who do the underlined pronouns refer to in the text?

I'll come to <u>thee</u> by moonlight, though hell should bar the way.	
<u>His</u> eyes were hollows of madness...	
Over the cobbles <u>he</u> clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard	
But <u>she</u> loosened her hair in the casement	

Stop and jot 3 - establish meaning - draw the image

Stanza 6

Draw what you understand about how Bess interacted with the Highwayman.



Stop and jot 4 - establish meaning - retrieval

Circle the correct answer:

The Highwayman's plans that night were to...	steal gold	rest for the night	take Bess
Tim the ostler listened from...	inside the stable	inside the tavern	the roadside
If the Highwayman is chased by the law, he will...	never return	return to Bess the next night	return to Bess the next morning

Lesson 2

Do now

a) ostler b) stirrups c) hilt

a man employed to look after the
horses of the people staying at an inn

loops of metal, wood or leather hung
from a saddle to support the rider's feet

the part of the sword where it is held

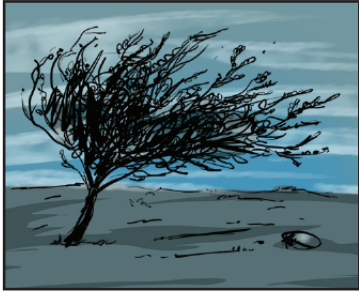
Stop and jot 1 - sensitivity analysis - figurative language

The poet uses metaphorical language in the first three sentences to create an atmosphere. By using metaphors, he is helping the reader or listener of the poem to paint a picture in their mind of what the scene would look like. Let's imagine the scene without metaphors:

The wind blew amongst the trees.
The moon was in the sky.
The road went over the moor,
And the highwayman came riding-
Riding-riding-
The highwayman came riding, up to the
old inn-door.

Without the metaphors, this stanza does not create a very strong atmosphere - the reader or listener does not feel like the description is positive or negative.

Let's analyse how each metaphor creates an atmosphere and whether this is a positive one (conjures up feelings of happiness) or a negative one (conjures up feelings of fear or worry):



‘The wind was a
torrent of darkness
among the gusty
trees’

Metaphor 1 - Line 1

What is the wind compared to?

What impression does this give you of the weather that night?

Is this a positive or a negative comparison?



‘the moon was a
ghostly galleon
tossed upon cloudy
seas’

Metaphor 2 - Line 2

What is the moon compared to?

What impression does this give you of the moon?

Is this a positive or a negative comparison?



'the road was a
ribbon of moonlight
over the purple
moor'

Metaphor 3 - Line 3

What is the road compared to?

What impression does this give you of the road and its surroundings?

Is this a positive or a negative comparison?

Stop and jot 2 - analysing meaning - language choices to create atmosphere

The 'atmosphere' in a text is created by the 'mood' set by the writer.

