

SOME ELEMENTS OF POETRY: METER

Rhythm is produced by a recurring pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables and pauses. Each poem has a **metric pattern** (except in "free verse" which has no metrical pattern since it is based on the natural cadences of speech). That is, the accents of the syllables in the words fall at regular intervals, like the beat of music. This pattern is described by indicating the **kind and number of feet** in a regular verse line.

THE FOUR MOST-USED KIND OF FEET			
No. of Syllables	Technical Name of Kind of Foot	Accented = (/) "DUMM" Unaccented = (~) "de"	Such as
2	iamb, iambic	~ / de DUMM	~ / ~ / a WAY, I WILL
2	trochee, trochaic	/ ~ DUMM de	/ ~ / ~ COM ing, DO it

Most trochaic lines lack the final unstressed syllable and so are called *catalectic*.

Ex. Ti ger ! Ti ger ! burn ing bright
In the fo rest of the night.

3	anapest, anapestic	~ ~ / de de DUMM	~ ~ / ~ ~ / can non ADE, let us IN
3	dactyl, dactylic	/ ~ ~ DUMM de de	/ ~ ~ / ~ ~ VIC to ries, TWO of them
Less Often Used: spondee, spondaic (DUMM DUMM) pyrrhus, pyrraic (de de)			

The beat of poetry feet is called **meter**. Marking to show **feet** or **meter** is called **scansion**. Example:

~ / ~ / ~ / ~ /
The stag | at eve | had drunk | his fill

This line is **iambic tetrameter**. If meter should vary within a line, it is called **inversion**.

The number of feet in a line is expressed as follows:	
1 foot monometer	6 feet hexameter
2 feet dimeter	7 feet heptameter
3 feet trimeter	8 feet octameter
4 feet tetrameter	9 feet nonameter
5 feet pentameter	

Add scansion to the following lines of poetry, and label each:

The cur few tolls the knell of par ting day.

Label: _____

There they are, my fif ty men and wo men.

Label: _____

The As syrian came down like a wolf on the fold.

Label: _____

KINDS OF POETRY ACCORDING TO FORM:

Regular Verse, Blank Verse, Free Verse

No. of Lines	REGULAR VERSE: Rhyme and Rhythm	
	What It's Called	What It Is
2	couplet	A stanza of 2 lines
2	rhymed couplet	2 lines with identical rhymes
2	heroic couplet	2 lines with identical rhymes at the end of a sonnet
3	tercet, triplet	3 lines – any rhyme scheme, any meter
4	quatrain	4 lines – any rhyme scheme, any meter
4	ballad quatrain	4 lines rhyming a b c b; 1st & 3rd lines iambic tetrameter, 2nd & 4th lines iambic trimeter
5	quintet	5 lines – any rhyme scheme, any meter
5	cinquain	5 lines – no rhyme, no meter BUT consisting respectively of 2, 4, 6, 8 and, 2 syllables a line
6	sestet	6 lines (often 3 sets of couplets) any rhyme scheme, any meter
7	rime royal	7 lines rhyming a b a b b c c iambic pentameter
8	octave	8 lines – any rhyme scheme, any meter
8	ottava rima	8 lines rhyming a b a b a b c c iambic pentameter
9	Spenserian stanza	9 lines rhyming a b a b b c b c c lines 1 - 8 iambic pentameter line 9 iambic hexameter
14	sonnet	14 lines iambic pentameter English - 3 quatrains + 1 couplet abab cdcd efef gg Italian - 1 octave + 1 sestet abbaabba cdecde OR cdcdee OR cdccdc OR...
19	villanelle	19 lines – 5 tercets + 1 quatrain 2 repeating refrains – 8 of 19 lines are refrain line 1 A' (repeated entirely at 6, 12, & 18) line 3 A" (repeated entirely at 9, 15, & 19) scheme – A'bA" abA' abA" abA' abA" abA'A"
BLANK VERSE		Any number of lines No rhyme Usually iambic pentameter
FREE VERSE		Any number of lines No rhyme No meter