POETRY BOOK GRADING CRITERION

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HOMEWORK MACHINE

The Homework Machine, oh the Homework Machine,
Most perfect contraption that's ever been seen.
Just put in your homework, then drop in a dime,
Snap on the switch, and in ten seconds' time,
Your homework comes out, quick and clean as can be.
Here it is – “nine plus four?” and the answer is “three.”
Three?
Oh me...
I guess it's not as perfect
As I thought it would be.

~ Shel Silverstein

HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,
And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.
I've heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me

~ Emily Dickinson
What Is Poetry?

According to poet Marianne Moore, poems are “imaginary gardens with real toads in them.” It takes imagination just to describe poetry. A poem is an “imaginary garden” because it is a creation of the poet’s imagination, and because it also comes from the poet’s experiences in real life, it has “real toads,” too.

Poetry is all around you. It’s the jingles of jump rope chants, television commercials, and the words of songs you like. Poetry is popular because it is fun, interesting, and it’s a different way to communicate ideas and feelings. Poetry comes in all shapes and sizes. Nearly any topic, mood, or feeling can be expressed in a poem. One student wanted to write about seeing deer in a canyon. She could have described them in a paragraph or written a research report on deer. She decided that a poem would be the best way for her to describe the experience. This is the poem she wrote:

A Doe and Her Fawns

I was hot, dusty, thirsty,
Coming down the trail,
The sun blinding,
When I came
To a shady canyon valley.

As my eyes adjusted
To shade and green,
Trees and creek...
I saw the doe.

She watched me
And concluding I was
A friend,
Bent to munch the
Short grasses.

Then I heard frolic
Up the valley wall.
The doe stood tall
And glanced my way.

Down leapt a spotted fawn,
Prancing and leaping,
Joyfully dancing
To his mother’s side,
Where she nudged him close.

Then she looked up,
Her neck straining,
Her ears alert,
And when I looked,
I saw the other.

Prancing, dancing, leaping,
And playing,
The other fawn oblivious to rules,
Danger, the coming darkness,
Was taken by surprise.

The doe sprang up the wall,
And with a nip and a nudge,
Guided her fawn back to
The safety of the valley floor.

Then looking at me
As if to say,
“What’s a mother to do?”
Herded her contrite children
Through the valley’s opening
Back to home
In the setting sun,

And so did I.
How to Read a Poem

If you want to write poems that you and others will enjoy reading, you will need to strengthen your “poetic ear.” When you have a poetic ear, you can enjoy and appreciate reading and writing poetry. To strengthen your poetic ear, you need to read lots of poetry and write it, too.

Here is a very famous poem by American poet, Robert Frost. Read this poem and other poems by following this list of directions. After you’ve done this with a few poems, you will start to notice that your poetic ear is getting stronger.

First, read the poem carefully all the way through. Next, read the poem aloud. When you read a poem, pay more attention to the punctuation than to the ends of lines. If there is no punctuation, go right to the next line as you read just as you would for a sentence in a story. Listen to it as you read.

Extension: Write this poem on a piece of art paper and illustrate it. Choose several poems you like and write them in a poetry journal where you can collect your favorites.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound’s the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.
How to Write a Poem

To write a poem, follow these basic steps:

1. Choose a Subject
Just about any subject or idea will work. As you read more poetry, you will discover that poems have been written on just about every topic imaginable. It's a good idea to choose a subject that is familiar to you. Good subjects might be your pet, a family member, how you felt about an experience or event, a dream you had, or even what you see from your window.

Here are a few ideas to get your imagination in gear:

Think about a subject that is very important to you. Maybe it's baseball, clean air, world peace, or new shoes. If it's important to you, it will make a good poem because you will put energy and feeling into it. Think of some subjects that are often overlooked, such as a far corner of the garage, an old toy, or even your elbow. Things we don't pay much attention to often make good poem subjects.

Think of an event in your life and write your feelings about it. It could be a death in the family, a broken arm, a flight on an airplane, or visiting a faraway relative. Remember your senses when you think of topics for poems. You could write a poem about the sound of a dripping faucet at night, the smell of your dog coming in from the rain, or the sight of the sky after a storm.

2. Prepare to Write
You may want to let your idea incubate. Incubation is a word many writers use for prewriting. During this time, think about your topic, add to it, and think of other things that are related to your topic and what it is that you want to say about it. Ask your self “what if...” questions such as “What if my elbow got stuck?”, or “What if I had three elbows on each arm?”, or “What if my old teddy bear started to talk? Would he tell me about everything I did as a baby?"

3. Write the Poem
Once you have lots of ideas and notes, it’s time to get your poem on paper. Some poets write their poems just once and never change this. This doesn’t often happen, though, and when it does, the poet has probably spent a lot of time thinking about the poem ahead of time. Usually, poems are written just like anything else that is written. There are scratch-outs, mess-ups, and changes made until it is finished. Polish it as much as you can, avoiding imitation of another person or poet. Some of the best things about poetry are that it is imperfect and individual. You can structure your poem any way you want. It can have stanzas (like paragraphs), rhyme, or it can be free verse. It’s up to you. Don’t be surprised, though, if your poem takes shape as you are writing it.
Definitions

Use these definitions to help you understand various terms associated with poetry.

alliteration - the repetition of the beginning sound or letter in two or more words in a line of verse, such as “dappled doggies dash,” “bouncy bunnies,” “careening cars crashing,” etc.

assonance - the repetition of a vowel sound, in two or more words, such as “Till the shining scythes went far and wide.” (Robert Louis Stevenson)

consonance - the repetition of consonant sounds anywhere in a word (not just at beginning as in alliteration) in a line of verse, for example, “As Tommy Snooks/and Bessy Brooks/were walking/out one Sunday.” (nursery rhyme)

couplet - two lines of poetry that rhyme and usually contain one complete idea

end rhyme - (also called external rhyme) when there is a rhyming of words at the ends of two or more lines of a poem, for example, “Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,/Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.”

foot - a unit of meter, iambic, anapestic, trochaic, dactylic, or spondaic (see meter). A group of two or three syllables is called a poetic foot.

internal rhyme - rhyming of words within a line of poetry, for example, “Jack Sprat could eat no fat.”

metaphor - compares two different things as if they are the same, without using comparison words such as “like” or “as”; for example, “The moon is a white Frisbee floating over the mountain.”

meter - a pattern of stressed and unstressed (or accented and unaccented) syllables in a line of poetry. For instance, in the word “window” the first syllable is stressed and the second syllable is unstressed. In the word “casino,” only the second syllable is stressed. Here are some examples of the various types of meter in poetry:

iambic: anew, goodbye, surprise, go home
trochaic: doorknob, teaspoon, hangnail, jumpstart
dactyllic: angel food, talk to me, rabbit's foot, Saturday
anapestic: cigarette, resurrect, disinfect, creamy sup, big blue book
amphibrachic: tremendous, courageous, humongous, terrific, the palace, the right way
spondaic: heartburn, big top, red house, cold fish, run down
pyrrhic: in a, so he, with it, with the, and the
onomatopoeia - a word that mimics the sound it represents; words such as buzz, swish, zip, growl, hiss, gulp, zigzag, slither

quatrain - a four-line stanza or four rhymed lines, rhyme scheme of various forms such as a-a-a-a, a-b-a-b, a-b-b-a, a-a-b-a, a-b-c-b, a-b-c-d.

