

## Versification Poetic Analysis Terms

**Scansion:** the art/act of scanning a line to determine metrical feet

**Feet:** the patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry

**Meter:** the unit of feet, (how many feet per line)

### Types of Metrical Feet:

**Iambic/iamb:** two syllables with the stress on the second syllable  
example: *Whose woods these are I think I know.* (iambic tetrameter)

**Trochaic/trochee:** two syllables with the stress on the first syllable  
example: *Double, double toil and trouble, Fire burn and cauldron bubble.*  
(trochaic tetrameter)

**Anapestic/anapest:** three syllables with the stress on the last syllable  
example: *With the sheep in the fold and the cows in their stalls.* (anapestic tetrameter)

**Dactylic/dactyl:** three syllables with the stress on the first syllable  
example: *Love again, song again, nest again, young again.* (dactylic tetrameter)

### Numbers of Meter:

**monometer:** one foot line, *Thus I* (trochaic monometer)

**dimeter:** two foot line, *Workers earn it.* (trochaic dimeter)

**trimeter:** three foot line, *The idle life I lead.* (iambic trimeter)

**tetrameter:** four foot line, *Whose woods these are I think I know.*

**pentameter:** five foot line, *Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May.* (iambic pentameter)

**hexameter:** six, *To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.* (iambic hexameter)

**heptameter:** seven, *It looked extremely rocky for the Mudville nine that day.* (iambic heptameter)

**octometer:** eight, *Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary.*  
(trochaic octometer)

**Rhyme:** identical repetition between two different words

- position: end rhyme, internal rhyme
- kinds of rhyme:
- masculine: one syllable rhymed words, blend/send
- feminine: a stressed then unstressed syllable, lawful/awful
- triple: three syllable rhymed word, quivering/shivering

**Rhyme scheme:** exact correspondence of rhyming sounds, identified by the first end rhyme represented by an "a," the next variation by a "b," etc.

### Internal Structures

- descriptive: requirements of describing used
- discursive: organized like an argument or essay
- dramatic: consisting of a series of scenes, vivid with detail
- imitative: mirroring the structure of something that already exists
- narrative: straightforward chronological framework
- reflective (meditative): pondering a subject or theme, playing with it in the mind

## Verse Forms:

**Blank verse:** lines of unrhymed iambic pentameter

**Free verse:** no regular meter and no end rhyme, although possible repetitive patterns

**Rhymed verse:** end rhyme and generally regular meter

- couplet: two lines of verse coupled by rhyme
- tercet: three lines of verse linked by a single rhyme
- quatrain: a stanza of four lines, rhymed or unrhymed
- Ballad Stanza: only one set of rhymes in four lines: most abcb
- quintet: five line stanza
- sestet: six line stanza
- septet: seven line stanza
- Rhyme royal: seven line iambic pentameter rhyming ababbcc
- octave: eight line stanza
- Ottava rima: eight line stanza rhyming abababcc
- Spenserian stanza: nine lines, first eight iambic pentameter and last line an iambic hexameter (alexandrine), rhyming ababbcbcc
- sonnet: fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with intricate rhyme scheme

**Italian** (Petrarchian): octave and sestet, typical: abba abba cde cde

**English** (Shakespearean): three quatrains and a couplet

- limerick: five line poem in aabba (often bawdy) with two lines of eight syllabus, two lines of five syllabus, and a final line of eight syllabus

**Visual** (concrete poetry), or technopaegnia -- related to the visual look of a poem on the page

Other "figures of speech" and poetic terminology and language:

- alliteration: repetition of initial consonant or vowel sounds
- assonance: similar vowel sounds repeated in successive or proximate words containing different consonants:
  - A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. -- Matthew 5:14b (KJV)*
  - Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. -- Matthew 5:16 (KJV)*
- consonance: ending verse words in which the consonant sounds agree but the vowels that proceed them differ (add-read, bill-ball, begun-afternoon)
- onomatopoeia: use of words which in their pronunciation suggests their meaning (hiss, slam, buzz, whirr, sizzle)
- simile: a comparison directly expressed using "like" or "as"
- metaphor: an implied analogy between two things
- conceit: fanciful intellectual idea; a striking parallel between two dissimilar things
- oxymoron: rhetorical antithesis, bringing together two contradictory terms
- allegory: objects/persons/actions are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself
- symbol: often something physical which stands for or represents something larger or more abstract
- allusion: a reference to a famous historical/literary figure or event
- ambiguity: ability to mean more than one thing
- connotation: what is suggested by a word, apart from what it denotes (the American flag: patriotism, honor, veterans, American values)
- denotation: the direct and specific meaning of a word (the American flag: denotes a piece of colored cloth in a particular pattern)
- personification: treating an abstraction/nonhuman as if it were a person, with human qualities
- precision: exactness, accuracy of language or description
- syntax: the formal arrangement of words in a sentence