

Narrative poems

Some poems tell stories. These poems tend to be quite long and often rhyme. As the poem is a narration, it usually tells a story that has a beginning, middle and end, with characters and plot development, an exciting ending and conclusion.

Rhyming narrative poems

Before writing and books were common, people used **narrative poetry** to tell stories. The rhymes and the rhythm made the stories easy to remember and pass on to other people.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by **Samuel Taylor Coleridge** is a good example of a narrative poem.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.
Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

It tells the story of a sailor left alone on a boat when the rest of the crew dies. The underlined words rhyme.

Free-form narrative poem

A narrative poem that **does not** contain a predictable rhyme scheme but does contain the various parts of poetry (alliteration, symbolism, metaphors, similes), is called a free-form narrative poem, or prose poem. Free-form narrative poems still tell a story but the only limit to these types of narrative poems is the poet's imagination!