repetition - repeating a word, phrase, or sounds to add emphasis or rhythm. Probably the best example of repetition would be the lines from Edgar Allan Poe’s, “The Raven.” “While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, as of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.”

rhyme - two or more words with the same or similar sounds

rhyme scheme - a pattern of rhyme in a poem. For instance, if it is a quatrain and the first and the third lines rhyme, it has a rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b. If all four lines rhyme with each other, it has an a-a-a-a rhyme scheme. If the second and fourth lines rhyme, the scheme is a-b-c-b.

simile - comparison of two different things using comparing words such as “like” or “as.” An example is “I’m as hungry as a bear.”

stanza - a division or section of a poem named for the quantity of lines it contains; for instance, the couplet is a two-line stanza, the triplet is a three-line stanza, a quatrain is a four-line stanza. There are also sestets (six lines), septets (seven lines), and octaves (eight lines).

verse - a line of traditional poetry written in meter. In addition, verse has a name depending upon the number of feet per line: one foot (monometer), two feet (dimeter), three feet (trimeter), four feet (tetrameter), five feet (pentameter), six feet (hexameter), seven feet (heptameter), and eight feet (octometer).
Traditional Poetry

You have probably seen more traditional poetry than any other kind. Traditional poetry follows certain patterns of rhyme and rhythm. Often, traditional poetry is arranged into a rhyme scheme. Look at the rhyme scheme of this poem by Lewis Carroll. The lines that rhyme are marked with the same letter.

**How Doth the Little Crocodile**

How doth the little crocodile       a
Improve his shining tail,           b
And pour the waters of the Nile    a
On every golden scale!              b
How cheerfully he seems to grin,   c
How neatly spreads his claws,      d
And welcomes little fishes in,     c
With gently smiling jaws!          d

Meter is another important pattern in traditional poetry. Meter is the rhythm you hear when a poem is read aloud. Clap while you read the poem about the crocodile. Can you feel the rhythm? The meter of a poem is made up of accented syllables and unaccented syllables. Clap on the accented syllables and don’t clap on the unaccented syllables. Look at the nursery rhyme below. The syllables are marked so you can see the meter. An accented syllable is marked with a ‘. Unaccented syllables are unmarked.

Péter, Péter, púmpkin éater,
Hád a wife and couldn’t kéep her;
Pút her ín a pumpkin shéll,
And thére he képt her véry wéll.

Read it again. Clap when you come to an accented syllable and open your hands when you come to an unaccented syllable.

Now try this one. Clap the rhythm while you read the nursery rhyme below. When you think you know the meter, mark the accented syllables.

Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry;
When the boys came out to play,
Georgie Porgie ran away.
Poetry Writing Checklist

☐ Have you checked the title of your poem? Does it make sense and add something to your poem? Does it catch the reader’s attention?

☐ Have you looked at the form of your poem? How does it look and how does it sound? Read it aloud to hear how it sounds. Even the way it is arranged on the page will add or detract from a reader’s enjoyment.

☐ What about capitalization? In traditional poetry the first word of each line is capitalized. This is not always true with free verse. You may want to capitalize just a few of the words for emphasis.

☐ Is your poem clear? Will it be too difficult to understand? Is it complete? Did you leave anything out?

☐ Did you check your poem for spelling and punctuation? Does your poem flow? Do you need to revise any parts?

☐ Is your poem in meter? Does it have a rhythm you can sense? Try clapping or tapping a finger or foot while you read it aloud or silently.

☐ If your poem rhymes, do your rhymes work naturally? Do they sound right?

☐ Is your poem easy to read? Do you need to type or rewrite it more carefully?

Make your revisions and corrections and you’re ready to present your final copy!
Metaphor and Simile

**Metaphor**
The word metaphor is used in two different ways. A metaphor may be the general term for *all* figurative language. There may be as many as 250 different figures of speech! A metaphor may also be a particular word, phrase, or sentence that suggests a similarity between two things. The comparison between the two objects is only suggested. (The words like, as, than, similar to, resembles, may not be used. When such words are used to strike a comparison, the result is a simile.) A metaphor compares two things by literally saying that one thing is another.

The following things are not alike, but they share one similarity that helps us make a colorful metaphor.

Metaphors:
1. The cloud is a white marshmallow. (Both are white, puffy, and soft looking.)
2. The road snakes around the mountain. (Both bend and curve.)
3. Elevators turn my stomach into a roller coaster. (Both go up and down dramatically.)
4. That professional wrestler is a gorilla.
5. The cowboy’s face was made of tanned leather.
6. The sentinel tree stands guard at the gate.
7. This is a monster of a problem.
8. Her eyes were diamonds in the sunlight.

**Simile**
The figure of speech called a simile does much the same thing, but uses intermediary words, such as like, as, than, similar to, resembles, etc., to highlight the comparison being struck. Some similes follow:

Similes:
1. Without you, I’m like a wave without a shore.
2. The old man gripped me like a vise.
3. She is as happy as a lark.
4. His mouth resembled a large cavern.
5. The mayor is as slippery as an eel.
6. The old man was as bald as a baby’s backside.
7. Ms. M.’s homework was as welcome as a skunk at a lawn party.
8. The two girls were as alike as two peas in a pod.
Metaphor

The use of metaphor is an important tool for poets (and all writers). A metaphor compares something by saying it is an entirely different thing. However, there is a common thread between the two things the metaphor is comparing. For example, in “Bluebird,” the poem below, it says “a piece of summer sky” landed in the birdbath. It really wasn’t a piece of sky; it was really a bluebird. Because the bird and the sky are both blue, this metaphor “shows” you how blue the bird is. It doesn’t just “tell” you that it is blue. There are several metaphors in “Bluebird.” Can you find them?

Bluebird
A piece of summer sky
With a bit of sunrise on his breast
Landed in the birdbath,
Scattering diamonds
Which glistened in the air
And glittered the rainbow of colors
In the garden below.

Simile

Writers often compare things to help the reader understand their messages. For example, if a writer wants you to really see, in your mind’s eye, the blue of the sea being described, then comparing these two things may help: blue sea – sapphires. Now, blue sea and sapphires are quite a bit different, but they share “blueness.” The writer will use linking words, such as like, as, similar to, resembles, etc., in order to paint this picture in your mind. Such comparisons are called similes. For example: The blue sea gleamed like a field of sapphires in the sun. A simile says something IS LIKE something else, while a metaphor says something IS something else. Below is a poem by Bruce Lansky that is full of similes.

Predictable
Poor as a church mouse.
strong as an ox,
cute as a button,
smart as a fox.
thin as a toothpick,
white as a ghost,
fit as a fiddle,
dumb as a post.
bald as an eagle,
neat as a pin,
proud as a peacock,
ugly as sin.

When people are talking
you know what they’ll say
as soon as they start to
use a cliché.
**When Poem**

A When Poem is a form poem. Students fill in the blanks with the appropriate information. Here is an example of a finished one:

> When I was a bird, I flew.  
> I soared like an airplane.  
> I chirped, and glided, and sang,  
> When I was bird.

Here is the form:

When I was a(an) ________Noun________, I ________Past Tense Verb_______.

I ________Past Tense Verb_______ Like a(an) ________Noun________.

I ________Past Tense Verb_______, & ________Past Tense Verb_______, &

_______Past Tense Verb_______.

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Haiku

Haiku is a Japanese poetry form that consists of three lines. Traditionally, there is a 5-7-5 syllable count per line. Haiku poems often have no title, do not use capital letters (except for proper nouns), and use only limited punctuation. Haiku was pioneered in the 1600's by Matsuo Bashô.

Although haiku poems are very short, they traditionally have four main elements. Imagery is a major component. Imagery refers to the use of words to paint an image, showing you a picture you can see in your mind. Haiku also suggests a season and makes observations about nature. Finally, there is an element of surprise in this picture drawn with words, making you see something that you are not expecting.

Here are some examples of haiku poems:

Pearly triangles
Ocean waves roll in,
Flash in the hot noonday sun, Foam against the sandy shore,
A crocodile yawns Then slide back to sea.

Wind, gently blowing
A solitary
Up, around, and through the trees, crow on a bare branch-
Plays tag with my kite. An autumn evening

Another Japanese poetry style similar to haiku is senryu. The senryu also has a 5-7-5 syllable count, but tends to be about humans or man-made topics rather than nature.
Haiku Poetry Worksheet
A tanka is a Japanese poetry form with a count of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables per line. As with the haiku, the imagery of nature is a major subject of a tanka; however, a tanka often combines nature with human concerns. A tanka is also called a waka or uta.

The tanka is older than haiku. The first three lines of the tanka, called hokku, was written as an image that had been observed. The last two lines, called a renga, was an answer or response to that image. Often poets had “renga parties.” Poets would write a hokku on the way to the party and then trade with another poet, who would write the two renga lines. Much later in time, the hokku became acknowledged for its own special qualities and was published as haiku.

A tanka has thirty-one syllables, which are distributed the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line 2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line 3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line 4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line 5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are some examples of tanka poems:

Waxy hexagons
Dripping with oozy nectar
Sealed in vaulted hives
Be careful of stinging swords
Guarding a golden treasure

The rain spills from clouds
Over thirsty grass and trees
It mists the landscape
Like a soft gentle shower
Spring awakens the whole world
~ G. Lipson

Warm us today sun
Come look down with your hot smile
We'll look up at you
And worship your gift to us
Yellow ball gives growth and joy
~ G. Lipson
Tanka Poetry Worksheet
Cinquain

A cinquain is any poem or stanza that has five lines. A cinquain poem always has five lines. Cinquains may or may not rhyme. Here is the structure for the cinquain poems you will be writing:

Line 1 – Subject (one noun)
Line 2 – Description of title (two adjectives)
Line 3 – An action about the title (three verbs)
Line 4 – A feeling about the title (a four-word phrase)
Line 5 – Another word for the title

Here are some examples of cinquain poems:

My Pet

Friskie
Fuzzy, cuddly
Wiggling, running, licking
Happy to see me!
Dog

Wonderful Woman

Grandma
Round, soft
Humming, baking, loving
Her lap’s for me
Grandma

Practice by finishing this cinquain about recess:

Recess (noun)

____________, __________ (two adjectives)

____________, __________, __________ (three verbs)

____________ __________ __________ __________ (four-word phrase)

____________ (another word for recess)
Cinquain Poetry Worksheet
Diamante

A diamante poem is very similar to a cinquain, except that the diamante is a seven-line poem in the shape of a diamond. Diamante poems do not have to rhyme, but each line uses specific types of words. A diamante may be about one topic, but more often it is about two opposite topics. Here is the structure for the diamante poems you will be writing:

Line 1 and 7 – State subjects that are opposite (nouns)
Line 2 – Contains two adjectives describing the subject of line 1
Line 3 – Contains three action verbs specific to the subject of line 1
Line 4 – Contains four adjectives; the first two describe the subject in line 1 and the second two describe the subject in line 7
Line 5 – contains three action verbs specific to the subject of line 7
Line 6 – contains two adjectives describing line 7
Line 7 – States subject that is the opposite of line 1

Here are some examples of diamante poems:

**Pets**

Puppy
Pudgy, bouncy
Wiggling, chewing, squealing
Soft, fat tummy - - tall, lean
Sleeping, barking, hunting
Loyal, patient
Dog

**Fire and Ice**

Fire
Hot, bright
Burning, flaming, glaring
Powerful, uncontrollable - - tranquil, solid
Chilling, freezing, cooling
Frigid, frosty
Ice
Diamante Poetry Worksheet
Couplet

A couplet is a two-line poem that rhymes.

Here are some examples of couplets:

I don’t like broccoli, squash, or peas,
And this is why: They make me sneeze!

Ruffles, bows, and anything fancy,
Are clothes that always make me antsy.

The barber cut off all of my hair.
Now I’m bald, and I’ve nothing to wear.

I caught my finger in my fly.
I’m so embarrassed, I might die.

Couplets are lines that always rhyme.
In pairs they’re rhyming all the time.
Couplet Poetry Worksheet
Triplet

The triplet, though not as common as the couplet (two-liner) or the quatrain (four-liner), nevertheless, can be an exciting creative writing experience. The triplet, also called a tercet, can be either rhymed or unrhymed. When rhymed, it allows for a variety of rhyming schemes: aaa, aab, aba, abb. The haiku, discussed earlier, which is usually written unrhymed is a good example of the triplet. The triplet can be simple or complex.

