PROSODY

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| **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” ( breveacc  ). 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 | dactyllic | ( ’ - - ) | 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 |

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| **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,” |

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| **special names** | Heroic meter | Iambic pentameter |
| Long meter | Iambic tetrameter |
| Alexandrine | One line of iambic hexameter |

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| **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**.’** |

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

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|  | **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. |