

## Poetry Unit

### **Big Questions:**

What is Poetry?

How can we enjoy poetry? How can poetry play a part in our lives?

How can poetry help us express ourselves?

What are the definitions and uses of literary and poetic terms?

What are different forms of poetry?

### **Student Objectives:**

Students will learn definitions of literary and poetic terms.

Students will learn to identify literary and poetic terms.

Students will use various literary and poetic terms in writing original poetry.

Students will learn and write various forms of poetry.

Students will express themselves in written and verbal form.

### **Differentiated Instruction and Multiple Intelligences and Addressing Areas of Difficulty**

Notes will be researched, as well as provided. Notes will be provided in oral and written form.

Students will read, write, edit, and orally share original pieces of poetry.

Students will create illustrations connected to their pieces.

Students will work in various groupings: individual, partners, groups, class.

Students will participate in activities.

Students will participate in writing groups and act as peer advisers.

See additional notes in Standards Section of Unit.

### **Outline:**

(Adjustments will be made as necessary)

Class 1:

*See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Touch No Evil, Smell No Evil, Taste No Evil* Activity

Learning to observe, describe in detail; Show vs. Tell

Introductory Questionnaire

Classes 2-3:

Poetic Terms WebQuest – See Individual Lesson Plans

Classes 3-10:

Learn various forms of poetry listed in Biographical Poetry Project

Notes provided to students

Write individual, original poems fitting each form

Class 11-12:

Finish Poetry Project Requirements

Class 13:

Share Quality Poems aloud with classmates

Name:

Rieger

**Biographical Poetry Project**

**Students will:**

Complete a minimum of 11 poems

- Free Verse (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Open (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Narrative (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Concrete (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Haiku (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Ode (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Elegy (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Acrostic (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Limerick (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Pantoum (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Parody (1) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Variable (x) x pts. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_/(110)

**Sound**

- Alliteration (2) Assonance (1) Consonance (1)
- Onomatopoeia (1)
- Repetition (2)
- Rhyme (full, slant, ½)

Couplet (1) Internal (1) External (1) /\_\_(10)

**Figurative Language**

- Image (2)
- Symbol (1)
- Comparisons (3) - Simile, metaphor, extended metaphor, analogy, hyperbole
- Allusion (1)
- Metonymy/ synecdoche (1)
- Personification (1)
- Irony, Oxymoron (1) /\_\_(10)

**Requirements**

Grades will be based upon student's ability to create a poem following prescribed form and included poetic devices. Additionally, the student should ensure information is related to his/ her life. Also, see **formatting** requirements below.

Cover 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

Foreword or introduction paragraph (1-2 paragraphs) 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

Illustrated – at least one poem must be illustrated 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

- Each page must be complete, edited, and professional 10 pts. \_\_\_\_\_

- o Grammatically correct
- o No spelling errors
- o Correct punctuation and capitalization (40)

Total: 170 pts. / \_\_\_\_\_

## Free Verse

Poetry that is based on the irregular rhythmic CADENCE or the recurrence, with variations, of phrases, images, and syntactical patterns rather than the conventional use of METER. RHYME may or may not be present in free verse, but when it is, it is used with great freedom. In conventional VERSE the unit is the FOOT, or the line; in free verse the units are larger, sometimes being paragraphs or strophes. If the free verse unit is the line, as it is in Whitman, the line is determined by qualities of RHYTHM and thought rather than FEET or syllabic count.

Such use of CADENCE as a basis for POETRY is very old. The poetry of the Bible, particularly in the King James Version, which attempts to approximate the Hebrew CADENCES, rests on CADENCE and PARALLELISM. The Psalms and The Song of Solomon are noted examples of free verse. Milton sometimes substituted rhythmically constructed VERSE paragraphs for metrically regular lines, notably in the CHORUSES of *Samson Agonistes*, as this example shows:

But patience is more oft the exercise  
Of Saints, the trial of thir fortitude,  
Making them each his own Deliver,  
And Victor over all  
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.

Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* was a major experiment in cadenced rather than metrical VERSIFICATION. The following lines are typical:

All truths wait in all things  
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,  
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon.

Matthew Arnold sometimes used free verse, notably in "Dover Beach." But it was the French poets of the late nineteenth century --Rimbaud, Laforgue, Vielé-Griffin, and others--who, in their revolt against the tyranny of strict French VERSIFICATION, established the Vers libre movement, from which the name free verse comes.

In the twentieth century free verse has had widespread usage by most poets, of whom Rilke, St.-John Perse, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Carl Sandburg, and William Carlos Williams are representative. Such a list indicates the great variety of subject matter, effect and TONE that is possible in free verse, and shows that it is much less a rebellion against traditional English METRICS than a modification and extension of the resources of our language.

[A note on the source.](#)

[POETRY HOME](#) | [ENGLISH 88 READING LIST](#) | [POETRY NEWS](#) | [FILREIS HOME](#)

Document URL: <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/freeverse.html>  
Last modified: Wednesday, 18-Jul-2007 16:25:53 EDT



## Blank Verse

Syllabus  
Craft of Poetry Home

**Blank Verse** is any verse comprised of unrhymed lines all in the same meter, usually *iambic pentameter*. It was developed in Italy and became widely used during the Renaissance because it resembled classical, unrhymed poetry. Marlowe's "mighty line," which demonstrated blank verse's range and flexibility, made blank verse the standard for many English writers, including both Shakespeare and Milton, and it remained a very practiced form up until the twentieth century when Modernism rebelled and openly experimented with the tradition. Regardless, blank verse was embraced by Yeats, Pound, Frost, and Stevens who skillfully brought the tradition through this century. While it may not be as common as open form, it retains an important role in the world of poetry.

Blank verse can be composed in any meter and with any amount of feet per line (any line length), though the iamb is generally the predominant foot. Along with the iamb are 3 other standard feet and a number of variations that can be employed in a blank verse poem. It is difficult--almost impossible--to write a blank verse poem consisting of all iambs, and other types of feet get used more often than one may think. These are:

1. Iamb- two syllables, unstressed-stressed, as in "today".
2. Trochee- two syllables, stressed-unstressed, as in "standard".
3. Anapest- three syllables, unstressed-unstressed-stressed, as in "disengage"
4. Dactyl- three syllables, stressed-unstressed-unstressed, as in "probably".

Variations include:

1. Headless Iamb or Tailless Trochee- one stressed syllable. Labeling the foot depends on where it is located in the line.
2. Spondee- two stressed syllables, as in "hot dog"
3. Amphibrach- three syllables, unstressed-stressed-unstressed, as in "forgetful"
4. Double Iamb- four syllables, unstressed-unstressed-stressed-stressed, as in "will you eat it?" A double iamb is counted as two feet.

Blank verse can be written with any combination of the above feet. The

name of the dominant foot coupled with the number of feet in the line provide the name of a poem's meter. For example, the dominant foot in Robert Frost's "Mending Wall" is the iamb, and there are five feet per line. Thus, the poem is written in iambic pentameter. Notice, however, that not each foot is an iamb, but Frost mixes up the feet, as in the first few lines of the poem.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun

When you read the words, the natural rhythm is not de-dum, de-dum, de-dum--it is not strictly iambic. The first line, for example, scans as a trochee and four iambs. *Scansion*, by the way is how poets demonstrate the meter of a poem using accents to show the stressed syllables. With scanning, one can tell if a poem is metered or not and, if so, what kind of meter is present, as in "Mending Wall:"

Something there is that doesn't love a wall.

