

Name _____ Date _____

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SONGS OF FREEDOM

Music played an important part in the lives of Americans born into slavery. Songs were a way of giving encouragement and hope for a free future. Read about three popular songs, then answer the questions.



LET MY PEOPLE GO

This song refers to the Exodus in the Bible, when the Israelites left Egypt for freedom. Americans born into slavery also wanted freedom and to leave the South.

*“When Israel was in Egypt’s land,
Let my people go.
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.
Go down, Moses,
’Way down in Egypt land.
Tell old Pharaoh:
Let my people go.”*



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

was a writer, statesman and anti-slavery activist. He also escaped slavery to freedom in the North. In one of his books, he writes about the songs sung by enslaved people to encourage each other to escape. Here is part of one of the songs that inspired him:

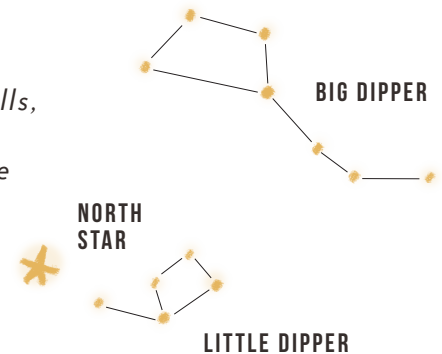
*“O Canaan, sweet Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.”*

Douglass said about the song:
“We meant to reach the North —
and the North was our Canaan.”

FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD

A gourd was a dried vegetable shell used for drinking. The song may refer to the Big Dipper, the star formation that includes Polaris, or the North Star. Those who escaped slavery followed the North Star to get to the free states in the North.

*When the sun come back,
When the first quail call,
Then the time has come
Follow the drinking gourd.
The river’s bank is a very good road,
The dead trees show the way,
Left foot, peg foot going on,
Follow the drinking gourd.
The river ends between two hills,
Follow the drinking gourd;
Another river on the other side
Follow the drinking gourd.
When the little river
Meets the great big one,
The old man waits—
Follow the drinking gourd.*



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What represented the North in the song that encouraged Frederick Douglass?

What does “my people” mean in the song?

Which direction would you go if you followed the Big Dipper?

UNSCRAMBLE
THE WORDS



RDGOU OPPLLE RSTA THRON
○○○○○ ○○○○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○○○

About Poetry: Rhyme Scheme

A rhyme scheme shows the pattern of words at the end of a line in a poem. It uses letters to represent the sounds. Words that sounds alike, or rhyme, have the same letter. The letter A represents the first group of sounds, the letter B represents the second group, continuing until the end of the poem.

Example:

Time to Rise

by Robert Louis Stevenson

A birdie with a yellow bill A
 Hopped upon my window sill, A
 Cocked his shining eye and said: B
 "Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy-head!" B

A group
 bill
 sill
B group
 said
 head

The words "bill" and "sill" are the first group of ending words. Since they have the same sound, or rhyme, they are both marked with the letter A. The words "said" and "head" rhyme, but do not rhyme with either "bill" or "sill." They are a new group and marked with the letter B.

Example:

Fairy Bread

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Come up here, O dusty feet! A
 Here is fairy bread to eat. A
 Here in my retiring room, B
 Children, you may dine C
 On the golden smell of broom B
 And the shade of pine; C
 And when you have eaten well, D
 Fairy stories hear and tell. D

A group
 feet
 eat
B group
 room
 broom
C group
 dine
 pine
D group
 well
 tell

Determine the rhyme scheme for the following poems.

Looking Forward

by Robert Louis Stevenson

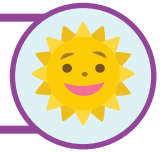
When I am grown to man's estate _____
 I shall be very proud and great, _____
 And tell the other girls and boys _____
 Not to meddle with my toys. _____

At the Sea-Side

by Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was down beside the sea _____
 A wooden spade they gave to me _____
 To dig the sandy shore. _____

My holes were empty like a cup. _____
 In every hole the sea came up, _____
 Till it could come no more. _____



Name: _____

Date: _____

MY SHADOW

by Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me, from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller, like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I 'rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.



Two words **rhyme** when the last part of the words sound the same. In poetry, words at the end of a line often **rhyme**. In this poem, "grow" and "slow" **rhyme** and "ball" and "all" **rhyme**. The rhyming words must sound the same, but do not have to be spelled the same way, like "head" and "bed".

Find three rhyming words that are not in the poem for the words listed below.

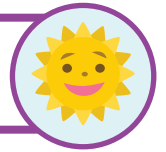
see _____

play _____

up _____



Read with Rhythm & Rhyme



Name: _____

Date: _____

Rhythm is the beat of the words in a poem. When we say words out loud, we stress (emphasize) some sounds and not others. Rhythm in poetry is important. It makes the words flow in a pleasant way.

Here is the rhythm in the first line of this poem. The stressed sounds are in capital letters, the unstressed words are in small letters.

i HAVE a LITtle SHADow THAT goes IN and OUT with ME

Say the sentence out loud to hear the rhythm. Now, try saying in the opposite way, putting the stress on the wrong sounds.

I have A litTLE shaDOW that GOES in AND out WITH me

The rhythm is wrong, and the words sound silly. Here is the second line of the poem with the stressed sounds.

and WHAT can BE the USE of HIM is MORE than I can SEE.

Write the following lines from the poem. Capitalize the sounds that are stressed. Write the unstressed sounds in small letters.

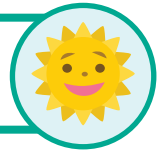
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,



Haiku How-To



Name: _____

Date: _____

Haiku is a style of Japanese poetry that traditionally describes nature. A haiku poem has *three lines* and *17 syllables*. The first line has five syllables, the second has seven, and the third has five.

Count the syllables in the example below:

An old silent pond.	_____
A frog jumps into the pond--	_____
splash! Silence again.	_____

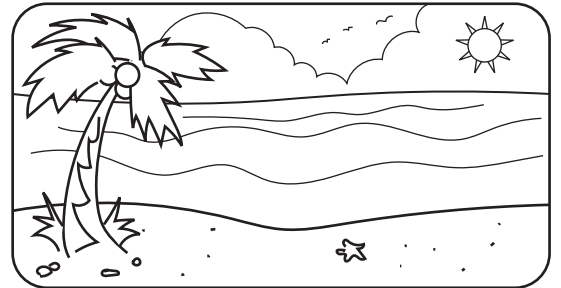
-Matsuo Basho

Complete the haiku below by filling in the blanks.
Remember to count the syllables.

Sun shines on _____

A warm breeze blows _____

Summer is _____



Now it's your turn! Pick something from nature and describe it using the haiku form. Remember to count the syllables in each line.

Name _____

Date _____

Bio Poem Template

A bio poem, short for a biographical poem, is a poem that describes a person. This poem template is written in present tense but can be used for a person who is no longer living as well.

Directions: Consider the bio poem example of famous jazz musician Thelonious Monk. Then use the template to write a bio poem about someone.

Thelonious
Born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina
Dedicated, innovative, rebellious
Who loves playing and listening to the piano
Who fears going through more tough times
Who feels the importance of leaving his mark on jazz music
Who would like to see others influenced by his work
Monk



Write the person's first name: _____

Write this person's birthplace: _____

Write three adjectives describing the person: _____, _____, _____

Write what this person loves: _____

Write what this person fears: _____

Write what this person feels: _____

Write what this person would like to see: _____

Write this person's last name: _____

Born in _____

Who loves _____

Who fears _____

Who feels _____

Who would like to see _____

Rewrite your poem on another sheet of paper and add drawings or pictures of the person.