










# Songs of Innocence And Experience: (d)

## Ballads

# Songs of Innocence And Experience: (d) Ballads

 refers to links on [www.crossref-it.info](http://www.crossref-it.info)

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To examine Blake's use of the ballad form in this collection.
  - (  Synopses and commentary for appropriate poems)
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Play a game of Chinese whispers
  - Start at one end with four lines of a poem with regular rhyme and rhythm (perhaps a Blake poem which the students have not yet met)
  - Start at the other end with a similar length piece of prose (perhaps from a newspaper report)
  - Which was remembered more easily and more accurately? (Hope that it was the poetry!)
  - Introduce the idea of the ballad, an oral form which was used to convey stories etc.
    - Why might Blake have used this form?  
(  The context of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* > Literary context > Enlightenment literature)
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Write up on the board the following list of characteristics of a ballad:
  - Short narrative
  - Use of dialogue
  - A pacy, dramatic approach
  - Plain language
  - Repetition
  - Simple rhyme and rhythm (usually 4-line verses)
  - Third-person objective narration
  - Either dividing all the poems up around the group, or concentrating on certain poems chosen by the teacher, students identify where Blake has used these characteristics (and, perhaps, where he has not)
  - They write examples on strips of paper or card
    - These are then fastened onto the board beside the characteristic which each is illustrating
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Looking at the examples, identify which Blake makes most use of
  - Is there a reason for this?
  - What overall effect does his use of ballad characteristics have?
  - Is there any difference between the examples from *Innocence* and those from *Experience*?  
(  The context of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* > Literary context)
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Choose a current news story and write your own ballad version, following as many of the characteristics as you can
  - You could take either the standpoint of innocence or experience as appropriate to the story  
(  The context of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* > Social / political context)  
(  Themes and significant ideas > What did Blake mean by 'Innocence' and 'Experience'?)
- ❖ **Critical task:** 'Blake's use of the ballad form makes his poetry too simplistic to be worthy of serious study.' How far do you agree with this critical view?
  - Examine 3 or 4 poems in detail in your answer.  
(  Critical approaches to *Songs of Innocence and Experience* > Varied critical responses)  
(  Aspects of literature > Romanticism)
- ❖ **Extension task:** Find a number of ballads from various periods of history
  - Examine how the ballad form has developed from its earliest use up to the present day
  - Does the ballad still have a role to play?  
(  *Songs of Innocence and Experience* > Timeline)