

Ballad – A form of folk literature, they were passed down from generation to generation verbally. It's a form of verse to be sung or recited. It is and characterized by its presentation of a dramatic or exciting episode in simple narrative form.

Ballads come from oral tradition, so no strict rules dictate their form. However a number of characteristics are associated with ballads. Every ballad contains some of these elements: **supernatural elements; sensational, sordid, or tragic subject matter; a refrain; and the omission of details.**

1. Incremental repetition – used to build suspense. A phrase or sentence is repeated with a new element added each time until the climax is reached.
2. A question and answer format – the facts of the story are revealed little by little from the answers. This builds suspense.
3. Conventional patterns – understood by listeners to have meaning beyond their literal eons.
4. A strong, simple beat – ballads were sung for the general audience; therefore, the rhyme and meter was simple.