Lots of Negatives

tense

nervous

stressed

Lots of Positives

excited

elated

happy

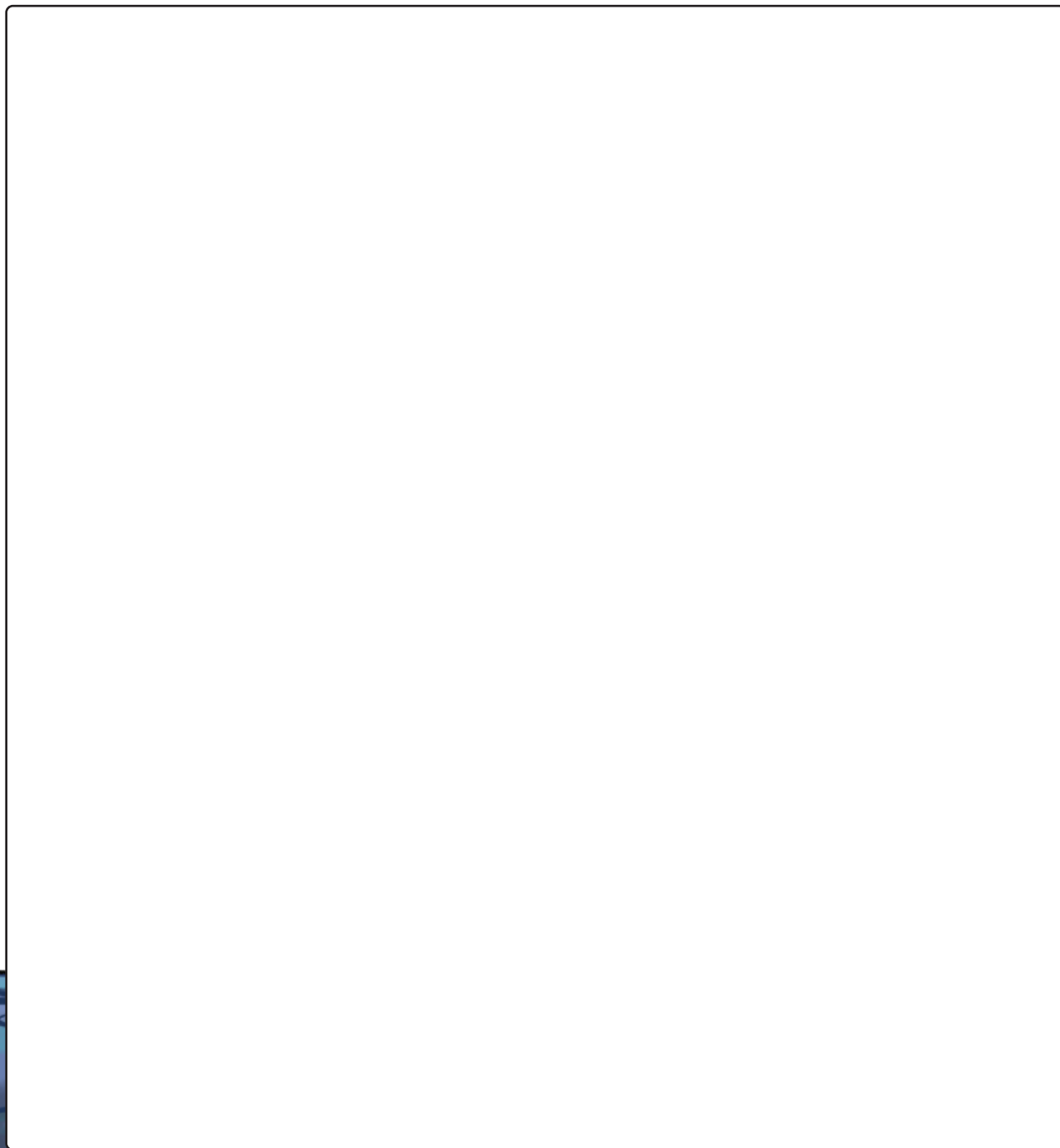
From what you have learned so far, answer the following questions:

What atmosphere does Alfred Noyes create in the first stanza of the poem? How does he do this?

Stop and jot 3 - establish meaning - draw the image

Stanza 1

Draw what you understand about how the landscape looked. Label your drawing with quotations from the text.



Lesson 3

Do now

a) French cocked-hat

b) claret

c) breeches

a dark purplish red colour

☐

a hat with three corners that used to be worn with some uniforms

☐

trousers that reach to the knee

☐

Stop and jot 1 - analysing meaning - language choices to create atmosphere

Alfred Noyes carefully chose words and phrases to create a tense and fearful atmosphere in stanza 4.

Circle the word/group of words in each line which has been chosen to create this atmosphere.

Two separate words - '...in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked'

One group of words - 'His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay...'

The character, Tim the ostler, is introduced for the first time in stanza 4.

What impression is the reader or listener given about Tim?

Remember to comment on use of positive/negative language to create atmosphere and mood.

Stop and jot 2 - analysing meaning - imagery

Writers use imagery to evoke emotions in the reader or listener. These ideas are sometimes entwined throughout a text.

Let's look at an example together:

PART ONE

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The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

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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.

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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 red-lipped daughter.
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say-

"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."

He rose upright in the stirrups. He scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair in 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,
(O, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away

The ribbon-like road is lit up by moonlight.

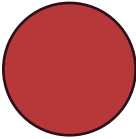
Artist's impression of Stanza 6



The locks of her hair are described as waves (similar shape to a ribbon) and he kisses her hair in the moonlight. It is also possible that a ribbon tied her hair up and when she 'loosened' it, the ribbon fell – once again connecting the two characters.

With this in mind, you could argue that 'waves' and 'ribbons' in moonlight unite the two lovers throughout the poem – the ribbon of moonlight is the road that unites them and the waves in the moonlight is the hair that falls for the Highwayman to touch.

There are some other images or symbols in part one which we can be interpreted as a 'foreshadowing' – this is when a writer uses an image or symbol to tell you what is going to happen in the future.

