

Article: "Blake's Work Burns Bright" • Issue: October 19, 2009

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Poem Analysis

"The Tiger" by British poet William Blake was published in 1794 as part of a collection of poems titled *Songs of Experience*. "The Tiger" is one of Blake's best-known and most-analyzed poems. Now it's your turn to analyze it. Read the poem below, and answer the questions that follow.

## The Tiger

*by William Blake*

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| <p>① Tiger! Tiger! burning bright<br/>In the forests of the night<br/>What immortal hand or eye<br/>Could frame thy fearful symmetry?</p> <p>② In what distant deeps or skies<br/>Burnt the fire of thine eyes?<br/>On what wings dare he aspire?<br/>What the hand dare seize the fire?</p> <p>③ And What shoulder, and what art,<br/>Could twist the sinews of thy heart?<br/>And when thy heart began to beat,<br/>What dread hand? and what dread feet?</p> | <p>④ What the hammer? what the chain?<br/>In what furnace was thy brain?<br/>What the anvil? what dread grasp<br/>Dare its deadly terrors clasp?</p> <p>⑤ When the stars threw down their spears,<br/>And watered heaven with their tears,<br/>Did he smile his work to see?<br/>Did he who made the lamb make thee?</p> <p>⑥ Tiger! Tiger! burning bright<br/>In the forests of the night,<br/>What immortal hand or eye<br/>Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?</p> |
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## The Sounds of Poetry

- A quatrain is a four-line stanza. How many quatrains are in this poem? \_\_\_\_\_
- A couplet is a pair of rhyming lines. How many couplets are in each stanza? \_\_\_\_\_
- Describe the rhythm of the poem. How many syllables are in each line? What do you notice about the rhythm of the syllables? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Alliteration is the repetition of beginning sounds, like "Peter picked a pack of pickled peppers." Give two examples of alliteration in "The Tiger." \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Explore Meaning

1. How does Blake want readers to feel about the tiger? What words elicit these feelings?

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2. In the first two stanzas, to what does Blake compare the tiger? (**HINT:** What “burns bright”?)

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3. What question or problem does Blake present to readers in this poem?

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4. The question in the final stanza repeats the first stanza, except for one word. What is the word? Why do you think Blake made this change?

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**YOU'RE THE POET**  
Write your own poem about an animal, using at least two quatrains.