

# Poetry

- 1) **Found Poetry** = poetry made with words and phrases from something you read or hear. It uses someone else's words, but the poet combines them in a new way. They are taken randomly from other sources and rearranged in a manner to create a new meaning.
- 2) **Formula Poetry** = Poetry written to a formula (e.g., ballad, cinquain, couplet, haiku, limerick, lyric, quatrain).
  - Haiku** = 3 line unrhymed nature-themed poem with syllable counts of 5,7,5
  - Tanka** = 5 line unrhymed nature-themed poem with syllable counts of 5,7,5,7,7
  - Limerick** = 5 line humorous nonsense poem with a rhyme scheme of aabba
- 3) **Acrostic Poem** = a free verse poem in which the first letter of each line, when read downward, forms a word (usually the theme of the poem)
- 4) **Free verse** = a poem without predictable rhyme, rhythm, or length of line or stanza
- 5) **Stanza** = a group of lines of poetry, usually similar in length and pattern (a poetic paragraph)
  - Line lengths: monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octameter
- 6) **Rhyme Scheme** = regular pattern of rhyming words in a poem (located at the ends of lines)
- 7) **Musical Devices** = tools used to make a poem sound a certain way
  - a. **Alliteration** = repetition of the first sound of several words in lines of poetry
  - b. **Onomatopoeia** = use of words to imitate actual sounds
  - c. **Repetition** = use of any element of language more than once
  - d. **Rhythm** = pattern of beats or stresses in language
    - i. **Meter** = a poem's rhythmical pattern. It is determined by the number and types of stresses/beats per line
      1. **foot** = grouping of stresses (beats) and unstresses (nonbeats) together  
ex: iamb, trochee, anapest, dactyl, spondee, pyrrhic
- 8) **Figurative Language** = writing or speech not meant to be interpreted literally
  - a. **Simile** = using "like" or "as" to compare two basically unlike things
  - b. **Metaphor** = comparing two unlike things without using "like" or "as;" an implied comparison; one thing is spoken of as if it were something else
  - c. **Personification** = giving human characteristics to nonhumans
- 9) **Speaker** = imaginary voice assumed by the poet
- 10) **Apostrophe** = speaking directly to an absent person or a lifeless object as if it could reply.  
(ex: Oh, death, where is thy sting?)
- 11) **Caesura** – noticeable pause within a line (may be denoted with punctuation)
- 12) **Enjambment** = run-on lines, as opposed to **end-stopped** (with punctuation)

# How To Scan a Poem

“Poetry is the most compressed form of language, and rhythm is an essential component of language. When we speak, we hear a sequence of syllables (basic units of pronunciation)...In words of two or more syllables, one is almost always given more emphasis or, as we say, is more heavily stressed than the others, so that what we hear in ordinary speech is a sequence of such units, variously stressed and unstressed.”

-- from *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, Fourth Edition

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## Terms to know:

**Scansion** = the analysis of stressed and unstressed syllables to determine its division into metrical feet

**Rhythm** = the pattern or beat of stresses

**Meter** = a poem's rhythmical pattern

**Foot** = the grouping of stresses and unstresses together

**Iamb** (iambic)= u /                      **Anapest** (anapestic)= u u /

**Trochee** (trochaic) = / u                      **Dactyl** (dactylic)= / u u

\***Phyrric** (phyrric)= u u                      \***Spondee** (spondaic)= //

*\*used only rarely as a substitution for iambs or anapests*

Line Lengths = the number of feet per line of poetry

1 foot = **monometer**

2 feet = **dimeter**

3 feet = **trimeter**

4 feet = **tetrameter**

5 feet = **pentameter**

Stanza Groupings

1 line of poetry = **monometer**

2 lines = **couplet**

3 lines = **tercet / triplet**

4 lines = **quatrain**

6 lines = **sestet**

8 lines = **octet**

## To scan a poem, follow these steps:

*Our example is the first line of John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields"*

- 1) Divide the line of poetry into its syllables

Ex: In Flan ders fields the pop pies blow

- 2) Look for the stressed syllables

Hint: Try to identify alliterated syllables.

Tapping to the "beat" may help as well.

Ex: In Flan ders fields the pop pies blow

- 3) Then, fill in the rest of the syllables as unstressed.

Ex: In Flan ders fields the pop pies blow

- 4) Look for a rhythmical pattern and box each pattern off.

Ex: In Flan ders fields the pop pies blow

- 5) Count up the number of feet and name the line length

Ex: In Flan ders fields the pop pies blow

# Close Study of a Poem

(use your handout for help)

Name of Poem \_\_\_\_\_ Author \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1 – Read the poem silently to yourself. Then, read it aloud. Read it again.

Step 2 – Analyze what's happening within the poem.

What is the situation?	
What is the setting?	
Who is the speaker? (What is his/her attitude?) (What is the tone of the poem?) (How reliable is the speaker?)	
Who is being spoken to?	
What is the relationship between the speaker and who is being spoken to?	

Step 3 – Analyze the diction and structure of the poem.

Patterns: repetition, rhythm, rhyme (scheme), meter, stanzas	
Images: what senses are affected? Literal and figurative images Metaphor, simile, personification, allusions, symbols, etc	

Words: alliteration, assonance, consonance, word choice	
Punctuation: placement of marks, run-on/fragments, caesuras, enjambment	

# Close Poem Analysis Paper

For this paper, you will choose a 10 line section of a poem that is written in meter (meaning NOT free or blank verse) to analyze.

You will scan the 10 lines and:

- 1) Write out the metrical pattern above the syllables of each line (ex: / or u )
- 2) Determine the metrical foot (or feet) used in the poem (ex: iamb, spondee)
- 3) Determine the line length (ex: monometer, pentameter)
- 4) Name the stanza type (ex: couplet, quatrain)

Then, you will analyze the poem itself using the 4-step process given on the sheet “How to Read a Poem (Close Study)”. I expect 1-2 pgs typed in MLA format. Here’s a brief reminder:

Step One: Read the poem through three times.

Step Two: Ask yourself the questions regarding the poem’s content.

Step Three: How does the poem achieve the effect through its use of structure?

Step Four: So What? How do all of the above contribute to what the poem is doing?

\*\*\* *Make sure you address the questions that are listed within each of the four steps!!!*

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Example of scansion with John McCrae’s poem “In Flanders Fields:”

We are the Dead. Short days ago

Foot =        *iamb* (u/)

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Line Length = *tetrameter* (lines 1-3)  
*Dimeter* (line 4)

Loved and were loved, and now we lie

In Flanders fields.

Stanza type = quatrain (4 lines)

Take up our quarrel with the foe:

Foot =        *iamb* (u/)

To you from failing hands we throw

Line Length = *tetrameter* (lines 1-5)  
*Dimeter* (line 6)

The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die

Stanza type = sestet (6 lines)

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields.