

Poetry Scanning Worksheet

Scanning poetry is not really a difficult job if you say the words out loud softly to yourself, exaggerating the accents slightly. As you do so, pay attention to which syllables are stressed. You may wish to work in pairs, since some people have difficulty hearing themselves. Every syllable that you stress should be marked with a DUMM or / . The unstressed syllables should be marked with a de or ~ . I have already divided these examples in your exercises into syllables to help you this first time.

1. First scan the line marking all stressed syllables. Determine what dominant rhythmic pattern is used – iambic (de DUMM), trochaic (DUMM de), anapestic (de de DUMM), dactylic (DUMM de de), spondaic (DUMM DUMM). Most poems will not be completely regular.
2. After determining what kind of rhythm is dominant in the lines, determine how many feet are used in most lines of the poem -- monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, etc.
3. Thus, each exercise should have the lines all marked and a two-word label, such as iambic dimeter.

EXERCISE ONE

The	stag	at	eve	had	drunk	his	fill
Where	shines	the	moon	on	Mo	nan's	rill.

iambic
tetrameter

EXERCISE TWO

Lit	tle	flit	ting	white	fire	in	sect,
Lit	tle	dan	cing	white	fire	crea	ture,
Light	me	with	your	lit	tle	can	dle,
Ere	u	pon	my	bed	I	lay	me,
Ere	in	sleep	I	close	my	eye	lids.

trochaic
tetrameter

EXERCISE THREE

The	As	syr	ian	came	down	like	the	wolf	on	the	fold,
And	his	co	horts	were	gleam	ing	in	pur	ple	and	gold,
And	the	sheen	of	their	spears	was	like	stars	on	the	sea,
When	the	blue	wave	rolls	night	ly	on	deep	Ga	li	lee.

anapestic
tetrameter

EXERCISE FOUR

Can	non	to	right	of	them,
Can	non	to	left	of	them,
Can	non	in	front	of	them,
Vol	leyed	and	thun	dered.	

dactylic
dimeter

EXERCISE FIVE

I like to see it lap the Miles -
 And lick the Valleys up -
 And stop to feed it self at Tanks -
 And then -- pro dig ious step
 A round a Pile of Moun tains --

iambic
tetrameter

EXERCISE SIX

My heart's in the High lands, my heart is not here,
 My heart's in the High lands a- chas ing the deer
 A- chas ing the wild deer and fol low ing the roe --
 My heart's in the High lands, wher ev er I go!

anapestic
tetrameter

EXERCISE SEVEN

To mor row, and to mor row, and to mor row,
 Creeps in ths pet ty pace, from day to day,
 To the last syl la ble of re cor ded time;
 And all our yes ter days have light ed fools
 The way to dus ty death. Out, out, brief can die!
 Life's but a walk ing sha dow, a poor play er,
 That struts and frets his hood up on the stage
 And then is heard no more. It is a tale
 Told by an i di ot, full of sound and fu ry
 Sig ni fy ing no thing.

iambic
pentameter

EXERCISE EIGHT

Thus I
 Pass by
 And die
 As one
 Un known
 And gone.

iambic
monometer

EXERCISE NINE

And still she slept an az ure- lid ded sleep
 In blanch ed lin en, smooth and lav en dered.
 While he from forth the clos et brought a heap
 Of can died ap ple, quince, and plum, and gourd;

iambic
pentameter

EXERCISE TEN: Write yur own nme in the space below, breaking it into syllables and scanning it. Do this with your full name and with the name you normally go by in class