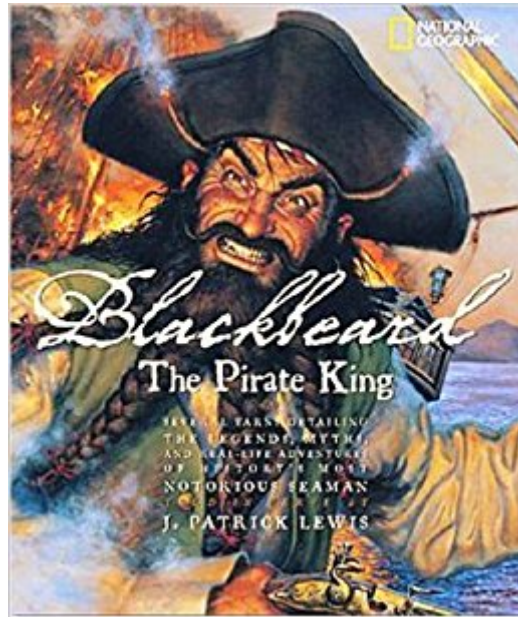




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Blackbeard The Pirate King



Synopsis

Now, the real-life adventures and the myths of the 18th century Pirate King Edward Teach have inspired a thrilling collection of biographical poems by J. Patrick Lewis—collected in a picture-book format that will quicken the pulses and fire the imaginations of young adventurers everywhere. This dramatically illustrated book combines history, adventure, geography, and poetry in a treasure trove of rhymes about Blackbeard and his bloodthirsty seadogs. While Lewis's swashbuckling verse celebrates Blackbeard's mystique, the author's extensive historical note recovers the facts of Edward Teach's life from time-encrusted layers of legend. The spine-tingling poetry also explores many lesser-examined realities amid the mass of mythology inspired by Blackbeard. Each of these 14 poems is written in a distinctive style as Lewis explores different aspects of the pirate's life. Blackbeard's seaborne reign of terror also roars to life in carefully selected historical prints, dating back to the earliest known images of the Pirate King. **Blackbeard: The Pirate King** is a rich chronicle of the most notorious pirate to ever scour the oceans. It's a book to be plundered and treasured by young dreamers with imagination in their blood, poetry in their bones, and a thirst for adventure on the high seas.

Book Information

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

Customer Reviews

Grade 4-7—A close-up cover illustration of the infamous Edward Teach, teeth bared and

eyes glaring, will draw pirate aficionados and the curious alike to this book. Lewis offers 12 poems (some with awkward rhyme schemes) that will be best appreciated by those who know a little about Blackbeard and pirating history, though a footnote with important details follows most poems and an author's note mentions sources. What truly shines here is the design. Each poem is presented with a striking illustration—there's N. C. Wyeth's painterly *Duel on the Beach*; Howard Pyle's evocative *An Attack on a Galleon*; a reproduction of one of the earliest known images of Blackbeard, by Thomas Nicholls (circa 1730); and an illustration (aglow in reds and oranges) of the terrifying Teach by the contemporary artist Rick Farrell. The variety of fonts and the pale brown pages evoke images of long-ago texts. Share this collection with reluctant poetry readers and anyone fascinated with the topic.

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J. Patrick Lewis has published 38 children's books, many of them poetry or nonsense verse. He lives in Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

My mistake...wanted Blue Beard...not Black Beard...this book for older kids. Keeping.

I bought this for my daughter who, despite being a real 'girlie-girl', took a huge interest in pirates. She thoroughly enjoyed reading about Edward Teach - was particularly fascinated by Teach's practice of putting lit matches in his hat. And I am elated that she is interested in something not pink or glittery. Well written and illustrated.

Jimmy will love reading this book. As always, once again, has found the right gift for me to give!!

I bought this for the background information and the Maitz cover, well, mostly for the latter.

This book assumes you already know a lot about Blackbeard. J. Patrick Lewis writes poetry to tell Blackbeard's biography, and uses artwork from many eras to illustrate the book. It's interesting and fun, but it is difficult to tease the biographical information out of this book. As a work of literature, this is dynamite, but as a biography, it may not be the best choice. Lewis does include a timeline at the end to summarize the known facts of Blackbeard's life, and the small captions on each page are good. But things like putting fuses in the hat - I had never heard that legend before, and this book did not address it, although many illustrations showed it. Some context for those blazing fuses

would have been a good addition, even if it meant including a page on the legends of Blackbeard.

