

P R O S O D Y

THE FOOT

THE FOOT is measured according to the number of its stressed and unstressed syllables. The stressed syllables are marked with an acute accent (') or a prime mark (') and the unstressed syllables with a small superscript line (--), a small "x," a superscript degree symbol (°) or a short accent mark, or "breve" (~). A virgule (/) can be used to separate feet in a line.

Iamb	iambic	(- ')	to-DÁY
Trochee	trochaic	(' -)	BRÓ-ther
Anapest	anapestic	(- - ')	in-ter-CÉDE
Dactyl	dactylic	(' - -)	YÉS-ter-day
Spondee	spondaic	(' ')	ÓH, NÓ
Pyrric	pyrric	(- -)	...of a...
(Amphibrach)	(amphibrachic)	(- ' -)	chi-CÁ-go
(Bacchus)	(bacchic)	(- ' ')	a BRÁND NÉW car
(Amphímacer)	(amphímacratic ?)	(' - ')	LÓVE is BÉST

METRICAL FEET

- 1 **Monómeter** "Thus I"
- 2 **Dímeter** "Rich the treasure"
- 3 **Trímeter** "A sword, a horse, a shield"
- 4 **Tetrámeter** "And in his anger now he rides"
- 5 **Pentámeter** "Draw forth thy sword, thou mighty man-at-arms"
- 6 **Hexámeter** "His foes have slain themselves, with whom he should contend."
- 7 **Heptámeter** "There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away."
- 8 **Octámeter** "When I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,"
- 9 **Nonámeter** "Roman Virgil, thou that sing'st Ilion's lofty temples robed with fire,"

SPECIAL NAMES

Heroic meter	Iambic pentameter
Long meter	Iambic tetrameter
Alexandrine	One line of iambic hexameter

SCANSION

To SCAN a line is to divide it into its several feet, then to tell *what kind of feet* make up the line and *how many* of them there are, as in the descriptive names of Chaucer and Shakespeare's 'iambic pentameter.'

STANZAIC FORMS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Lines</i>	<i>Special rhymes / forms</i>
Couplet	2	rhymes: aa (2 heroic lines = <i>heroic couplet</i>)
Tercet	3	rhymes: aaa, aab, abb (<i>Terza rima</i> = aba bcb cdc, etc.)
Quatrain	4	(<i>In Memoriam Stanza</i> = abba in iambic tetrameter)
Quintain	5	(<i>Limerick</i> rhymes: aabba)
Sestet	6	—
Seven-line	7	(<i>Rime Royale</i> = ababbcc in iambic pentameter)
Octet	8	(<i>Ottava Rima</i> = abababcc in iambic pentameter)
Nine-line	9	(<i>Spencerian Stanza</i> = ababbcbcc in iambic pentameter; the final line is an Alexandrine)

Some fixed poetic forms

THE SONNET

The sonnet consists of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter (in Romance languages, iambic hexameter)

The English (Shakespearean) Sonnet is made up of three quatrains and a heroic couplet and rhymes abab cdcd efef gg

The Italian (Petrarchan) Sonnet is made up of an octet and a sestet. It rhymes: abbaabba cdecde; in sonnets written in English, the last six rhymes may come in any order.

THE SESTINA

The sestina dates from the 12th century. Its 39 lines divide into six sestets and a three-line envoy. The same words that end the lines in the first sestet will end the lines in all the others in a different but prescribed order. Each stanza uses these ending words from the previous stanza in the order 6-1-5-2-4-3. All six words appear in the envoy, three of them at the end of a line.

THE VILLANELLE

The villanelle, a complex and rare form, is made up of 19 lines arranged in five tercets and a concluding quatrain. Line 1 must be repeated as lines 6, 12, and 18; line 3 must be repeated as lines 9, 15, and 19.

THE BALLAD

The ballad is made up of quatrains in which the second and fourth lines must rhyme and are generally trimetric; the first and third lines are normally tetrametric.

TWO JAPANESE FORMS

Syllables instead of feet are counted. The haiku is a three-line poem in which the first and third lines have five, the second, seven. The tanka is a five line poem in which the first and third lines have five, the other three, seven each. The haiku must contain a reference to a season.