Higher than a house, a We have fallen in the dreams of ever-living a
Higher than a tree. b Breathe on the tarnished mirror of the world. b
Oh! Whatever can that be? b And then smooth out with ivory hands and sigh. c
~ Mother Goose ~ W. B. Yeats

The lines of a triplet can be the same length or they may differ in length. They can reflect beautiful thoughts or ordinary events. Here are some examples:

**Buddies**
My friend is mad a
He wouldn't play b
Instead he only ran away b
~ G. Lipson

**New Year's Eve**
Family and friends are we a
Celebration and merriment to see a
Why does it always trouble me? a
~ J. Romatowski

**Rover**
I mourn my dog. a
I'm not ashamed b
To say I loved him. c
~ G. Lipson

**Blind Love**
Minute by minute, hour by hour a
The sun penetrates the growing flower a
Leading it to its inevitable end. b
~ J. Romatowski

**Awakening**
The presents that you bring a
Are not only just for me b
Because you brought the spring. a
Quatrain

Stanzas are lines of poetry that are grouped together. Quatrain is the name for stanzas that are four lines long. Many poetic structures require that they be written in quatrains. Stanzas can be any length. A poem can be written in one large stanza, or it can be divided up into shorter stanzas. There are special names for stanzas that are different lengths. Some names for these stanzas are listed below:

- Monostich – 1-line stanza
- Couplet – 2-line stanza
- Tercet – 3-line stanza
- Quatrain – 4-line stanza
- Cinquain – 5-line stanza
- Sestet – 6-line stanza
- Septet – 7-line stanza
- Octave – 8-line stanza

The quatrain can be either rhymed or unrhymed. The quatrain allows for a variety of rhyming schemes: aabb, abab, aaaa, or abcb. The last two schemes are often used in long poems so that there is a pattern among all the quatrains. This is one of the most common forms of poetry.

Tom, he was a piper’s son,
He learned to play when he was young,
But all the tune that he could play
Was “Over the hills and far away.”

Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an English bum,
Be he alive, or be he dead
I’ll grind his bones to make my bread.

My Quilt

My grandmother made
The quilt on my bed,
With squares made of memories
And colorful thread.

This pink square was cut
From the first dress I wore,
The yellow square came from
Some pants that I tore.

I wore this square fishing,
And that to the zoo,
To the park I wore red,
To first grade I wore blue.

My quilt is so special
That’s no mystery,
Each night I sleep tight
With my own history.
A clerihew is a short, usually humorous, and light poem about a famous person, whose name makes up the first line. It was invented by Edmund Clerihew. The form for this poem is two couplets (four lines with the rhyme scheme of aabb.

Here are some examples of clerihew poems:

**Agatha Christie**
Wrote plot lines so twisty,
Whodunit we’d never know
If it weren’t for the little grey cells of Poirot.

**Sir James Jeans**
Always says what he means;
He is really perfectly serious
About the universe being mysterious.

The thing we like about Henry Ford
Is he didn’t let himself get bored.
He thought of making cars for us;
When they break down, we take the bus.

**The enemy of Harry Potter**
Was a scheming plotter.
I can't tell you what he's called; I’d be ashamed
To name "he who must not be named."

The people of Spain think Cervantes
Equal to half-a-dozen Dantes;
An opinion resented most bitterly
By the people of Italy.
Limerick

A limerick is a five-line poem that uses rhyme and humor. The first line usually names a person or the place where a person is from. It often starts with something like “There once was a person named...” or “There once was a person from...” The next lines tell something about that person, what he is like, or what he has done. The last line sums up the person or his activities in a humorous manner. Edward Lear and Ogden Nash are both well known for this humorous poetry style.

Limericks use an aabba rhyming scheme. The limerick also uses a specific metric pattern. Lines 1, 2, and 5 have three metric feet (stress patterns), and lines 3 and 4 are shorter, with two feet. This may seem complicated, but once you have read a few limericks, you will begin to understand.

A thesaurus is a useful tool for poets (and writers of all kinds). It helps find words that mean about the same thing as another word. In “The Ballerina,” the word “frau” is another word for “woman,” but it rhymes with “how” and “now.” A rhyming dictionary is another useful tool when writing poems that rhyme, such as limericks.

Here are some examples of limericks. Read them aloud quietly so that you can get a sense of their rhythm (meter).

The Ballerina
There once was a hippo named Rose
Who thought she had delicate toes
But on stage, the old frau
Would not take a bow
For her tutu was tight, I suppose

A Flea and a Fly
A flea and a fly in a flue
Were imprisoned, so what could they do?
Said the flea, “Let us fly!”
Said the fly, “Let us flee!”
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.
~ Edward Lear

Delicious Stew
There once was a young man from Kew
Who found a dead mouse in his stew.
Said the waiter, “Don’t shout
Or wave it about,
Or the rest will be wanting one, too!”
Limerick Poetry Worksheet
**Free Verse**

Modern free verse began with Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, published in 1855. Others who are known for their free verse poetry are Carl Sandburg, Langston Hughes, e.e. cummings, and William Carlos Williams. In free verse poetry, there are no rules; no specific rhyming scheme, syllable count, metric pattern, line arrangement, or theme. The poet is “free” to write however he wants.

In free verse, the poet must choose where to break the lines in the poem. A line break is where one line stops and another begins. A poet may break at the end of a complete thought or divide a thought onto different lines. Walt Whitman wrote long lines of free verse. William Carlos Williams’s lines were often very short. Some poems have just one word on a line.

Here are some examples of free verse poetry:

**Fog**

The fog comes
On little cat feet.
\[\text{drops}\]

It sits looking
Over harbor and city
On silent haunches
And then moves on.
~ Carl Sandburg

**April Rain Song**

Let the rain kiss you
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops

Let the rain sing you a lullaby
The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk

The rain makes running pools in the gutter
The rain plays a little sleep song on our roof at night
And I love the rain.
~ Langston Hughes

**Minstrel Man**

Because my mouth
Is wide with laughter
And my throat
Is deep with song,
You do not think
I suffer after
I have held my pain
So long?

Because my mouth
Is wide with laughter,
You do not hear
My inner cry?
Because my feet
Are gay with dancing,
You do not know
I die?
~ Langston Hughes

**Rotting**

Candy makes your teeth rot
TV makes your brain rot
Air makes the salad rot
Time makes the fruit rot

And hate makes your heart rot.
~ Keira Null
White Rabbits with Red Wings

White rabbits with red wings
Flew through my childhood dreams,
Fluttering around the swing in the mulberry tree
And through the peach and the plum.

They sat with me in the sycamore,
Feet dangling high above the ground,
Wondering where clouds go on summer days,

And listened for the train,
Running with me through the gap in the hedge
To wave at the man in the caboose
Who went to faraway places.

White rabbits with red wings
Blew dandelion heads,
Drifting with the feathery fluff,
And followed butterflies
Where they floated out of sight.

White rabbits with red wings
Danced upward with the fireflies
Until they blended with the stars,

Leaving me where I stood,
Gazing in a reflecting pool at the summer moon
And wishing on a faraway star
To be a white rabbit
With red wings.

I, Too, Sing America

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--

I, too, am America.
~ Langston Hughes

in time of daffodils

in time of daffodils (who know
the goal of living is to grow)
forgetting why, remember how

in time of lilacs who proclaim
the aim of waking is to dream,
remember so (forgetting seem)

in time of roses (who amaze
our now and here with paradise)
forgetting if, remember yes

in time of all sweet things beyond
whatever mind may comprehend,
remember seek (forgetting find)

and in a mystery to be
(when time from time shall set us free)
forgetting me, remember me
~ e.e. cummings
Free Verse Dream Place Poetry Worksheet
Free Verse Sensory Poetry Worksheet
Free Verse Poetry Worksheet
Concrete

Concrete poems are meant not only to be read, but also to be seen. In a concrete poem, the words are arranged on the page to look like the subject of the poem. The shape, font, letter size, color, and positioning of the words on the page are all tools the poet uses when writing concrete poems. Some concrete poems are shaped like an item, as in “A Kite.” Others show an action by following the line of words. So, concrete poetry is written in a shape or design to match the meaning or feeling of the poem.