Of course, how a person scans a single line or an entire poem depends on the reader's natural rhythms and inclinations, and, while there may be better ways to scan a poem, there is not always a single correct scan. In the first line of "Mending Wall", for instance, the first iamb *could* be read as a trochee, with the stress falling on "there" instead of "is."

#### How to and Examples

One way to write in blank verse is to take an old poem and turn the existing lines into ten-syllable lines. Then, modify the diction and the syntax (be careful not Yoda always try to sound) in such a way that the iamb becomes the predominant foot. Remember, the poem should be read naturally without forcing the meter onto the rhythm. Each line does not need to read "de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, de-dum, de-dum" but, rather, that that meter can be over-imposed onto the natural rhythm of the line. As well, the poem should be read in sentences, not by line break. Line breaks should be determined by the meter. Allow the meter of the poem to drive you as you write it. Let it decide where the line length and line breaks should be without imposing your own natural habits.

This can be very difficult to do if you have never tried writing blank verse before, and I have found the above method does not work best for me. A second way is to simply write in pentameter by using roughly ten syllable lines, then, going back and changing syntax and diction to emphasize the iamb. With a little practice the meter will soon be controlling the way the line moves and sounds, and it will modify your natural rhythms to adhere with the pattern.

What does blank verse do to the line? It lengthens it, of course, but the meter also pushes the line into the next line and so on, giving blank verse a strong, narrative pull. I find blank verse makes my own poems long winded, the

meter drives me to keep writing, and I feel a narrative voice emerging that I don't feel in a shorter-lined poem. Blank verse can be very helpful in that way, particularly if you feel you don't know what to write. The meter and long line demand words to fulfill its requirements, which makes blank verse a decent exercise for escaping writer's block.

Examples of blank verse include:

- "Mending Wall"- Robert Frost (almost anything by Frost will be a solid example)

Online Examples and Resources:

- ["Notes on the Blank Verse of Christopher Marlowe" \(From T.S. Eliot's \*The Sacred Wood\*\)](#)
- [Blank Verse](#)
- [Forms Index](#)

-- Damon McLaughlin

[Top of page](#)

<http://www.uni.edu/english/craft/blankverse.html>  
Last Updated 8/23/99

## Narrative Poetry

What is narrative poetry? Narrative Poetry is a poem that tells a series of events using poetic devices such as rhythm, rhyme, compact language, and attention to sound. In other words, a narrative poem tells a story, but it does it with poetic flair! Many of the same elements that are found in a short story are also found in a narrative poem. Here are some elements of narrative poetry that are important:

- o character
- o setting
- o conflict
- o plot

Read these examples:

### Papa's Fishing Hole

I place my tiny hand in his  
as we walk to Papa's Fishing Hole.  
I hand him a wiggling night crawler  
fighting for his life.  
The deadly hook squishes  
through the worm's head,  
and I watch the brown guts ooze out.  
Papa throws the pole's long arm back  
and then forward.  
The line lands in a merky spot  
along the reedy shore.  
Now I get to reel it in.  
Nothing yet, he says.  
He casts again. I reel it in.  
Still nothing.

Three time's a charm, he says.  
He casts.  
A strike.  
We turn the crank together.  
The fish jumps from the water  
and his colors form a rainbow  
as he arches his body above the reeds.  
My Papa handles him  
with the skill of a master  
as I stop helping to watch him work.  
A stiff jerk, a quick reel, a stiff jerk again.  
The fish doesn't have a chance, I yell.  
I know. I know. I know, he says.

*-Elisabeth D. Babin*

Babin, Elisabeth D. "Papa's Fishing Hole." *Tempest*. Spring 1994. 27.

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### The Lie

Mother is in the hospital  
for an operation  
and Grandma Sanderson  
has come to take care of us.  
She's strict.  
If I'm two minutes  
late from play,  
she grips my wrist tightly  
and swings me to a chair  
to think about it.  
I skin my knee  
and get a deep cut.  
She looks worried.  
"When you go to school,  
ask the nurse what to do."  
On the way home,  
I remember I've forgotten.

I know this is more serious  
than being late from play.  
I imagine a spanking,  
early to bed for a week,  
or extra work on Saturday.  
She asks me what the nurse said.  
"Wash it very carefully  
with soap and water,  
dry it, put on vaseline  
and then place a band-aid over the top."  
(That's what Mother  
would have said,  
except she'd use  
iodine which stings.)

*-Donald Graves*

Graves, Donald. "The Lie." *Baseball, Snakes and Summer Squash*. Honesdale: Boyds Mill Press, 1996. 43-44.

Choose one of the poems and answer the following:

Who are the characters in the poem?

What do you know about the speaker in the poem?

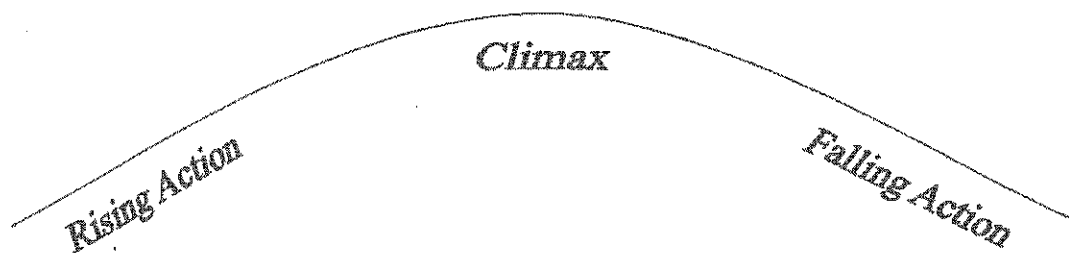
What character traits does each of the characters have? What evidence in the poem shows this?

What is the setting of the poem? (time and place)

What types of conflicts occur in the poem? (hint: there is more than one)

What is the mood of the poem?

Draw a small plot line. Tell what happens in the beginning, middle and end of the poem.