National Geographic publishers have turned their sights to the world of poetry, it seems. But not your namby-pamby flowers and sunshine type poems. No, sir. Poems with blood. Poems with gunfire. Poems with pirates! And what better way to celebrate all things piratical than with a little Blackbeard action, eh? With all things pirate hotter now than ever, the time is ripe for a book that can be part biography and part illustrated history. Throw in a couple pirate poems and the concept is a touch confusing, but no less amusing. Author J. Patrick Lewis culls together what little we know about Blackbeard's life and sets it ah-rhyming. Though a bit awkward and difficult to follow, I can think of no better work of poetry to hand to those boys forced to do poetry book reports against their will. Or, for that matter, pirate loving lasses. The book is twelve poems, each of which documents a significant moment in Blackbeard's life. From his early days as Edward Teach to his eventual piratical apprenticeship under Benjamin Hornigold, Lewis weaves together fact and myth to bring us the a book that appreciates Blackbeard at his best. With lush color illustrations from such artists as Howard Pyle, N.C. Wyeth, and some contemporary works as well, the book is a bright brassy alluring look at a most notorious and mysterious historical figure. The poetry itself is rather good. It scans beautifully and even tries for different poetic forms here and there. I can't tell my stanza from my ode, but I know enough about the art to know that Lewis is comfortable in escaping the standard a,b,a,b rhyme schemes so favored by lesser children's poets. I, for one, would have enjoyed a couple more sea shanties, of course. I mean, when you think of rhyming pirates you have one of two images leap to mind. Either "The Pirates of Penzance" or sea shanties. And if you're an original author, definitely go with the shanties every time. One of the essential problems with this book is how the information is presented to the reader. If you happen to know Blackbeard's biography by heart then you should have no trouble reading the poems and figuring out what they refer to. For each section Lewis presents a picture, a poem, and, in tiny type, an explanation of the aforementioned at the bottom of the page. Sometimes these explanations clear up the poetry. Sometimes they don't. For the full story you have to flip to the back of the book and read through the Blackbeard Time Line. In terms of history and interest, this information should really be at the front of the book. I suppose the publisher figured the poem "The Brethren of the Coast" with its image of one man sword fighting with another made for a better opener. Still, for clarity's sake, I'd prefer a little history before my poetry. Or at least facts first, artistic license second. Though, of course, sometimes even the explanations leave one out in the cold. When we learn that Blackbeard would hold contests of some sort where he would, "light several ... pots of sulfur, close the hatches, and

challenge his men to see who could stay below deck the longest", we're not entirely certain why this would be hard. An adult can probably figure out that sulfur stinks terribly and to stay would be near to intolerable. Child readers, on the other hand, are going to have to read a lot into the Frank Earle Schoonover painting that accompanies this info (an image which is more than a little oblique). That said, the facts that are here are fascinating. Blackbeard may have been born in Philadelphia... or maybe Bristol, England... or perhaps London, Jamaica. He eventually was pardoned by the English king in Bath, North Carolina and even settled down with a wife. Then he was off pirating again. That time period would make an excellent bit of historical fiction speculation, don't you think? I also loved the idea that someone could be apprenticed to a pirate. Not to bring it up again, but how much more "Pirates of Penzance" can you get? Good rhyming pirate books are few and far between. Should you have a kid who would like to pair this with a slightly goofier outing, might I suggest grabbing a copy of Lisa Wheeler's, "Seadogs" as well. The timing of the publication of this book couldn't be better. Pirates are hot hot hot stuff. So when the next Talk Like a Pirate Day rolls around (September 19th) I hope you remember to pluck this pirate-laden book of Blackbeard fun off of your shelves for a look-see. It's flawed but still a lot of fun. Arrrghh!

I love Blackbeard the Pirate King!! Great book about an amazing character!! Edward Teach was the most fright-envoking pirate of all time!

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