

This is the opening to *Casabianca* by Felicia Hemans.

A boy is standing on a ship which is now in flames.

'The boy stood on the burning deck,  
Whence all but he had fled;  
The flame that lit the battle's wreck,  
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,  
As born to rule the storm;  
A creature of heroic blood,  
A proud, though childlike form.

The flames rolled on – he would not go,  
Without his father's word;  
That father, faint in death below,  
His voice no longer heard.'

**1. What should you do when you first start examining the form of a poem?**

- a. Notice patterns in how the poem sounds and its layout on the page
- b. Read the poem listening carefully for rhythm and rhyme
- c. Look closely at the poem noticing the layout on the page

**2. Now look at the stanzas. How many lines are there?**

- a. Each of the three stanzas has four lines (quatrains).
- b. The stanza is 12 lines long.

**3. Now look for rhymes. What is the rhyme scheme?**

- a. The rhyme scheme is ABAB meaning every other line rhymes.
- b. The rhyme scheme is AAAA meaning every line ends with the same rhyme.

**4. Now, let's focus on the rhythm. Read the poem aloud and see which of these statements is true.**

- a. Each line has a similar rhythm or beat but there are eight syllables in the first line, followed by six syllables in the second line.
- b. Each line has the same rhythm or beat and the same number of syllables

**5. Now, using this information, let's see if we can identify the form. What is the form of this poem?**

- a. It is a sonnet.
- b. It is free verse.
- c. It is a type of ballad.

**6. Finally, we should think about the writer's intention. Why is this form important to the ideas in the poem?**

- a. The ballad form is important because the short, regular stanzas and rhyme scheme helps to propel the story forward, adding to the drama of whether the boy and his father will be rescued.
- b. The form is important because it is in quatrains which makes it easy to keep listening to - even with a long poem.
- c. The form is important because the rhyme scheme helps us to remember the story of the heroic boy.