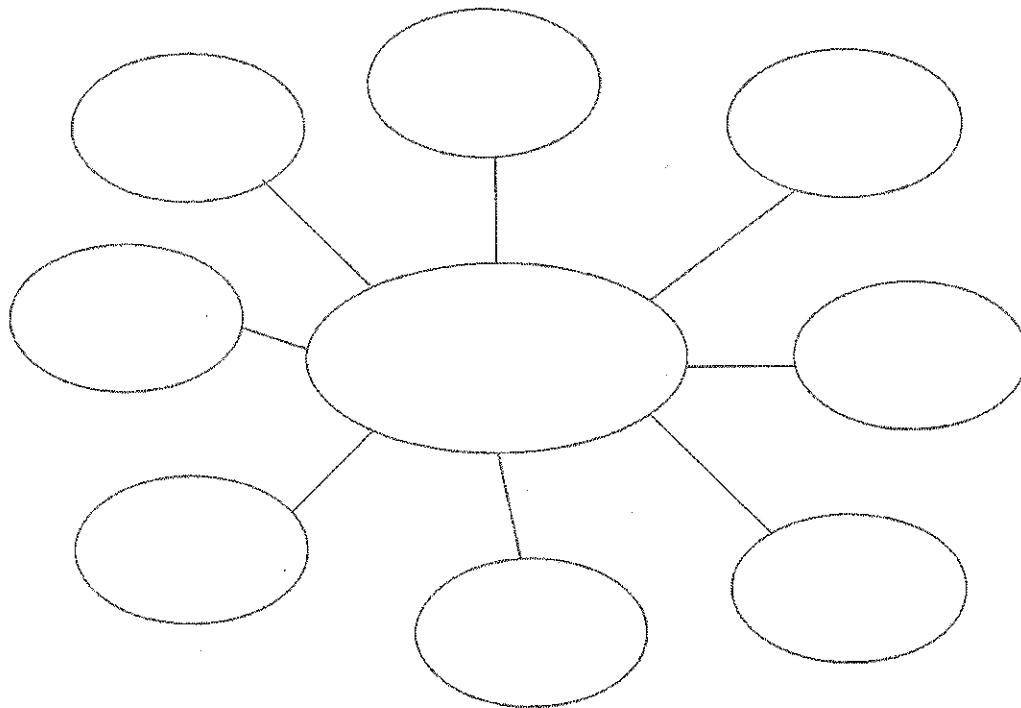
## Writing narrative poetry

When writing narrative poetry a good place to start is with your own life's experiences. Choose experiences that can be captured in a snapshot. Do you have a favorite photograph of you playing baseball when you were 6 years old? Or, how about the funny picture on your first birthday with you face full of cake? Maybe you can remember funny moment from a special vacation, or a moment with a grandparent that is very memorable. Remember, these are moment in time—not the whole event. A poem (unless you are writing an epic poem) captures snapshots, not 5 hour academy award winning movies!

Brainstorm 5 different "snapshot" experiences that you may be able to write a narrative poem about.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

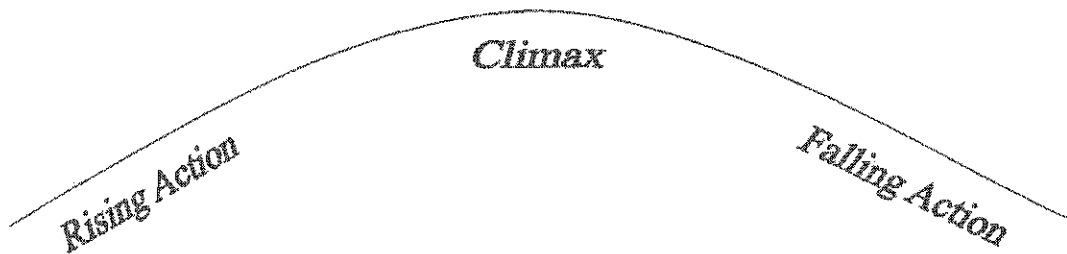
Next, gather sensory details about that experience. The best way I have found to do this is through clustering idea. Remember that not ALL the ideas need to be used in your poem, but don't leave hole in the poem that would prevent a reader from connecting to your poem.



Now that you have your images, choose character for your poem. What is he or she like? Who will be the speaker of the poem?

The next step, just like in when writing a short story is to determine the conflict. What are the inner and outer conflicts in the even that you have chosen? How is the conflict resolved?

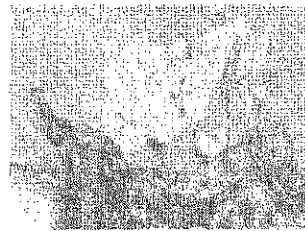
To identify plot in you poem create your own plot line below.




Now, craft the lines of your poem. If it doesn't come together in the first draft, that's okay. Narrative poetry always takes a couple of drafts to get the spirit of the poem down on the page. Remember to include a wonderful title that adds to the meaning of your poem.

## LESSON PLAN

## Discovering Poetic Form and Structure Using Concrete Poems



Grades	9 - 12
Lesson Plan Type	Standard Lesson
Estimated Time	Two 50-minute sessions
Lesson Author	Traci Gardner Blacksburg, Virginia
Publisher	 National Council of Teachers of English

## Student Objectives

Session One

Session Two

Extensions

Student Assessment/Reflections

## STUDENT OBJECTIVES

Students will

- be introduced to the genre of concrete poetry.
- explore the relationship between the structure and meaning of a poem.
- draw conclusions about the ways a writer's choices play a role in writing.

## SESSION ONE

1. Just before giving out the poem, explain that there is something unusual about its arrangement on the students a minute or so to look at its arrangement on the page.
2. Ask if anyone has figured out how to read the poem so that it makes sense. (It's important to establish -left reading pattern early, since no further discussion is possible without this simple key.)
3. Give students time to read the poem to themselves; then read it aloud (or ask a volunteer to do so) who follow along.
4. Lead students in a discussion of "Suppose Columbus" and of concrete poetry more generally. The follow questions can help build conversation:

Explain how the author of the poem "reimagines" Columbus' voyage, and what the results of the new the voyage are.

Silently reread line four, noticing your eye motion. How is that motion related to what the line says . Columbus' actual voyage from Spain?

Why do the ships' names shift slightly more to the left each time they appear in the poem?

Why are only two ships listed in line thirteen? Only one in line fifteen?

Are there other instances where the placement of words or phrases—especially at the ends of lines—relate to the events as they occur in the poem?

This poem would make sense if read aloud to someone who doesn't have a copy in hand. What would miss, though, from an oral reading?

5. Explain to the students that this poem is just one example of a certain kind of poetry—concrete poetry. In a concrete poem, the placement of words on the page is related to the meaning of the poem. You might discuss the choice of the word *concrete*, drawing attention to what it means to use concrete language or a concrete object.
6. Experiment in class with simple one- and two-word concrete poems, printing words like *uneven*, *roller*, *conflict*, *nervous*, and *inflammation* on the board. Ask students to arrange the words on a sheet of paper that relate to the words' meanings. Emphasize that they can change the sizes, colors, and, to some extent, the shapes of the letters as well as arranging them in different patterns on the page.
7. If students are working at computers, this is a good opportunity for a minilesson that focuses on how to adjust font and paragraph settings in a word processor.
8. Have students share their work with the class or in small groups.
9. For homework, have students read "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r," "Easter Wings," "The Altar," or a similar concrete poem from the List of Additional Concrete Poems or your text. Ask them to focus on what they can tell about the relationship between the shape and layout of the poem and its meaning.

## SESSION TWO

1. No matter which poem your students have read for homework, the goal is to focus on inductive teaching. Ask students to draw conclusions about the poem. Begin by reading the poem (aloud or silently); then ask students what they noticed about the poem.
2. As students share observations, write their comments on the board. This should be a free, brainstorm-style discussion. If necessary, the following general questions can help shape the discussion:

How does the poet show what the poem is about?

Why is the poem in this particular shape? Are there other shapes that would have worked?

What do you notice about the way that words are placed on the page? Take a look at line breaks, stanza breaks, hyphenated words, and so forth.

Why did the poet choose this title?

3. Pull all the ideas together by asking about the issue of choice. Begin by asking students to look at all of details that have been gathered on the board. You might connect like ideas to organize the information necessary.
4. Ask students what conclusions they can draw about the way this poem was written and what they can't the poet's purpose. With little prompting, students should raise the issue of choice. *Poets make choices* might move toward a list of the kinds of things that poets choose (words, rhythms, sounds, images, line and so forth).
5. Once they've stated and agree on this basic idea, ask them to think about the reasons for the choices. *Simply, why did the poet make these choices in this poem. Here, the idea is to notice that these choices typically informed choices, choices that are made for specific reasons.*
6. One of the underlying goals of exploring these poems is to demystify poetry, and writing in general. To the activity, have students write reflectively in journals or freewrite on the following prompt:

Think about something you've written that you remember well. It might be a letter to someone, an essay for school, an article for the school newspaper, or a poem. Think also about the choices that we've discovered poets make when they write a poem. How did you make choices as you were writing? What conclusions can you draw about writers in general from thinking about the way that you and others (including poets) write?

