"The Cremation of Sam McGee" by Robert Service (text page 736)
Narrative Poem

Critical Reading Questions
On the line to the left, write the letter of the best answer. Make sure your penmanship is legible.

1. What makes "The Cremation of Sam McGee" a narrative poem?
   a. It uses regular rhythm and rhyme.
   b. It is told in the first person.
   c. It tells a story.
   d. It contains a surprise ending.

2. What information presented early in the poem is essential for the development of the plot?
   a. Sam McGee comes from Tennessee.
   b. No matter how warmly he dresses, Sam is always cold.
   c. The Arctic trails are lit by the Northern Lights.
   d. Sam and the narrator are mushing the Dawson trail on Christmas Day.

3. In the poem, both Sam McGee and the speaker are involved in
   a. prospecting for gold
   b. running a ferry across the lake
   c. training sled dogs
   d. newspaper reporting

4. Based on the following line, which word best describes the atmosphere or mood established in the opening of the poem?
   The Arctic trails have secret tales . . .
   a. jolly
   b. sad
   c. humorous
   d. strange

5. The speaker of the poem is
   a. Sam
   b. Cap
   c. Lebarge
   d. a husky

6. According to the poem, before the men go to sleep on Christmas night, Sam tells the speaker that
   a. he is going back to Tennessee the next morning
   b. he has found gold
   c. he will die soon
   d. he is hungry

7. From details in the poem, the speaker can be described as
   a. proud
   b. sensitive
   c. easygoing
   d. loyal
8. Why does "hot sweat" roll down the cheeks of the speaker even though the temperature is "icy cold"?
   a. He is nervous about cremating his friend.
   b. The heat from the fire is intense.
   c. The howling of the dogs worries him.
   d. He is frightened by the midnight sun.

9. The crematorium that the speaker is seeking turns out to be
   a. a sled
   b. a lake
   c. a forest
   d. an abandoned ship

10. The speaker keeps his promise to Sam McGee by
    a. feeding the huskies
    b. burning Sam's body
    c. starting a fire on Lake Lebarge
    d. returning home at the first opportunity

11. From details in the poem, we may assume that the cremation takes place
    a. at sunrise
    b. at noon
    c. at night
    d. during a warm spell

12. When the speaker opens the door, he is surprised because
    a. Sam has disappeared
    b. the fire has gone out
    c. Sam speaks to him
    d. he sees two bodies instead of one

13. What is the most important effect of the rhythm pattern used in the poem?
    a. to make the reader feel the cold of the Yukon winter
    b. to introduce a feeling of mystery
    c. to duplicate the rhythm of the dogs pulling the sled
    d. to create a sense of anticipation

14. The final stanza of the poem
    a. introduces a new character
    b. changes the pattern of rhyming words
    c. exactly repeats the first stanza
    d. changes the overall rhythm
1. In “The Highwayman,” who overhears the conversation between the highwayman and Bess?
   a. Tim the ostler
   b. the landlord
   c. one of the redcoats
   d. a gypsy

2. In “The Highwayman,” when the highwayman asks Bess to wait, he is planning to
   a. commit a robbery
   b. win a prize in a contest
   c. exchange some possessions for gold
   d. fight the redcoats

3. In “The Highwayman,” which of these details helps build suspense?
   a. the fact that the highwayman’s boots come up to his thigh
   b. the fact that Bess hears the horse hoofs before the redcoats do
   c. the fact that Bess is the landlord’s daughter
   d. the fact that Bess has long black hair

4. Which pair of sentences about “The Highwayman” shows a cause-effect relationship?
   a. Bess has long black hair. The highwayman wears lace at his chin.
   b. The wind was a torrent of darkness. The road was a ribbon of moonlight.
   c. He did not come in the dawning. He did not come at noon.
   d. The highwayman commits a robbery. The redcoats come to the inn.

5. Which line from “The Highwayman” best contributes to the feeling of suspense?
   a. And he rode with a jeweled twinkle
   b. Bess, the landlord’s daughter
   c. Nearer he came and nearer. Her face was like a light.
   d. Plaiting a dark red love knot into her long black hair.

6. In “The Highwayman,” how did the redcoats know that the highwayman would be coming to see Bess?
   a. It was probably common knowledge in the town.
   b. Tim the ostler had told them.
   c. They had followed him many times.
   d. Bess’s father had told them.

7. Why do you think the highwayman was hurrying back toward the inn after hearing that Bess had died?
   a. He wanted to attend her funeral.
   b. He wanted to comfort her father.
   c. He didn’t believe the news.
   d. He wanted to get revenge against those responsible for her death.