The Lyrical Ballads:

What is a lyric?

What is a ballad?

What kind of meanings emerge when you join the two words?

“Simon Lee”:

1. The following questions refer to ll. 69-80
   Why does Wordsworth expect the reader to begin becoming impatient with his poem? What do you think he means by the line “I’m afraid that you expect / Some tale will be related.” How and why does Wordsworth gently admonish (reprimand) the reader? What is the effect of having Wordsworth address the reader directly--break the fourth wall of the ballad?

2. How does Simon Lee bridge the gap between literature and life, how does it assert a community of feeling between sophisticated and simple?

3. How is this an example of Wordsworth’s belief that in poetry, "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation"

4. Is there any way that the poem makes us feel less for him than we might since he is broken down because he played so hard?

5. This is, in effect, an elegy: how does the tone of the poem conflict with an elegiac mood?
6. How do Simon Lee and both the little girl and the narrator of “We Are Seven” cleave to one thing or idea with a pathetic, courageous, or even frightening tenaciousness? How has this physical cleaving, which is the central passion, resulted from a separation? How might they be cleaving to one thing or idea in order to be saved from a still deeper sense of separation— that is, what might be the difference between how loss is ordinary but passion is extraordinary in these poems?

7. Analyze the last stanza: What is the elusive meaning of the last few lines? How does he slow our reading down? What is the effect of the repetition of kind/kind? What different meanings does the word “kind” involve? Is there any sense of irony at the end?

“We Are Seven”

1. How many ways can you read the line “What should [a simple child] know of death?”

2. How does she define “we are seven”?

3. Why can’t the narrator understand the little girl? Why does he argue with her that she has only 5 brothers and sisters? How do the world views of the girl and the narrator differ?