Students can write in class or for homework, depending upon the time available.

## EXTENSIONS

Invite students to create concrete poems of their own. Share the example concrete poem version of "Hump" from Albert B. Somers' *Teaching Poetry in High School* to provide a model for students. Discuss the choices Somers made as he arranged the traditional poem into a concrete poem version. Provide a selection of old rhymes or similar, well-known poems. Alternately, students could choose a prose passage from a book they read and fashion the sentence(s) into concrete poems. Using nursery rhyme or passage, students shape the structural form of the content into a concrete poem. Finished poems can be published using the ReadWriteThink Print student interactive.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS

As students discuss the sample concrete poems, listen for comments that indicate students see (1) the connection between structure and meaning and (2) the ways that an author's choices play a role in writing. Provide specific feedback for observations that show students are making connections between the ways that poets and other writers compose—especially connections to their own writing.

The reflective writing that concludes this activity will allow you to see which students are making connections

between a writer's choices and the resulting piece of writing. Read the journal entries and comment on the reflections, noting important observations that students make and asking provoking questions where they think more deeply.

If you're satisfied from both class discussion and students' reflections that they understand how choice affects you can begin the examination of your next piece of literature by connecting to this lesson. Ask specifically what choices students see the author making. If students need more practice to see the connection between choice and piece of writing, return to the process of asking students what they notice about their reading then asking them to comment on the reasons that they think the particular features are noticeable.

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Section Page Page 1.2.25 Page Section

- Textbook
- Poetry
- Forms
  - Heroic Couplets
  - The Ballad
  - The Ode
  - The Sonnet
  - Blank Verse
  - Other Forms
  - Free Verse
  - Concrete Poetry
  - Language Poetry
- Terms
  - Scansion
- Web Resources
- Fiction
- Film
- Theory
- Contexts
- Research and Writing
  - Research
  - Writing
- Courses
  - Tutorial
  - 120
  - 121
  - 224
  - 226
- Seminars
- Site Information
  - Site Updates
  - Navigation
  - Site Map

## Concrete Poetry

Broadly defined, *concrete poetry* is poetry in which the visual presentation of a poem creates a major part of the poem's meaning. By that definition, concrete poetry includes works from certain Classical and Renaissance poems (including, famously, George Herbert's "Easter Wings") to contemporary online compositions such as Dan Waber's "Arms."

Many writers and critics apply the phrase "concrete poetry" only to a much narrower range of works, such as a school of visual poetry produced primarily in the 1950s and 60s by artists who emphasized extreme originality, uniqueness of structure, and abstraction of form. In these poems, words function as suggestive visual markers, not as components of conventional sentences.

As you can see in the introduction to Mary Ellen Solt's *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, the English critic Mike Weaver in 1964 distinguished three types of concrete poetry: "visual (or optic), phonetic (or sound) and kinetic (moving in a visual succession)." Among all these different definitions, however, as Solt points out, "there is a fundamental requirement which the various kinds of concrete poetry meet: concentration upon the physical material from which the poem or text is made."

Solt's book is published on (by far) the leading internet archive of concrete poetry by any definition: UbuWeb.

Search Connections

Section Page Page 1.2.25 Page Section

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# Haiku

## (HI-coo)

### Lesson 19

Haiku is a poetic form and a type of poetry from the Japanese culture. Haiku combines form, content, and language in a meaningful, yet compact form. Haiku poets, which you will soon be, write about everyday things. Many themes include nature, feelings, or experiences. Usually they use simple words and grammar. The most common form for Haiku is three short lines. The first line usually contains five (5) syllables, the second line seven (7) syllables, and the third line contains five (5) syllables. Haiku doesn't rhyme. A Haiku must "paint" a mental image in the reader's mind. This is the challenge of Haiku - to put the poem's meaning and imagery in the reader's mind in ONLY 17 syllables over just three (3) lines of poetry! Check out some Haiku at Haiku Salon (see Lesson 2 for the link).

### HAIKU EXAMPLES

The Rose

Donna Brock

The red blossom bends

and drips its dew to the ground.

Like a tear it falls



A Rainbow

Donna Brock

Curving up, then down.

Meeting blue sky and green earth

Melding sun and rain.

Have your teacher show you how to copy and paste this into your word processing program by toggling between the Internet and your word processing program. Now print out a copy of one, or both of the Haiku's above and mark the syllables with your pencil. If you are having trouble figuring out how many syllables, try clapping out the words, or putting your hand under your chin and counting how many times your chin goes down. If all else fails, get a dictionary! :)

Now it's your turn. Pick your favorite sport. That sport will be your theme. Decide: 1) For what purpose will you write?

2) What mood do you want to convey?

Think of the images, descriptive words, and figurative language that best describe that sport (remember sounds, smells, sights). Jot them down in web form or as you think of them. Then the final step is to experiment by putting your ideas on the Haiku "skeleton" - 5, 7, 5 (syllables) and 3 lines.

Look at your poem, check it for correct syllables and lines. Now, for the real test, read it ALOUD. Does it really paint a clear picture? Share your Haiku with someone else. Listen to his or her critique of your poem. A critique is when someone tells you the strengths and weaknesses of your work. DON'T GET MAD, LISTEN to the suggestions. Revise your work. Remember, the BEST writers are REWRITERS!

Fill in the seven syllable line.

Green elms in the woods

---

Standing tall and proud

Fill in the two five syllable lines.

---

The petals bend to the earth

---

You are ready to look at your theme from Lesson 15 and try it in Haiku form

Write an original Haiku. Type and choose a font that adds to the look of your Haiku. Revise. Finish by illustrating your poem. If you are computer talented, you might want to draw it on the computer.

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by Bernadette Mayer

## Ode to the Confederate Dead

by Allen Tate

## Ode to the West Wind

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

## The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket

by Robert Lowell

## Book 1, Ode 5, [To Pyrrha]

by Horace

## » Ancient Forms

Poetic Form: Cento

Poetic Form: Elegy

Poetic Form: Epic

Poetic Form: Epigram

Poetic Form: Sapphic

Poetic Forms: Abecedarian and Acrostic

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Poetry Glossary

## Poetic Form: Ode

"Ode" comes from the Greek *aoidain*, meaning to sing or chant, and belongs to the long and varied tradition of lyric poetry. Originally accompanied by music and dance, and later reserved by the Romantic poets to convey their strongest sentiments, the ode can be generalized as a formal address to an event, a person, or a thing not present.

There are three typical types of odes: the Pindaric, Horatian, and Irregular. The Pindaric is named for the ancient Greek poet Pindar, who is credited with inventing the ode. Pindaric odes were performed with a chorus and dancers, and often composed to celebrate athletic victories. They contain a formal opening, or *strophe*, of complex metrical structure, followed by an *antistrophe*, which mirrors the opening, and an *epode*, the final closing section of a different length and composed with a different metrical structure. The William Wordsworth poem "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" is a very good example of an English language Pindaric ode. It begins:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight

To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;--

Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The Horatian ode, named for the Roman poet Horace, is generally more tranquil and contemplative than the Pindaric ode. Less formal, less ceremonious, and better suited to quiet reading than theatrical production, the Horatian ode typically uses a regular, recurrent stanza pattern. An example is the Allen Tate poem "Ode to the Confederate Dead," excerpted here:

Row after row with strict impunity  
The headstones yield their names to the element,  
The wind whirs without recollection;  
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves  
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament  
To the seasonal eternity of death;  
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny  
Of heaven to their election in the vast breath,  
They sough the rumour of mortality.

