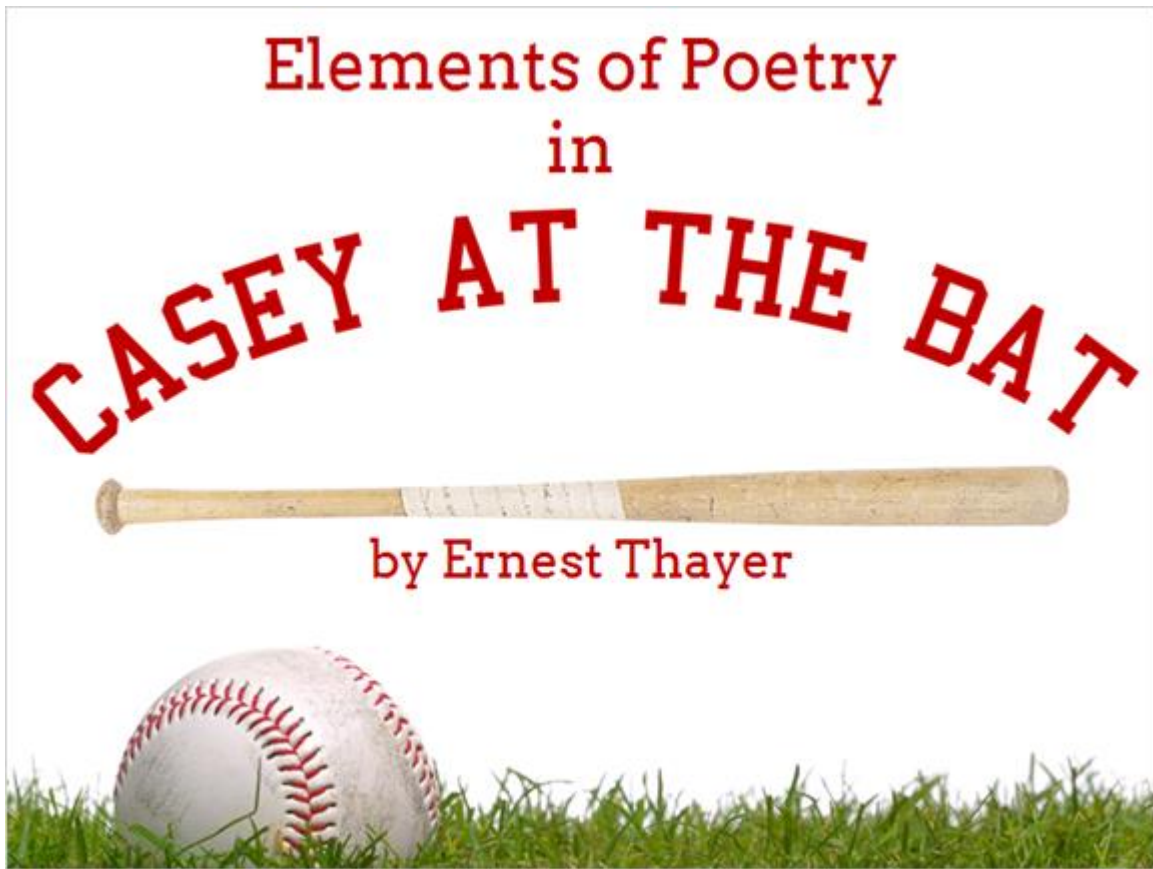


**Module 5: Poetry**  
**Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes**



Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Thayer

## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes



Written by Ernest Thayer in 1888, “Casey at the Bat” is a comical ballad about a small-town baseball team and their star player. A ballad is songlike and tells a story, so “Casey at the Bat” has been performed all over the United States since it was first written. The speaker in the poem is telling a story of what happened to Casey during a game in Mudville.

When the poem starts, a game is in its last two innings and the home team is losing. Take a few moments to read and listen to the poem. As you do, keep notes of anything interesting that you notice about the poem. After the poem, you will examine some of the different elements of poetry in “Casey at the Bat.”

## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville Nine that day;  
the score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play.  
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,  
a sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A stragglng few got up to go in deep despair. The rest  
clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;  
they thought, if only Casey could get but a whack at that -  
they'd put up even money, now, with Casey at the bat.



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## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,  
and the former was a lulu and the latter was a fake,  
so upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,  
for there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,  
and Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;  
and when the dust had lifted, and the men saw what had occurred,  
there was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.



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## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes

Then from five thousand throats and more there rose a lusty yell;  
it rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;  
it knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,  
for Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;  
there was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.  
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,  
no stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.



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## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;  
five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt.  
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,  
defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,  
and Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.  
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped--  
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.



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## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,  
like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore.  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand;  
and it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;  
he stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
he signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;  
but Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."



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## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered fraud;  
but one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.  
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,  
and they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;  
he pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.  
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,  
and now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.



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**Module 5: Poetry**  
**Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes**

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;  
the band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,  
and somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;  
but there is no joy in Mudville - mighty Casey has struck out.



Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;  
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and somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;  
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The Mudville fans were certainly disappointed by that game. Did you think that Casey was going to hit that final pitch or were you surprised when he missed it? Now, click **NEXT** to explore some elements of poetry in "Casey at the Bat."

## Module 5: Poetry

### Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes

**stanza**

**rhyme**

**couplet**

**quatrain**

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;  
there was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.  
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,  
no stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.



A stanza is a group of lines in a poem that form the metrical verse. In "Casey at the Bat," you find two different types of stanzas. When viewing the poem, you may have noticed that every two lines in the poem rhyme. Rhyming occurs when two words sound similar, or have endings that sound similar. In this selection, "place" and "face" rhyme and "hat" and "bat" rhyme. These pairs of lines are couplets, which are two lines in a poem that rhyme or have the same meter. A quatrain is a set of four lines in a stanza. If you look at the poem, you will notice that the rhyming in these quatrains follow a pattern of AABB.

**Module 5: Poetry**  
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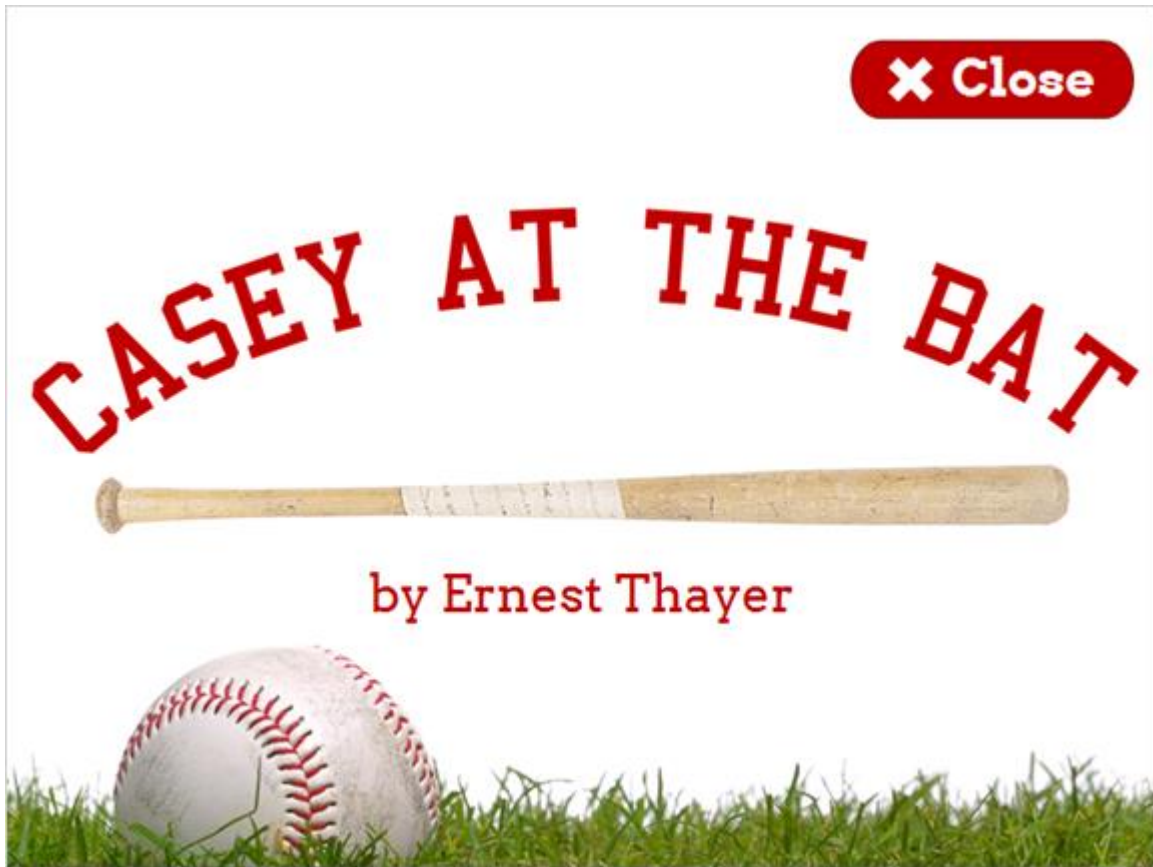
## slant rhyme

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;  
he stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
he signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;  
but Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."



You might have noticed that Thayer did something sneaky with the first couplet in quatrain ten. Though the words “shone” and “on” look like they should rhyme, they only almost rhyme. This device is called a slant rhyme, or a lazy rhyme. It may seem like the poet did not put in the effort to make these lines rhyme, but poets often use this device to avoid making the rhymes too predictable.

**Module 5: Poetry**  
**Topic 1 Content: Elements of Poetry in "Casey at the Bat" Notes**



As you continue your study of poetry, make sure to look for the elements that you just examined in "Casey at the Bat." Important terms like stanza, couplet, quatrain, and rhyme apply to many different types of poems. Click **CLOSE** to close the interactivity.