Symbol	Meaning
the colour red 	love death (blood) danger warning

Go back and underline where the colour red is used in the poem and then answer the following question:

Red symbolises love, death (blood), danger and warning. What foreshadowing message do you think Alfred Noyes is trying to give to the audience before they experience part two of the poem?

Think carefully about all characters involved and the events about to unfold that night.

Lesson 1

Do now

a) galleon b) torrent c) claret

a dark purplish red colour

c

a large three-masted sailing ship

a

a heavy, rushing stream

b

Stop and jot 1 - Making predictions

Which section of the poem?

All of part one

Both the Highwayman and
Tim the ostler love Bess.
What do you think Tim the
ostler will do after hearing the
Highwayman's plans?

Prediction

I think that Tim the ostler
will tell the authorities that
the Highwayman will
return the next night so
that he can be captured
and then he can have Bess
to himself.

Evidence

What has helped you to make
this prediction?

He is listening in the dark
and seems like a sly char-
acter. He also loves Bess
and would probably be
jealous of the Highway-
man.

After reading the full text:

YES

☐

NO

☐

The poet uses lots of pronouns to refer to characters in the text, rather than repeating their names. 'Thee' means 'you' in old-fashioned English. Using your understanding of the text, complete the following task:

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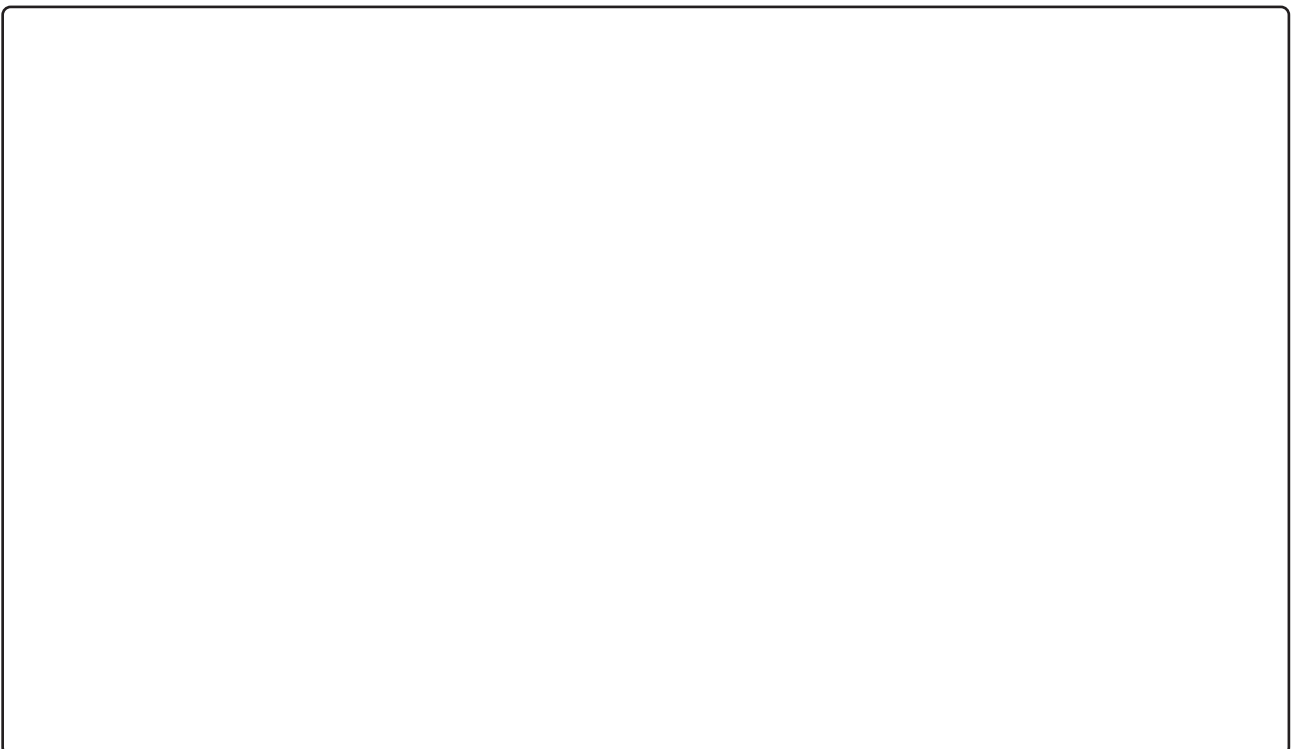
Who do the underlined pronouns refer to in the text?