The Irregular ode has employed all manner of formal possibilities, while often retaining the tone and thematic elements of the classical ode. For example, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by John Keats was written based on his experiments with the sonnet. Other well-known odes include Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," Robert Creeley's "America," Bernadette Mayer's "Ode on Periods," and Robert Lowell's "Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket."

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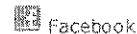
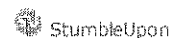
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# *Withstanding the test of time*

### **Pindaric and Horatian styles.**

Two ode structures emerged from antiquity: the Pindaric Ode and Horatian Ode. Both operated on multiple quatrain stanzas, but the Pindaric Ode tended to offer sweeping celebrations of events, gods, or other individuals, while the Horatian Ode was deeply personal. Two examples illustrate how the classic Pindaric style (Sappho) truncates the fourth line, while the Horatian style (Horace) cuts the third line, then offers a full fourth line.

#### **Ode to Aphrodite**

Sappho (c. 630-570 B.C.)

Deathless Aphrodite, throned in flowers,

Daughter of Zeus, O terrible enchantress,  
With this sorrow, with this anguish, break my  
spirit  
Lady, not longer!

Hear anew the voice! O hear and listen!

Come, as in that island dawn thou camest,  
Billowing in thy yoked car to Sappho  
Forth from thy father's

Golden house in pity! ... I remember:

Fleet and fair thy sparrows drew thee, beating  
Fast their wings above the dusky harvests,  
Down the pale heavens,

Lightning anon! And thou, O blest and  
brightest,

Smiling with immortal eyelids, asked me:  
"Maiden, what betideth thee? Or wherefore  
Callest upon me?"

"What is here the longing more than other,

Here in this mad heart? And who the lovely  
One beloved that wouldst lure to loving?  
Sappho, who wrongs thee?"

"See, if now she flies, she soon must follow;

Yes, if spurning gifts, she soon must offer;  
Yes, if loving not, she soon must love thee,  
Howso unwilling..."

Come again to me! O now! Release me!

End the great pang! And all my heart desireth  
Now of fulfillment, fulfill! O Aphrodite,  
Fight by my shoulder!

#### **The Ship of State (Odes I, 14)**

Quintus Horatius Flaccus (Horace) (65-8  
B.C.)

On Ship! New billows sweep thee out

Seaward. What wilt thou? Hold the port, be  
stout  
See'st not thy mast  
How rent by stiff Southwestern blast?

Thy side, of rowers how forlorn?

Thine hull, with groaning yards, with rigging  
torn,  
Can ill sustain  
The fierce, and ever fiercer main;

Thy gods, no more than sails entire,

From whom yet once they need might aid  
require,  
Oh Pontic Pine,  
The first of woodland stocks is thine.

Yet race and name are but as dust,

Not painted sterns gave storm-tost seamen  
trust;  
Unless thou dare  
To be the sport of storms, beware.

O fold at best a weary weight,

A yearning care and constant strain of late,  
O shun the seas  
That girt those glittering Cyclades

### **Classic but flexible.**

French poet Pierre de Ronsard was a key ode revivalist. He took the classic Pindaric story structure of strophe-antistrophe-epode and then added a closing couplet to each quatrain to form sestet stanzas with *ababcc* rhyme schemes:

**To His Young Mistress**

Pierre de Ronsard (1524-85)

Fair flower of fifteen springs, that still

Art scarcely blossomed from the bud,  
 Yet hast such store of evil will,  
 A heart so full of hardihood,  
 Seeking to hide in friendly wise  
 The mischief of your mocking eyes.

If you have pity, child, give o'er,

Give back the heart you stole from me,  
 Pirate, setting so little store  
 On this your captive from Love's sea,  
 Holding his misery for gain,  
 And making pleasure of his pain.

Another, not so fair of face,

But far more pitiful than you,  
 Would take my heart, if of his grace,  
 My heart would give her of Love's due;  
 And she shall have it, since I find  
 That you are cruel and unkind.

**Meeting the needs of the ages.**

Part of the ode's history is the latitude that poets exercised to continually reshape the form to meet their needs. Sir Edmund Spenser and Ben Jonson carried the ode tradition into English literature, with Spenser bringing the Horatian Ode into vogue in the late 16th century and Jonson following some years later with the Pindaric form. Jonson also established a style of rhyming couplets in his stanzas, which was picked up by Alexander Pope, who included an echo from the ode's earliest days: a chorus line.

From **Ode to Sir Lucius Gray and Sir H. Morison**

Ben Jonson (1572-1637)

It is not growing like a tree

In bulk, doth make man better be;  
 Or standing long an Oak, three hundred year,  
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear.  
 A Lily of a day  
 Is fairer far, in May  
 Although it fall and die that night;  
 It was the plant and flower of light.  
 In small proportions we just beauties see;  
 And in short measure, life may perfect be.

From **Alexander's Feast**

John Dryden (1631-1700)

Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won

By Philip's warlike son:  
 Aloft in awful state  
 The godlike hero sate  
 On his imperial throne:  
 His valiant peers were placed around;  
 Their brows with roses and with myrtles  
 bound  
 (So should desert in arms be crowned).  
 The lovely Thais, by his side,  
 Sate like a blooming Eastern bride  
 In flower of youth and beauty's pride.  
 Happy, happy, happy pair!  
 None but the brave,  
 None but the brave,  
 None but the brave deserves the fair.

Chorus

Happy, happy, happy pair!  
 None but the brave,  
 None but the brave,  
 None but the brave deserves the fair.

**Elevation by Romanticists.**

When the Romantic poets wrapped their creative, intellectually astute, and historically inclined minds around the ode, the form received its greatest treatment since Gaius Valerius Catullus and Horatio made the ode personal. One of the greatest poems in the English language was written by John Keats.

From **Ode to a Nightingale**

John Keats (1795-1821)

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
'Tis not through envy of the happy lot,  
But being too happy in thy happiness,—  
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,  
In some melodious plot  
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been

Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
Tasting of Flora and the country green,  
Dance, and Provencal song, and sun-burnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget

What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs;  
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

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### *An ode to celebration*

#### **Freedom to create.**

The beauty of writing odes is that you're not constrained by a fixed stanza length, metrical scheme, or rhyme scheme. The key to success is stanza organization and the consistency of metrical and rhyme patterns.

#### **Celebrate the form.**

Your poem should be a celebration – of a person, an event, an achievement, a relationship, an animal, an ordinary object, or simply the day. Once you've selected a topic, choose which of the two classic structures with which you will work. The Pindaric Ode – the public celebration form – uses a three-stanza structure repeated throughout the poem (strophe-antistrophe-epode), with the strophe and antistrophe using identical meter and rhyme patterns. Stanzas can be as short as four lines or as long as thirty; the goal is to present the celebration in a lyrically smooth manner that focuses on the content, not the structure.

The easier of the two forms is the Horatian Ode, or the personal form. You can literally create your own stanza, meter, and rhyme pattern. You don't have to rotate between strophe-antistrophe-epode, as in the Pindaric Ode, but you must repeat the stanza structure you create for every succeeding stanza.