Concrete poems are also called calligrams, picture poems, or shaped poems. They may be written in rhymed and metered verse or in free verse. George Herbert wrote some shaped poetry in the 1600s. However, Guillaume Apollinaire is often referred to as the inventor of picture poems in the early 1900s.

Here are some examples of concrete poems.

**Dusk**

Above the

water hang the

loud

flies

Here

O so

gray

then

What    A pale signal will appear
When    Soon before its shadow fades
Where    Here in this pool of opened eye
In us    No Upon us As at the very edges
of where we take shape in the dark air
this object bares its image awakening
ripples of recognition that will
brush darkness up into light
even after this bird this hour both drift by atop the perfect sad instant now
already passing out of sight
toward yet-untroubled reflection
this image bears its object darkening
into memorial shades Scattered bits of
light    No of water Or something across
water    Breaking up No Being regathered
soon    Yet by then a swan will have
gone    Yes out of mind into what
vast
pale
hush
of a
place
past
sudden dark as
if a swan
sang

**Swan and Shadow**

~ John Hollander


**Bird #3**

~ Don J. Carlson

Poe's raven told him nothing nevermore and Vincent's circling crows were a threat to destroy sunlight. Now I saw a bird, black with a yellow beak, orange rubber legs pecking to kill the lawn, storm bird hates with claw, evil beak, s u n and eye

**The Air Force**

~ Monique Ramsey

Could achieve all my dreams My fear of planes will No longer be, my fright of flying you will no longer see, lots of exercise, little rest the air force is just for me; So high in The big blue sky you wonder what could you see a bird A ballon, No your African American woman pilot But look you said it would never be me; your words you spoke were wrong my biggest of All dreams will come true, over the ocean to the sun I Would explain everywhere I flew, no one in my family actually told me they think I could succeed, most of the time it was just okay, yeah, well do what you want to do, but just follow your dreams; My dreams are to be a pilot, a pilot I will be, I will work hard to achieve my dream and a pilot you will see!
P is for Picture Poem*

"The Kite"

high flying acrobat, I flutter
in the breeze, way up
with the clouds, above all the
trees. I'm a bright shooting star,
a rainbow with sails, or maybe
a dragon with a long curvy
tail. When there is March wind hang
on tight to me, I
decorate skies,
look up and
you'll see!

My tail keeps me dip dip
and I and I
twist and twist
and I and I
dip dip
I

I dip dip
and I and I
twist and twist
and I and I
dip dip
I

I dip dip
and I and I
twist and twist
and I and I
dip dip
I

* Also called Concrete poetry
Acrostic

In an acrostic poem, the title is the subject of the poem. It is usually only one or two words long. Each letter of the title starts a line of the poem. The title word is therefore written vertically as the first letter of each line.

Here are some examples of acrostic poems.

**Drawing**

Delightful pictures
Released onto paper
As
Wild
Imaginations are
Netted with the
Grasp of a crayon.

**Drama**

Does any one realize all the
Ridiculous things
Actors and actresses
Must endure before hearing the
Applause?

**April**

After an extensive winter
Pretty tulips
Rise from the once
Icy ground bringing fresh signs of
Life.
A sonnet is a complex poetry form that follows many rules. A sonnet has fourteen lines. Each line is written in iambic pentameter. Remember, an iambic foot is a set of two syllables: an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Pentameter means there are five feet per line (or five sets of unaccented/accented syllables).

There are several traditional styles of sonnets, but two are used the most. The style is based on the rhyming scheme and named after the poets who developed the pattern, William Shakespeare and Francesco Petrarch. “Yellow Dog” is a Shakespearean, or English, sonnet. It has a rhyme pattern of abab cdcd efef gg (three quatrains plus a couplet). A Petrarchan, or Italian, sonnet has a rhyming pattern of abba abba cdc dcd (two quatrains and two tercets).

Sonnets can be written about any subject matter, but traditionally are about love. However, sonnets can be reflections on life’s ordinary events, on burning issues, on love’s adventures. They can be light in tone or quite dramatic. An experience or problem is set up in the first eight lines (two quatrains). Then there is a change in events, and the problem is solved in the last six lines (a quatrain and a couplet).

Here are some examples of sonnets:

**Yellow Dog**

I went out to the barn one wintry night
To shut the doors the wind had opened wide.
I was surprised to see by lantern light
A yellow dog sitting there inside.

I did not know her, nor did she know me,
And if I got too close she raised her fur,
But she was hungry, it was plain to see,
And gobbled up the food I offered her.

Those wintry days, she would not let me near,
But as spring rains began to thaw the ground,
She licked my hand and let me scratch her ears
And by my side, she followed me around.

And now upon my feet she lays her head
And sleeps each night on pillows by my bed.
The Quadrangle: Sixteenth Street, Marquette, Linwood, and McGraw
A Sonnet of the City

The block on Sixteenth Street where I was born,
The school that grew the children I knew well,
The home I had - - wood frame and weather worn,
Are gone - - erased by UR-BAN RE-NEW-AL.

Great fragments of gray sidewalk, splintered wood,
Sharp shards of glass, and trees cut to the ground
Are monuments to memories that once stood
Where now rats rustling through the weeds abound.

They promised a new school upon this spot,
With tinted glass and spans of open space.
But build, it’s certain now that they will not - -
The boys and girls there vanished with no trace.

How could they dare destroy my childhood’s seeds - -
The block “renewed” for only rats and weeds?
~ John Telford

History

I heard that you were back in our hometown.
Have you reflected through these passing years?
We were the very best of friends around.
Emotions roil to contemplate you near.

Do you feel pain from our old bitter fight?
I can’t decide who did the grievous wrong,
Or who it was whose cause was in the right
Nor did it matter much, once you were gone.

Will you forget we gave each other grief? - -
I wish to mend our breach in hopeful dreams
To still regret and give my soul relief
Be mine again, dear friend, in healing scenes.

When anger waned - - I knew what I had lost
So unprepared was I to pay the cost.
~ Greta B. Lipson
Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date.

Some time too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature’s changing course, untrimmed;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,
Nor shall death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest.

