

Meter

accent: prominence or emphasis given to a syllable or word; in the word *poetry*, the accent (or stress) falls on the first syllable

anapest: metrical foot of three syllables, two short (or unstressed) followed by one long (or stressed), as in *seventeen* and *to the moon*; reverse of the dactyl

blank verse: poetry that is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter; Shakespeare wrote most of his plays in blank verse

dactyl: metrical foot of three syllables, one long (or stressed) followed by two short (or unstressed), as in *happily*; reverse of the anapest

foot: two or more syllables that together make up the smallest unit of rhythm in a poem; for example, an iamb is a foot that has two syllables, one unstressed followed by one stressed; an anapest has three syllables, two unstressed followed by one stressed

free verse: poetry composed of either rhymed or unrhymed lines that have no set meter

iamb: metrical foot of two syllables, one short (or unstressed) and one long (or stressed); there are four iambs in the line "Come **live**/ with **me**/ and **be**/ my **love**," from a poem by Christopher Marlowe (stressed syllables are in bold); reverse of the trochee

iambic pentameter: type of meter in poetry, in which there are five iambs to a line

meter: arrangement of a line of poetry by the number of syllables and the rhythm of accented (or stressed) syllables

spondee: metrical foot of two syllables, both of which are long (or stressed)

trochee: metrical foot of two syllables, one long (or stressed) and one short (or unstressed); an easy way to remember the trochee is to memorize the first line of a lighthearted poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which demonstrates the use of various kinds of metrical feet: "**Trochee**/ **trips** from/ **long** to/ **short**" (stressed syllables are in bold); reverse of the iamb.

from "Metrical Feet"
By Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Tro chee / **trips** from / **long** to / **short**;
From long to long in solemn sort
Slow Spon / **dee stalks**; / **strong foot**, / **yet ill** / a ble
Ev er to / **come** up with / **Dac** tyl tri / **syl** la ble
I **amb** / ics **march** / from **short** / to **long**;
With a **leap** / and a **bound** / the swift **An** / a pests **throng**.

Sound and Form

alliteration: repetition of the same or similar sounds at the beginning of words

assonance: repetition or a pattern of similar sounds, especially vowel sounds

caesura: natural pause or break in a line of poetry, usually near the middle of the line; there is a caesura right after the question mark in the first line of this sonnet by Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways."

consonance: repetition of similar consonant sounds, especially at the ends of words, as in *lost* and *past* or *confess* and *dismiss*

couplet: a pair of lines that are the same length and usually rhyme and form a complete thought

enjambment: continuation of a complete idea (a sentence or clause) from one line or couplet of a poem to the next line or couplet without a pause; an example of enjambment can be found in the first line of Joyce Kilmer's poem "Trees": "I think that I shall never see/A poem as lovely as a tree."

Types of Poems

ballad: poem that tells a story similar to a folk tale or legend and often has a repeated refrain

elegy: poem that laments the death of a person, or one that is simply sad and thoughtful

epic: long, serious poem that tells the story of a heroic figure

lyric (a category, not a specific type): expresses the thoughts and feelings of the poet

narrative (a category, not a specific type): tells a story

ode: lyric poem that is serious and thoughtful in tone and has a very precise, formal structure

pastoral: poem that depicts rural life in a peaceful, idealized way

sestina: a poem with six stanzas of six lines and a final triplet, all stanzas having the same six words at the line-ends in six different sequences that follow a fixed pattern, and with all six words appearing in the closing three-line conclusion

sonnet: lyric poem that is 14 lines long; it is usually metered (most commonly in iambic pentameter)