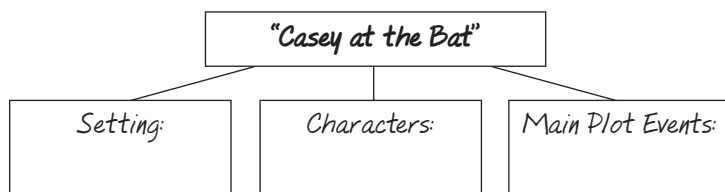


LITERARY ANALYSIS: NARRATIVE POETRY

Like fiction, poetry can tell stories. Poems that do so are called **narrative poems**. Just as any other story, a narrative poem has characters, a plot, and a setting. It presents a conflict and might also include suspense.

As you read “Casey at the Bat,” identify its setting, characters, and main plot events in a diagram like the one shown. Also note the suspense that builds as you read the story.



READING STRATEGY: READING POETRY

In addition to the elements that all stories have, narrative poems include poetic elements that add meaning and interest. Much of the energy and excitement of “Casey at the Bat” comes from the poet’s use of **sound devices**, such as repetition, rhyme, and rhythm.

- **Repetition** is the repeating of a sound, word, phrase, or line to emphasize something in a poem.

For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

- **Rhyme** is the repetition of sounds at the ends of words.

It looked extremely rocky for the Mudville nine that day;
The score stood two to four, with but an inning
left to play.

- **Rhythm** is a pattern of stressed (´) and unstressed (˘) syllables in a line of poetry.

Then ´ from the ´ gladden´ed ´ multitu´de ´ went ´ up ´ a
joyous ´ yell—

As you read the poem, pay attention to the sound devices. Reading the poem aloud may help you.

Review: Make Inferences

One-Hit Wonder

Although Ernest Lawrence Thayer wrote many poems for newspapers, he is remembered for just one: “Casey at the Bat.” Thayer was educated at Harvard



Ernest Lawrence Thayer
1863–1940

University. Being

known among his classmates as a very funny person probably helped him become editor, and later president, of the university’s humor magazine, the *Lampoon*.

Crowd Pleaser After graduation, Thayer joined the staff of the *San Francisco Examiner*, where in 1887 he began writing a poem for each Sunday issue. “Casey at the Bat” was first printed in the paper in 1888. By the time of Thayer’s death in 1940, “Casey at the Bat” had become an American favorite.



MORE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For more on Ernest Lawrence Thayer, visit the **Literature Center** at ClassZone.com.

Background

America’s Sport Baseball began in the United States in the mid-1800s. Small towns and large cities formed teams and clubs. The first baseball game with set rules was played in 1846 between Cartwright’s Knickerbockers and the New York Baseball Club. By the early 1900s, going to baseball games was a favorite pastime of people throughout the United States.