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
~ William Shakespeare

Sonnet 43

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday’s
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.
~ Elizabeth Barrett Browning
How to Write a Sonnet

The sonnet, a 14-line poem, has two main types: English (or Shakespearean) and Italian (or Petrarchan). You will be writing a Shakespearean sonnet, which follows this format:

Steps:
1. Select the subject matter for your sonnet. Themes have often focused on love or philosophy, but modern sonnets can cover almost any topic.
2. Divide the theme of your sonnet into two sections. In the first section you will present the situation or thought to the reader; in the second section you can present some sort of conclusion or climax.
3. Compose your first section as three quatrains - that is, three stanzas of four lines each.
4. Write the three quatrains with an a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f rhyme scheme, where each letter stands for a line of the sonnet and the last words of all lines with the same letter rhyme with each other. Most sonnets employ the meter of iambic pentameter (duh-DUH-duh-DUH-duh-DUH-duh-DUH-duh-DUH), as seen in these three quatrains from Shakespeare's 'Sonnet 30':

5. When to the sessions of sweet silent thought (a)/ I summon up remembrance of things past, (b)/ I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought, (a)/ And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste: (b)/ Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, (c)/ For precious friends hid in death's dateless night, (d)/ And weep afresh love's long since canceled woe, (c)/ And moan the expense of many a vanished sight: (d)/ Then can I grieve at grievances foregone, (e)/ And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er (f)/ The sad account of fore-bemoan'd moan, (e)/ Which I new pay as if not paid before. (f)

6. Compose the last section as a couplet - two rhyming lines of poetry. This time, use a g-g rhyme scheme, where the last words of the two lines rhyme with each other. We refer once more to 'Sonnet 30':

7. But if the while I think on thee, dear friend, (g)/ All losses are restored and sorrows end. (g)
Time to pay your dues. Try writing a sonnet.

Here are the rules

- It must consist of 14 lines.
- It must be written in iambic pentameter (duh-DUH-duh-DUH-duh-DUH-duh-DUH-duh-DUH).
- It must be written in one of various standard rhyme schemes.

If you're writing the most familiar kind of sonnet, the Shakespearean, the rhyme scheme is this:

```
A
B
A
B

C
D
C
D

E
F
E
F

G
G
```

Every A rhymes with every A, every B rhymes with every B, and so forth. You'll notice this type of sonnet consists of three quatrains (that is, four consecutive lines of verse that make up a stanza or division of lines in a poem) and one couplet (two consecutive rhyming lines of verse).

Ah, but there's more to a sonnet than just the structure of it. A sonnet is also an argument — it builds up a certain way. And how it builds up is related to its metaphors and how it moves from one metaphor to the next. In a Shakespearean sonnet, the argument builds up like this:

- First quatrain: An exposition of the main theme and main metaphor.
- Second quatrain: Theme and metaphor extended or complicated; often, some imaginative example is given.
- Third quatrain: Peripeteia (a twist or conflict), often introduced by a "but" (very often leading off the ninth line).
• Couplet: Summarizes and leaves the reader with a new, concluding image.

One of Shakespeare’s best-known sonnets, Sonnet 18, follows this pattern:

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature’s changing course, untrimmed;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,  
Nor shall death brag thou wanderest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest.  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

The argument of Sonnet 18 goes like this:

• First quatrain: Shakespeare establishes the theme of comparing "thou" (or "you") to a summer's day, and why to do so is a bad idea. The metaphor is made by comparing his beloved to summer itself.

• Second quatrain: Shakespeare extends the theme, explaining why even the sun, supposed to be so great, gets obscured sometimes, and why everything that’s beautiful decays from beauty sooner or later. He has shifted the metaphor: In the first quatrain, it was "summer" in general, and now he's comparing the sun and "every fair," every beautiful thing, to his beloved.

• Third quatrain: Here the argument takes a big left turn with the familiar "But." Shakespeare says that the main reason he won’t compare his beloved to summer is that summer dies — but she won’t. He refers to the first two quatrains — her "eternal summer" won’t fade, and she won’t "lose possession" of the "fair" (the beauty) she possesses. So he keeps the metaphors going, but in a different direction. And for good measure, he throws in a negative version of all the sunshine in this poem — the "shade" of death, which, evidently, his beloved won’t have to worry about.

• Couplet: How is his beloved going to escape death? In Shakespeare’s poetry, which will keep her alive as long as people breathe or see. This bold statement gives closure to the whole argument — it’s a surprise.

And so far, Shakespeare’s sonnet has done what he promised it would! See how tightly this sonnet is written, how complex yet well organized it is? Try writing a sonnet of your own.
# Sonnet Poetry Worksheet

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Sonnet Poetry Worksheet
Villanelle

Villanelle means “country house” in Latin, and these poems are traditionally about everyday life. Dylan Thomas is known for his villanelle “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night.” E. A. Robinson and W. H. Auden also wrote villanelles.

Villanelles are 19 lines long, divided into six stanzas. The first five stanzas have three lines (tercets), and the last stanza has four (a quatrain). In a villanelle, all the first and third lines rhyme with each other, and all of the second lines rhyme together, so it has the following rhyme scheme: ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABAA. Furthermore, the first two "A" lines are repeated throughout the poem. Here is a breakdown of lines:

Line 1: Is repeated throughout your poem and rhymes with all other (A) lines
Line 2: Is the first of many (B) lines and must rhyme with all other (B) lines
Line 3: Is repeated throughout your poem and rhymes with all other (A) lines

Line 4: An (A) rhyme
Line 5: A (B) rhyme
Line 6: Write the exact same thing you wrote for line 1

Line 7: An (A) rhyme
Line 8: A (B) rhyme
Line 9: Write the exact same thing you wrote for line 3

Line 10: An (A) rhyme
Line 11: A (B) rhyme
Line 12: Write the exact same thing you wrote for line 1

Line 13: An (A) rhyme
Line 14: A (B) rhyme
Line 15: Write the exact same thing you wrote for line 3

Line 16: An (A) rhyme
Line 17: A (B) rhyme
Line 18: Write the exact same thing you wrote for line 1
Line 19: Write the exact same thing you wrote for line 3

Some examples of villanelles are on the next pages:
Precious Rose

Behold the precious rose
Each petal soft as rain
Forever beautiful as it grows

It's thorns are sharp like deadly foes
Touch them and you'll pain
Behold the precious rose

That dances lightly as the wind blows
Never does it seem plain
Forever beautiful as it grows

Its tender grace always shows
My joy to see it I can't contain
Behold the precious rose

How it became no one knows
It's difficult to explain
Forever beautiful as it grows

Something better I could not suppose
This image etched in my brain
Behold the precious rose
Forever beautiful as it grows

The Rule

At my house it was the rule
To do my homework everyday
When I got home from school.

I'd sit upon the kitchen stool
And get my work done right away;
At my house it was the rule.

My mother, she was not a fool.
She caught me if I went to play
When I got home from school.

She said, “Don’t be a stubborn mule,
Get busy and don’t disobey!”
At my house it was the rule.

I always thought it would be cool
To play like it was Saturday
When I got home from school.

“It may seem strict, but if you study you’ll
Get better grades,” my mom would say.
At my house it was the rule
When I got home from school.
Villanelle

Time will say nothing but I told you so,
Time only knows the price we have to pay;
If I could tell you I would let you know.

