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 I. 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 Mornan'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 die,
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 nightly on deep Gal li lee.

**anapestic tetrameter**

EXERCISE FOUR

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

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

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 follow ing the roe--
My heart's in the High lands, wher ev er I go!

EXERCISE SEVEN
To mor row, and to mor row, and to mor row,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yester days have light ed fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief can die!
Life's but a walk ing shadow, a poor play er,
That struts and frets his hour up on the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an i di ot, full of sound and fury
Sign i fying no thing.

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

EXERCISE NINE
And still she slept an az ur e-li ded sleep
In blan ch ad lin en, smooth and lav en der ed.
While he from forth the clo set brought a heap
Of can died ap ple, quince, and plum, and gourd:

EXERCISE TEN: Write your own line 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.