

What to do today

IMPORTANT Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and any weblinks or use of internet.

1. Read the first verse of The Highwayman

- Read the *Highwayman First Verse*. Read it in your head first and then try reading it out loud. What patterns do you notice? What mood would you say this verse has? What do you think might happen?

2. Watch the PowerPoint of The Highwayman

- Watch the *PowerPoint of The Highwayman* or watch the video animation and follow the words as you do.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryu1JZiSbHo>
- When you have finished try to tell the story out loud. What happens in this narrative poem?

3. Put the events in order

- Cut out the *Highwayman Events* and try to put them in order.
- Watch the PowerPoint or the video again to help.
- When you have finished, check your answers with a grown-up. Tell them the story of what happens. They can look at the end of this pack for the answers.

4. Write five questions

- The poem is a bit mysterious. Write five questions or puzzles that the poem raises.

Try the Fun Time Extra

Read the *Tips for Learning a Poem By heart* and try learning the first verse and some other verses of the poem by heart. Could you perform this to someone else? Your older relatives may know the poem from school.

Highwayman – First Verse

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.



The Highwayman

By Alfred Noyes

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.

II

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.

III

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.

IV

And dark in the 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 –

V

'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.'

VI

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

VII

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching-
Marching-marching-
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

VIII

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter, and bound her, to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through the casement, the road that he would ride.

IX

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They bound a musket beside her, with the muzzle beneath her breast!
'Now, keep good watch!' and they kissed her.
She heard the dead man say-
Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

X

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

XI

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the muzzle beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

XII

Plot-plot; plot-plot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Plot-plot; plot-plot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up straight and still.

XIII

Plot-plot, in the frosty silence! Plot-plot, in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him - with her death.

XIX

He turned; he spurred to the West; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew grey to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

XX

Back, he spurred like a madman, shouting a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

XXI

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding –
Riding – riding –
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

XXII

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard,
And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles 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.

by Alfred Noyes

Highwayman Events - Put the events into the right order

A. One night the Highwayman rides to the inn to see Bess, the landlord's daughter.

B. Bess hears the noise of the Highwayman's horse's hooves getting closer and closer.

C. The next morning the highwayman finds out that Bess saved him by shooting herself to warn him.

D. The Highwayman rides away when he hears the noise of the gun shot.

E. Tim the ostler watches Bess talking to the Highwayman and is jealous because he loves her.

F. Ever since then, on a winter's night people say the ghosts of Bess and the Highwayman are seen.

G. There is no sign of the highwayman in the daytime, but King George's men arrive at the inn.

H. The highwayman kisses Bess goodbye and promises he will return before tomorrow night.

I. Bess twists and turns her hands until she manages to get one finger on the trigger of the gun.

J. Bess shoots herself as a warning to the highwayman to turn back.

K. The soldiers shoot the highwayman as he is riding like a madman along the highway.

L. The King's Men make fun of Bess and tie her up to the bed.

M. Bess wants to escape but her hands are tied together too tightly.

N. They have also tied a musket beside her, aiming right at her.

Highwayman Questions



Top tips for learning a poem by heart

- Read the poem aloud several times slowly.
- Copy the poem out a couple of times.
- Be strategic. Pick a poem with a pattern, metre and rhyme are much easier to learn by heart than free verse.
- Learn and internalise the “story” in the poem
- Understand the poem by knowing every word’s meaning
- With a card, cover everything but the first line of the poem. Read it. Look away, see the line in the air, and say it. Look back. Repeat until you’ve “got it.”
- Uncover the second line. Learn it as you did the first line, but also add second line to first, until you’ve got the two.
- Then it’s on to three. Always repeat the first line on down, till the whole poem sings.



Highwayman – Sequence of Events - ANSWERS

A

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H

G

L

N

M

I

B

J

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C

K

F