

Exploring how language has been used for effect in *The Highwayman*

REPETITION

1. Red is used repeatedly in the poem.
 - a) How many references to red, or shades of it, can you find?
 - b) What do you associate the colour red with?
 - c) Why do you think Alfred Noyes chose to mention red so much in his poem?

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

2.

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.

- a) What type of figurative language is used in the highlighted line?
- b) What do you think the phrase means?
- c) Why do you think Noyes wanted to have that meaning in his poem?

DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE

3. Remember that descriptive language **includes** figurative language.

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—

Look at the stanza above to answer the questions below.

- a) What impression of Tim has the poet created? And how has he done this?
- b) Why do you think the poet wanted to give those impressions of Tim?