If we should weep when clowns put on their show,
If we should stumble when musicians play,
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

There are no fortunes to be told, although,
Because I love you more than I can say,
If I could tell you I would let you know.

The winds must come from somewhere when they blow,
There must be reasons why the leaves decay;
Time will say nothing but I told you so.

Perhaps the roses really want to grow,
The vision seriously intends to stay;
If I could tell you I would let you know.

Suppose the lions all get up and go,
And all the brooks and soldiers run away?
Will time say nothing but I told you so?
If I could tell you I would let you know.

~ W. H. Auden

Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

~ Dylan Thomas
Vilanelle Poetry Worksheet
End Rhyme

End rhyme means that the last word on one line of a poem rhymes with the last word on another line. Sometimes the rhyming lines are next to each other, and sometimes they skip lines. The way in which a poem’s lines rhyme makes up a rhyming scheme.

There are many rhyming schemes in poetry, and some types of poems require a certain scheme. To describe rhyming patterns, letters are assigned to lines. Lines that rhyme with each other are given the same letter. Lines that have a different rhyme are given another letter. Once a rhyming scheme is started, it usually continues throughout the poem.

Try to determine the rhyming scheme for this poem:

How Would You Act?

If you were a bird,
You’d want to be heard.
If you were a horse,
You’d run, of course.

Through water you’d swish
If you were a fish
And if you were an eel
All slimy you’d feel.

A cold-blooded lizard
Would stay out of a blizzard
And a sneaky old fox
Would stalk hens and cocks.

A cat would have fun
Lying out in the sun
And if you were a worm
Through the earth you would squirm.

You see, it’s a fact
That however you act
Depends on your kind,
Which brings to my mind,

If you are a child
Should you be wild?
Weak Rhyme

Words that “almost” rhyme are called weak rhymes. Say the last words in each pair of lines in “My Song.” Do you hear that they do not exactly rhyme, but that they almost do? Weak rhymes are also called slant, off, near, or half rhymes. Another kind of rhyme is a visual rhyme. These words look like they would rhyme, but they don’t sound at all alike. “Good” and “food” are visual rhymes. Visual rhymes are also called eye rhymes. Read some of Ogden Nash’s humorous poetry. He had fun playing with a variety of ways to “make” words rhyme.

How words sound is important when writing. In addition to rhyming words, there are other types of sound combinations that poets purposely use. Alliteration refers to words that start with the same sound, such as “five fidgety fingers.” Consonance means that words have the same ending consonant sound, such as “giant elephant print.” Assonance occurs when words have the same vowel sounds, such as “pigs knit mittens.”

Listen for the weak rhymes in this poem:

My Song

I find that it is very easy
To drive my mom completely crazy.

All I have to do is sing
A song that talks about nothing.

I start to sing when day is young
And make my tune last all day long

For when my song comes to an end,
I start it up all over again.

My mother says she loves me dearly
But when I sing, must I really

Choose that awful song to sing
Instead of one that says something?

Find the creative/forced rhyme in this poem:

The Ostrich

The ostrich roams the great Sahara.
Its mouth is wide, its neck is narra.
It has such long and lofty legs,
I’m glad it sits to lay its eggs.
~ Ogden Nash
Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is another tool that poets use. It refers to words that sound like the noise the word makes. For example, if you drop a pan, you may say it “bangs” on the floor. The word “bang” sounds like the noise made by the pan hitting the floor. Words like crunch, hiss, roar, buzz, and splat are onomatopoeic words.

There are two kinds of onomatopoetic words. Euphonic words sound soft and smooth, such as whoosh, hiss, and puff. Cacophonous words sound hard, hoarse, and rough, such as clatter, crunch, and clank.

Find examples of both types of onomatopoetic words in this poem:

The Ears of an Elephant

If you had the ears of an elephant,
You might hear the bugs that crunch
On leaves that whisper whooshing words
As they’re gobbled up for lunch.

You might hear the snap of butterflies
As they open up their wings,
Like a sail that catches up the wind
On a day when sunshine sings.

You might hear the sizzle of a drop
Of rain that hits hot sand
Or the cacophonous crash and clatter
As the snowflakes gently land.

If you had the ears of an elephant,
You might hear the crispy calls
And sounds that whir and buzz and plop
From things both great and small.
Iambic

Poems often have a rhythm or a beat. The rhythmical beat is called meter and is measured in “feet.” A foot is made up of a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables.

The most common meter in English poetry is iambic. It is made up of iambs. An iamb is two syllables long. The first syllable is unstressed. The second syllable is stressed. For example, look at the second line of “Two Chains.” It is divided up into four iambs. You would say the line has four feet. The lowercase letters are unstressed. The upper case letters are stressed:

To SEE/ if HE/ could FIND/ a TREAT

Read the “Two Chains” and listen for the rhythm of the iambic meter.

Two Chains

A dragonfly flew by the pond
To see if he could find a treat.
He landed on a floating leaf
And looked for little bugs to eat.

It didn’t see the frog that sat
Upon a mossy rock so still
That thought the dragonfly might make
A very, very tasty meal.

Behind the frog there lay a snake
Who slithered quickly toward his prey
And in a tree there stood a hawk
Who thought a snake would make his day.

Now when a cow that eats just grass
Stepped in the pond to drink that day
A ripple moved the leaf and scared
The hungry dragonfly away.

The frog jumped in, the snake crept off,
The mighty hawk took to the sky
And so their chance to have a feast,
Came to an end and passed them by.

The cow stepped out to eat more grass,
But never even had a hunch,
That she became the only one
Who got the chance to eat her lunch.
Ballad

Long ago, storytellers, who traveled from town to town, were the primary source of news, education, and entertainment. Often, they told their tales in poetry forms called ballads. Traditionally, ballads were love stories that ended in tragedy. Many ballads have been put to music and sung.

Ballads are written in groups of four lines. These groups are called stanzas. In each stanza, the last words in the second and fourth lines rhyme. In a ballad, there are four feet, or beat patterns, in the first and third lines. There are only three feet in the second and fourth lines.

Here is an example of a ballad:

**Ballad of the Butterfly and Rose**

In early days of summer, came  
A lovely butterfly.  
His wings were painted with the hues  
Of sunsets in the sky.

He flew around the garden's blooms,  
However, what he chose  
To land on was a tiny bud,  
The smallest unborn rose.

He stayed there with the bud for weeks  
Until it opened wide  
And petals colored like the sun  
Were waiting there inside.

The butterfly danced for his rose,  
The rose collected dew,  
A drink to give her butterfly,  
And each day their love grew.

One evening under brilliant skies,  
Bright yellow, orange, and red,  
The butterfly and lovely rose,  
Together, they were wed.

Soon summer passed and came the time  
When roses start to fade  
And butterflies leave for the south,  
Yet, knowing that, he stayed.