I'll come to <u>thee</u> by moonlight, though hell should bar the way.	Bess
<u>His</u> eyes were hollows of madness...	Tim the ostler
Over the cobbles <u>he</u> clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard	the Highwayman
But <u>she</u> loosened her hair in the casement	Bess

Stop and jot 3 - establish meaning - draw the image

Stanza 6

Draw what you understand about how Bess interacted with the Highwayman.



Stop and jot 4 - establish meaning - retrieval

Circle the correct answer:

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Do now

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a man employed to look after the horses of the people staying at an inn

a

loops of metal, wood or leather hung from a saddle to support the rider's feet

b

the part of the sword where it is held

c

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‘The wind was a
torrent of darkness
among the gusty
trees’

Metaphor 1 - Line 1

What is the wind compared to?

a river of darkness

What impression does this give you of the weather that night?

It was violently windy.

Is this a positive or a negative comparison?

negative



‘the moon was a
ghostly galleon
tossed upon cloudy
seas’

Metaphor 2 - Line 2

What is the moon compared to?

a ghostly ship

What impression does this give you of the moon?

That it was white like a ghost, spooky and that dark, enveloping clouds surround it.

Is this a positive or a negative comparison?

negative



'the road was a
ribbon of moonlight
over the purple
moor'

Metaphor 3 - Line 3

What is the road compared to?

a ribbon

What impression does this give you of the road and its surroundings?

It was a thin, long and twisting, and the surroundings were dark and spooky.

Is this a positive or a negative comparison?

negative

Stop and jot 2 - analysing meaning - language choices to create atmosphere

The 'atmosphere' in a text is created by the 'mood' set by the writer.

Lots of Negatives

tense
nervous
stressed

Lots of Positives

excited
elated
happy

From what you have learned so far, answer the following questions:

What atmosphere does Alfred Noyes create in the first stanza of the poem? How does he do this?

He creates a tense atmosphere in the first stanza by using negative metaphorical language which makes the setting sound dark, aggressive and scary.

Lesson 3

Do now

a) French cocked-hat

b) claret

c) breeches

a dark purplish red colour

b

a hat with three corners that used to be worn with some uniforms

a

trousers that reach to the knee

c

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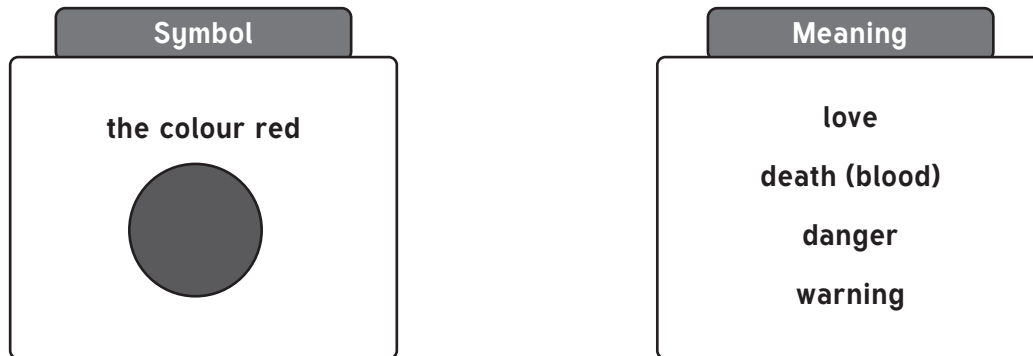
What impression is the reader or listener given about Tim?

Remember to comment on use of positive/negative language to create atmosphere and mood.

Tim is described in a hideous and unappealing way. The use of negative language to describe Tim creates a tense and sinister atmosphere as he listens in the shadows.

With this in mind, you could argue that 'waves' and 'ribbons' in moonlight unite the two lovers throughout the poem – the ribbon of moonlight is the road that unites them and the waves in the moonlight is the hair that falls for the Highwayman to touch.

There are some other images or symbols in part one which we can be interpreted as a 'foreshadowing' – this is when a writer uses an image or symbol to tell you what is going to happen in the future.



Go back and underline where the colour red is used in the poem and then answer the following question:

Red symbolises love, death (blood), danger and warning. What foreshadowing message do you think Alfred Noyes is trying to give to the audience before they experience part two of the poem?

Think carefully about all characters involved and the events about to unfold that night.

I think that Alfred Noyes is foreshadowing that one of the characters will be killed. Tim the ostler has overheard that the Highwayman is off to steal gold and will return soon after. He may warn someone so that the Highwayman is killed or Bess may be killed instead.