#### **Consider length and mirroring.**

When writing, be sure that your lines rhyme with at least one other line per stanza. Also, try to write a minimum of four stanzas. Short odes are exceedingly rare; the vast majority are at least five stanzas. Depending on how you rhyme, line lengths do not need to be consistent, but whatever length you choose for one stanza must be mirrored in successive stanzas.

#### **Shelley's Horatian Ode.**

Percy Bysshe Shelley opened his masterpiece, "Ode to the West Wind," which celebrates the crisp drying winds of autumn's harvest season, in this way:

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
 Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
 Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,  
 Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou  
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed  
 The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow  
 Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
 With living hues and odors plain and hill:  
 Wild Spirit which art moving everywhere;  
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

This is an Horatian Ode construct. Shelley developed a stanza length, rhyme scheme, and meter that he carried through this stanza and the four that followed. He ended each of the first three stanzas with the proclamation, "Oh hear!"

#### **Tap into your emotion.**

Shelley's content describes the coldness and harshness the west wind brings in its heralding of the dark winter months, but it also celebrates the wild spirit that accompanies the changing of seasons. He has chosen a subject of universal familiarity, driven to its most essential element – change – and sung his praises to the high heavens. Find a subject that brings out similar emotion in you, and give this magical brand of poetry a try!

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## Poetic Form: Elegy

The elegy began as an ancient Greek metrical form and is traditionally written in response to the death of a person or group. Though similar in function, the elegy is distinct from the epitaph, ode, and eulogy: the epitaph is very brief; the ode solely exalts; and the eulogy is most often written in formal prose.

The elements of a traditional elegy mirror three stages of loss. First, there is a lament, where the speaker expresses grief and sorrow, then praise and admiration of the idealized dead, and finally consolation and solace. These three stages can be seen in W. H. Auden's classic "In Memory of W. B. Yeats," written for the Irish master, which includes these stanzas:

With the farming of a verse  
Make a vineyard of the curse,  
Sing of human unsuccess  
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart  
Let the healing fountain start,  
In the prison of his days  
Teach the free man how to praise.

Other well-known elegies include "Fugue of Death" by Paul Celan, written for victims of the Holocaust, and "O Captain! My Captain!" by Walt Whitman, written for President Abraham Lincoln.

Many modern elegies have been written not out of a sense of personal grief, but rather a broad feeling of loss and metaphysical sadness. A famous example is the mournful series of ten poems in *Duino Elegies*, by German poet Rainer Maria Rilke. The first poem begins:

If I cried out  
who would hear me up there  
among the angelic orders?  
And suppose one suddenly  
took me to his heart  
I would shrivel

Other works that can be considered elegiac in the broader sense are James Merrill's monumental *The Changing Light at Sandover*, Robert Lowell's "For the Union Dead," Seamus Heaney's *The Haw Lantern*, and the work of Czesław Miłosz, which often laments the modern cruelties he witnessed in Europe.

### Examples of poems in the Elegy form:

**Another Elegy**  
by Jericho Brown

**For the Union Dead**  
by Robert Lowell

**Fugue of Death**  
by Paul Celan

**In Memory of W. B. Yeats**  
by W. H. Auden

**O Captain! My Captain**  
by Walt Whitman

### FURTHER READING

#### Related Poems

**For the Union Dead**  
by Robert Lowell

**Fugue of Death**  
by Paul Celan

**In Memory of W. B. Yeats**  
by W. H. Auden

**O Captain! My Captain!**  
by Walt Whitman

**The Role of Elegy**  
by Mary Jo Bang

#### Ancient Forms

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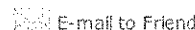
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## Elegy

### Definition

An elegy is a poem of mourning; this is often the poet mourning one person, but the definition also includes Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', which mourns all the occupants of that churchyard, and looks into the future to mourn the poet's own death. The difference between an elegy and a eulogy is that the latter is a speech given to honour someone's best qualities, often (but not necessarily) after their death.

As well as referring to a mourning or pensive mood, 'Elegiac' can refer to a classical metre, this being a couplet of one dactylic hexameter followed by a dactylic pentameter, and in this case need not carry any sense of sadness. But this is rare in contemporary usage.

There are several elegies to be found within the Archive; Brian Patten's 'Blake's Purest Daughter', for example, or Fleur Adcock's 'For Meg'.

<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/glossaryItem.do?id=8090>

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An acrostic poem is very easy to write. It can be about any subject. This kind of poem can be written in different ways, but the simplest form is to put the letters that spell your subject down the side of your page. When you have done this then you go back to each letter and think of a word, phrase or sentence that starts with that letter and describes your subject. The following poems are examples of acrostic poems written in this format. The students used AppleWorks to compose their poems.

Justin	Samara	Teshia	Drew
Stephanie	Katherine	Sam	Sharon
Alisha		Alaina	Spencer
Sarah		Matthew	

### Hockey

Hockey is my favorite sport  
 On the ice or street  
 Cool and fun  
 Keep on playing  
 Exercise and stronger  
 You should try

### Sam

Shares his stuff  
 Always on time  
 My friend

### Sky

So nice and blue  
 Keep on looking at it  
 You should look

by Drew

[Back to Top](#)

### Hockey

Hockey is my favorite sport.  
Out cold  
Count the periods  
knock out  
Easy , play the puck , boys  
Yuck! The puck just hit me in the face.

by Justin

Back to Top

---

### Best Buds

Best  
Everlasting  
Super  
True  
Best friends  
Unforgettable  
Do not exclude  
Super

by Samara

Back to Top

---

### Mothers

Mothers are really sweet and kind  
Only the sweetest thing on earth  
They love you like anything  
Have to work all day cleaning  
Easy to make them happy  
Really easy to give them... xoxo.  
(Mother)

by Teshia

Back to Top

---

### Gavin

Great friend  
A pal  
Very Friendly  
Interesting  
Never mad

by Matthew

Back to Top

---

Sharon

Sweet girl.  
Has a sweet heart.  
A nice friend.  
Rocks this world.  
On the best friend list.  
Never alone

by Stephanie

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---

Easter

Eat candy  
A Easter bunny  
Save candy  
Take your time  
Eat lots  
Remember next year

by Katherine

Back to Top

---

Hockey

Hockey is good exercise.  
Och! I got hit.  
Come and play.  
Kind of ruff.  
Evening of hockey.  
Yoch! I got checked.

by Sam

Back to Top

---

Stephanie

Sweet  
Thoughtful  
Easy to get along with

Pretty  
Has a heart  
Agreeable  
Nice  
In stoppable  
Especially cool

**Mother**

Mothers are special  
Open to buy you gifts  
Tuck you in  
Hugs you  
Excellent mom  
Rinses the dishes

by Sharon Lynn

[Back to Top](#)

---

**Spider**

Startling  
Pretty scary  
It has lots of eyes  
Deadly  
Everywhere  
Really it is just like us.

by Spencer

[Back to Top](#)

---

**Tiger**

Tame  
Is cute  
Gold eyes  
Ears are big  
Really lazy

by Alisha

[Back to Top](#)

---

**Alisha**

A god friend

Likes kittens.  
I visit her a lot.  
She lives next door to me.  
Her class is next to my class.  
An excellent painter.

by Alaina

[Back to Top](#)

---

**Sophie**

Small but sweet  
Of course she is cute  
Pretty tiny  
Happy  
I love her  
Everything about her is cute

by Sarah

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# LIMERICKS

## Lesson 23

A limerick is a five-line poem written with one couplet and one triplet. If a couplet is a two-line rhymed poem, then a triplet would be a three-line rhymed poem. The rhyme pattern is a b b a with lines 1, 2 and 5 containing 3 beats and rhyming, and lines 3 and 4 having two beats and rhyming. Some people say that the limerick was invented by soldiers returning from France to the Irish town of Limerick in the 1700's.

Limericks are meant to be funny. They often contain hyperbole, onomatopoeia, idioms, puns, and other figurative devices. The last line of a good limerick contains the PUNCH LINE or "heart of the joke." As you work with limericks, remember to have pun, I mean FUN! Say the following limericks out loud and clap to the rhythm.

A flea and a fly in a flue  
Were caught, so what could they do?  
Said the fly, "Let us flee."  
"Let us fly," said the flea.  
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

-Anonymous

You will soon hear the distinctive beat pattern of all limericks. The rhythm is just as important in a limerick as the rhyme. Try completing this limerick.

There once was a pauper named Meg

Who accidentally broke her \_\_\_\_\_.

She slipped on the \_\_\_\_\_.

Not once, but thrice

Take no pity on her, I \_\_\_\_\_.

### Lyrical Lesson: Limericks

1. Practice the rhythm of limericks by clapping you hands or snapping your fingers.
2. Think of some funny names, places, or situations.
3. Using the a a b b a 5-line form, write an original limerick.
4. How would you illustrate the page if your poem was published in a book of limericks? What types of art would you use?

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## A page from the "Poetry through the Ages" exhibit...

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# Merriment in rhyme

### Limericks and LIMERICKS.

Limerick expert Dou Marquis identified three types of limericks: "limericks to be told when ladies are present; limericks to be told when ladies are absent but clergymen are present; and LIMERICKS."

#### Delightful simplicity.

A look at memorable limericks, each with five lines and an *abba* rhyme scheme, clearly shows their intended audiences, as well as the bawdiness, nonsense, humor, and delightful storytelling simplicity of the form.

There was an Old Man of Nantucket  
Who kept all his cash in a bucket.  
His daughter, called Nan,  
Ran away with a man,  
And as for the bucket, Nantucket.  
- Anonymous

There was a young lady of Lucca  
Whose lovers completely forsook her;  
She ran up a tree  
And said "Fiddle-de-dee!"  
Which embarrassed the people of Lucca.  
- Edward Lear

There was a Young Lady whose chin  
Resembled the point of a pin;  
So she had it made sharp,  
And purchased a harp,  
And played several tunes with her chin.  
- Edward Lear

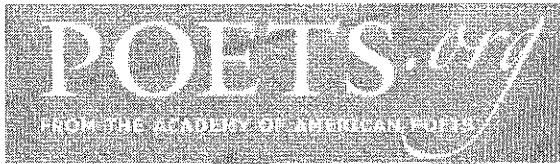
Few thought he was even a starter;  
There were many who thought themselves  
smarter,  
But he ended a PM  
CH and OM  
An earl and a Knight of the Garter.  
- Clement Attlee

There once was a man from Peru  
Who had a lot of growing up to do,  
He'd ring a doorbell,  
then run like hell,  
Until the owner shot him with a .22.  
- Anonymous

A bather whose clothing was strewed  
By winds that left her quite nude  
Saw a man come along  
And unless we are wrong  
You expected this line to be lewd.  
- Anonymous

There once was a young lady named bright  
Whose speed was much faster than light  
She set out one day  
In a relative way  
And returned on the previous night.  
- Anonymous

There was an old man with a beard  
Who said, "it's just how I feared!  
Two owls and a hen  
Four larks and a wren  
Have all built their nests in my beard.  
- Anonymous



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## Poetic Form: Pantoum

The pantoum originated in Malaysia in the fifteenth-century as a short folk poem, typically made up of two rhyming couplets that were recited or sung. However, as the pantoum spread, and Western writers altered and adapted the form, the importance of rhyming and brevity diminished. The modern pantoum is a poem of any length, composed of four-line stanzas in which the second and fourth lines of each stanza serve as the first and third lines of the next stanza. The last line of a pantoum is often the same as the first.

The pantoum was especially popular with French and British writers in the nineteenth-century, including Charles Baudelaire and Victor Hugo, who is credited with introducing the form to European writers. The pantoum gained popularity among contemporary American writers such as Anne Waldman and Donald Justice after John Ashbery published the form in his 1956 book, *Some Trees*.

A good example of the pantoum is Carolyn Kizer's "Parent's Pantoum," the first three stanzas of which are excerpted here:

Where did these enormous children come from,  
More ladylike than we have ever been?  
Some of ours look older than we feel.  
How did they appear in their long dresses

More ladylike than we have ever been?  
But they moan about their aging more than we do,  
In their fragile heels and long black dresses.  
They say they admire our youthful spontaneity.

They moan about their aging more than we do,  
A somber group--why don't they brighten up?  
Though they say they admire our youthful spontaneity  
They beg us to be dignified like them

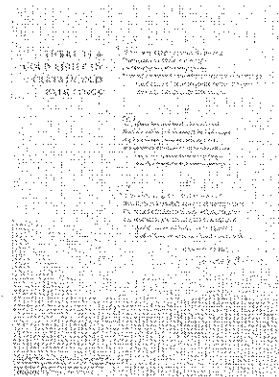
One exciting aspect of the pantoum is its subtle shifts in meaning that can occur as repeated phrases are revised with different punctuation and thereby given a new context. Consider Ashbery's poem "Pantoum," and how changing the punctuation in one line can radically alter its meaning and tone: "Why the court, trapped in a silver storm, is dying." which, when repeated, becomes, "Why, the court, trapped in a silver storm, is dying!"

An incantation is created by a pantoum's interlocking pattern of rhyme and repetition; as lines reverberate between stanzas, they fill the poem with echoes. This intense repetition also slows the poem down, halting its advancement. As Mark Strand and Eavan Boland explained in *The Making of a Poem*, "the reader takes four steps forward, then two back," making the pantoum a "perfect form for the evocation of a past time."



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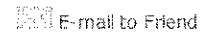
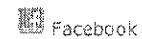
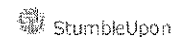
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Creative writing activity for individual writers

## Writing a Pantoum

### Objectives

to use this Malaysian form of poetry in an entertaining form

to make use of the cyclical and repetitive nature of pantoums in a contemporary poem

### Organisation

individual writing

### Example

Wendy Cope's Teddy Bear Pantoum

### Notes

It is important to choose a theme for which repetition makes sense.

It may be useful to use lines that make full sentences or complete statements on their own.

It could also be interesting to subvert the repetitions by sometimes using sentences or statements that are ambiguous.

Pantoums can rhyme (Wendy Cope's does) but they work quite well unrhymed.

### Procedure

Choose a theme in which the same thing is usually said more than once (e.g. an argument, a political discussion, a decision one may agonise over / be obsessive about)

Brainstorm a number of statements and sentences that would be uttered in connection with that theme.

Choose the one which would make a good opening and a good closing line. Then do the same with another one that will appear in line three and in line 2 in the last quatrain (four-liner)

Then arrange the rest of the sentences/statements in pantoum form

Form

line A

line B

line C

line D

line B (repeated)

line E

line D (repeated)

line F

line E (repeated)

line G

line F (repeated)

line H

...

line Y

line C (repeated)

line Z

line A (repeated)

## Satire vs. Parody

from *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Ed. M.H. Abrams. Thomson Wadsworth.

### SATIRE

Satire can be described as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from the *comic* in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire derides; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt that exists outside the work itself. . . . Satire has usually been justified by those who practice it as a corrective of human vice and folly . . . Its frequent claim (not always borne out in the practice) has been to ridicule the failing rather than the individual, and to limit its ridicule to corrigible faults, excluding those for which a person is not responsible. . . .

Satire occurs as an incidental element within many works whose overall mode is not satiric – in a certain character or situation, or in an interpolated passage of ironic commentary on some aspect of the human condition or of contemporary society. But for some literary writings, verse or prose, the attempt to diminish a subject by ridicule is the primary organizing principle, and these works constitute the formal *genre* labeled “satires.” [One such sub-genre within satire is as follows and applies to *The Monk*:]

2. **Indirect Satire** is cast in some other literary form than that of direct address to the reader. The most common indirect form is that of a fictional narrative, in which the objects of the satire are characters who make themselves and their opinions ridiculous or obnoxious by what they think, say, and do, and are sometimes made even more ridiculous by the author’s comments and narrative style

from *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (June 2005 revision)

### PARODY

Parody (n.) 1. a. A literary composition modelled on and imitating another work, esp. a composition in which the characteristic style and themes of a particular author or genre are satirized by being applied to inappropriate or unlikely subjects, or are otherwise exaggerated for comic effect. In later use extended to similar imitations in other artistic fields, as music, painting, film, etc.

1607 T. WALKINGTON *Optick Glasse* v. 35 All which in a parode, imitating Virgil wee may set downe. 1616 B. JONSON *Every Man in his Humor* (rev. ed.) V. v. 26 in Wks. I, Clem. [reads some poetry] How? this is stolne! E. Kn. A Parodie! a parodie! to make it absurder then it was. 1693 DRYDEN *Disc. conc. Satire* in tr. *Juvenal Satires* p. xx, From some Fragments of the Silli..we may find, that they were Satyrique Poerns, full of Parodies; that is, of Verses patch'd up from great Poets, and tum'd into another Sence than their Author intended them. 1774 J. BRYANT *New Syst.* II. 132 (note) The history of Aristæus is nearly a parody of the histories of Orpheus and Cadmus. 1791 T. PAINE *Rights of Man* I. 22 But if the age of aristocracy..should fall..Mr Burke, the trumpeter of the Order, may continue his parody to the end, and finish with exclaiming, 'Othello's occupation's gone!' 1803 *Ann. Rev.* 1 383/1 The singularity of the parody has given to such notes a selling value analogous to current value. 1875 B. JOWETT tr. *Plato Dialogues* (ed. 2) IV. 134 The derivations in the *Cratylus*..are a parody of some contemporary Sophist. 1910 *Encycl. Brit.* I. 211/2 Adolphus was called to the bar in 1822, and his *Circuiteers*, an *Eclogue*, is a parody of the style of two of his colleagues on the northern circuit. 1958 *Daily Mail* 19 July 8/8 Parody of a French film sequence set in a sleezy bistro. 1977 *Listener* 13 Oct. 481/2 The songs are pleasant parodies of Nashville, of torch songs and even of grand opera. 2003 *Washington Post* 18 Feb. A25/4, I produced a ribald parody..which not only was published but won an award.

Parody (v.) 2. trans. In extended use: to imitate in a way that is a parody; esp. to copy or mimic for comic or derisive effect; to make fun of, satirize.

1801 R. SOUTHEY *Thalaba* IX. (note), I could show that it is the trick of Beelzebub to parody the costume of religion. 1869 J. E. T. ROGERS in A. Smith *Inq. Wealth of Nations* (new ed.) I. Pref. p. xx, After his death, his [sc. Pitt's] finance was parodied by incapable successors. 1878 J. E. A. BROWN in *Sunday Mag.* Dec. 42 Children of the period, who parody the ways and the worldliness of men and women. 1927 V. WOOLF *To Lighthouse* I. iii. 27 All these young men parodied her husband, she reflected; he said it would rain; they said it would be a positive tornado. 1954 G. GREENE *Twenty-one Stories* 223 A class world that you could still see parodied at the Wormsley Common Empire by a man wearing a top hat and a monocle, with a haw-haw accent. 1980 E. BLISHEN *Nest of Teachers* II. xi. 122, I realised that, in the attempt to convince myself that I was a teacher, I was parodying the men who taught me. 2002 *Washington Post* 8 Apr. C2/3 The glib slimeballs whom Newhart manages to parody without merely ridiculing.

A Parody imitates the style and thought of a literary work, author, or tradition in a humorous way. A parody poem derives its poetic

form from the original work that is being parodied. The poem being parodied must be one with which your reader is familiar for the

full humorous effect to be achieved.

In English, parodies of nursery rhymes and children's stories are popular. Guy Wetmore Carryl wrote several books of these parodies

in poetic form, including Grimm Tales Made Gay, Mother Goose for Grown Ups, and the Aesop's fables parody Fables for the Frivolous.

A short example is this humorous parody "Little Bo-Peep" by Frank Jacobs:

Little Bo-Peep  
Has lost her sheep  
And thinks they may be roaming;  
They haven't fled;  
They've all dropped dead  
From nerve gas in Wyoming.

Another favorite subject for parody in English poetry is the writing style of a famous poet. An extended example is G. K. Chesterton's

"Variations of an Air: Composed on Having to Appear in a Pageant as Old King Cole", in which Chesterton rewrites the nursery rhyme

"Old King Cole" in the styles of Tennyson, Yeats, Browning, Whitman, and Swinburne.

A parody may be of a particular famous poem. A short example of this type is Bob McKenty's parody of the style and subject in Dorothy Parker's "News Item":

"Eyeglasses or No..."  
Men often get amorous  
With gals who are mammarous.

A modern variation on parody is William Cole's Uncoupled Couplets, in which he takes a famous poet's line from an English poem and

rhymes it with his own new line in the same meter, for an irreverent purpose. Here is Cole's "Robert Herrick" parody:

Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may  
But take your little pill each day.

## Definition

Parody is the imitation of the style of another work, writer or genre, which relies on deliberate exaggeration to achieve comic or satirical effect. It is usually necessary to be familiar with the original in order to appreciate the parody, though some parodies have become better known than the poems they imitate.

The very act of writing leaves every poet vulnerable to parody, but some seem irresistible. T S Eliot parody is almost a genre in itself, with Wendy Cope's 'Waste Land Limericks' perhaps the best-known recent example. Cope is an expert parodist; her 'Strugnell's Haiku' finds delicious humour in the clumsy attempts of her invented wannabe poet, Jason Strugnell, to engage with the delicacy of the traditional Japanese form.

'The Passionate Pupil Declaring Love' is a gentle parody on an Elizabethan poem, 'The Passionate Shepherd to His Love' by Christopher Marlowe. The first line of the original, "Come live with me and be my love" is one of the most famous in English poetry. Andrew Fusek Peters is in good company; the Marlowe poem has provoked many responses over the centuries, including a poem by John Donne called 'The Bait' which borrowed that famous opening line.

## How to use this term

Ian McMillan introduces his poem 'For Me' by making clear it is a parody of a certain point of view of poetry.