The butterfly felt freezing winds  
But would not leave his bride  
And with his wings wrapped round his rose,  
Together they both died.
Doublet

A doublet was invented by Lewis Carroll in 1879 as a word puzzle. The goal is to make a list of words that change, one letter at a time, to make a different word. The doublet is written one word under another to make a “word ladder.” The poem is then written around this word ladder. The first and last words of the word ladder are usually the title. They are related to each other in some manner, such as being antonyms, synonyms, or associations. These words must also have the same number of letters.

In “Rain to Snow,” the first word of the doublet is “rain.” Look directly under the word “rain,” and you will see “raid.” The letter “n” in “rain” was changed to a “d” to make “raid.” As you read the poem, try also to watch the progression of the changes to the words in the word ladder to determine how “rain” finally becomes “snow.”

Here is the doublet:

Rain to Snow?

Rain falls
Leaving clouds that raid the sky.
They said the day would be gray.
I slid my hands in my pockets,
Walking carefully not to slip in puddles
Or slop mud on my pants.
Then, in a magical moment, the drops began to slow and I watched
As from dripping to drifting, rain changed to snow.
Ghazal

A ghazal is an ancient Persian poetry form dating back to 100 BC. It continues to be written widely in Iran, Iraq, and India. In English, Jim Harrison and Adrienne Rich are known for ghazals.

A ghazal has between five and twelve couplets (two-line stanzas). The second line of each couplet rhymes with the first line of the poem. The rhyming pattern is aa, ba, ca, da, etc. The last couplet contains the poet’s name. Some names are easy because they mean something. Other names are more difficult. However, names can be used as an actual name in the poem. For example, if the poet’s name was Davis, the last line of “My Baby Brother” could be “That show baby Davis who’s not wearing clothes.” The name can also be broken apart. The last line could have been written, “For in the last one, the baby has no clothes,” if the poet was named Stone.

Try to determine the poet’s name as you read this poem.

My Baby Brother

When he was little, he wriggled his toes,
Wrinkled his forehead, wrinkled his nose.

He wiggled his fingers and stuck out his tongue,
His arms flapped like wings, his kicking feet rose.

He turned on his stomach, he turned on his back,
All the time laughing with each silly pose.

My mom thought it funny, the camera came out,
And then with a click, each wiggle froze.

Now many years later, when pictures come out,
My dear brother’s face turns bright as a rose.

Embarrassed, he wants to toss out these shots
That show a young baby who’s not wearing clothes.
A jingle is a simple, catchy poem about a light or humorous subject. Jingles use rhyme, rhythm, and repeating words or lines to make the poem easy to remember. Because the sound of the words makes the poem likely to attract attention, jingles are often put to music and used in television and radio commercials. The use of repetition, rhyme, and rhythm gets the jingle stuck in your mind, which is what advertisers want.

There are three major parts of a jingle written for commercials. The verse tells the details, facts, or gives a story. The tag is the name of the company or product. It is repeated several times throughout the jingle. The hook tells you why you want or need the product.

Read the jingle below. The verse lists kinds of candy. The tag names the store, and the hook tells you it’s the sweetest place to stop. When you think about candy, “The Sweet Tooth Candy Shop” hopes their jingle will pop into your mind, and you will come to their shop to spend your money!

**The Sweet Tooth Candy Shop**

Taffy, suckers, and lollipops,  
Lemon, lime, and orange gumdrops,  
At the Sweet Tooth Candy Shop,  
It’s the sweetest place to stop!

Peppermint sticks and chocolate bars,  
Drive right up here in your car  
To the Sweet Tooth Candy Shop,  
It’s the sweetest place to stop!

Is candy what you like to eat?  
Then you will find all sorts of sweets  
At the Sweet Tooth Candy Shop,  
It’s the sweetest place to stop!
Narrative Poem

A narrative poem is a poem that tells a story. Narrative poems can use meter and rhyme, such as in a ballad, or can be written in free verse. Originally, narrative poems were recited, in oral tradition, by bards who sometimes changed the poems from one telling to the next. Often, several versions of the same poem survived to written form.

A very long, book-length narrative poem, such as Homer’s *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*, is called an epic poem. Traditionally, epic poems relate the history, myths, and beliefs of a culture. *John Brown’s Body*, by Stephen “Vincent Benét, is an epic poem about America’s Civil War.

Here is an example of a narrative poem:

**Reading Homer**

My teacher said that I must read
Stuff by this Homer guy.
“Just open up your book,” she said,
“Give him a little try.”

I didn’t think I’d like the poem
He wrote so long ago,
But when I started reading it
I couldn’t stop, you know!

He wrote of this Odysseus dude
Who, sailing home from Troy,
Ticked off the great god of the sea
Because he harmed his boy.

His boy happened out to be
A giant with one eye
Who ate the sailors of the ship
Like they were apple pie.

Odysseus stabbed him in the eye,
Escaping from his wrath,
But more disastrous adventures would
Await him on his path.

Like Sirens singing soothing songs
That lured men to their graves,
A witch that turned men into pigs,
And storms with raging waves.

I couldn’t wait to turn each page
To see what else I’d find,
And daydreams of Odysseus now
Completely fill my mind.
Rap

Rap is a style of vocal music with its roots traced to jazz poetry. It is known for its strong rhythmic beat, often combined with rhyming couplets, and it is usually chanted (performed) aloud. The style is used to express a wide range of themes. Rap poetry has even been used in commercials.

Cowboy poetry emphasizes the history and folklore associated with the West. Originally, cowboys reciting poems about their life on the range passed these poems from campfire to campfire. In 1886, Lysius Gough became the first Texas cowboy to publish a book of cowboy poetry. Traditionally, cowboy poetry is rhymed and metered verse, following a ballad form that tells a story. Today, cowboy poetry is written in many styles.

In the following poem, “Cowboy Rap,” the poetry had fun mixing the western ranch, storytelling theme of cowboy poetry with the rhythm of rap.

**Cowboy Rap**

I wanna be a cowboy, I wanna ride a horse,
So I went to the boss man and I told him this of course.
He asked me could I ride, and he asked me other things,
But the last thing that he asked me is he asked me could I sing.

I gave a little smile and a yippee yippee yea,
And the boss man said I’d do, and he hired me right away.
He told me cows are restless when night is dark and deep,
And said that it was up to me to sing them cows to sleep.

We rode across the prairie, we rode the whole day long,
And sittin’ in the saddle, I thought up my sweet song.
And when the stars came out, with my lasso cross my lap,
I rode out with them cows and I started up my rap.

With a scritch,
And a scratch,
And loud noises by the batch,
I called out to them cows,
All you mammas hear me now!
Chew your cud,
In the mud,
Don’t you worry ’bout no thing,
Swing your cute,
Little tails,
To the rhythm that I sing.

All them cows started mooin’, I thought they liked my lead,
But the next thing I knew, they had started to stampede.
The boss man, he was angry, he said, “Son, you’re gonna change.
Tomorrow when you sing, just sing home, home on the range!”
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