

In Other Words. . .

The play *The Ballad of John Henry* includes some lines from the original 1927 ballad, which tells the story of John Henry in lyrical language. A ballad is meant to be sung, and the language often conjures up a specific time in history. In this activity, you will study a few lines from that 1927 ballad, and then see if you can rewrite them using your own words.

Directions: Rewrite each of the lines from *The Ballad of John Henry* in the space provided. Be creative and have fun with this!

1. When John Henry was a little baby, sitting on his daddy's knee, he picked up a hammer, a little piece of steel, said hammer be the death of me, Lord, Lord, hammer be the death of me.

Your words:

2. Looka yonder what I see—the drill done broke and the hole's done choke, and you can't drive steel like me, Lord, Lord, and you can't drive steel like me.

Your words:

3. The man who invented the steam drill thought he was mighty fine. John Henry drove his 15 feet, an' de steam drill only made 9.

Your words:
