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| ..... **Meter in Poetry and Verse**  **Iambic Pentameter**  In verse and poetry, meter is a recurring pattern of stressed (accented, or long) and unstressed (unaccented, or short) syllables in lines of a set length. For example, suppose a line contains ten syllables (set length) in which the first syllable is unstressed, the second is stressed, the third is unstressed, the fourth is stressed, and so on until the line reaches the tenth syllable. The line would look like the following one (the opening line of Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18") containing a pattern of unstressed and stressed syllables.  Shall **I** com**PARE** thee **TO** a **SUM**mer’s **DAY**?  Each pair of unstressed and stressed syllables makes up a unit called a **foot**. The line contains five feet in all, as shown next:  **1**               **2**                 **3**                **4**                **5**   Shall **I..|..**com**PARE..|..**thee **TO..|..**a **SUM..|..**mer’s **DAY**?  A foot containing an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (as above) is called an **iamb**. Because there are five feet in the line, all iambic, the **meter** of the line is **iambic pentameter**. The prefix *pent* in *pentameter* means *five* (Greek: *penta, five*). *Pent* is joined to words or word roots to form new words indicating five. For example, the Pentagon in Washington has five sides, the Pentateuch of the Bible consists of five books, and a pentathlon in a sports event has five events. Thus, poetry lines with five feet are in pentameter.   .......Some feet in verse and poetry have different stress patterns. For example, one type of foot consists of two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed one. Another type consists of a stressed one followed by an unstressed one. In all, there are five types of feet:   .   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **...Iamb (Iambic)** | **Unstressed + Stressed** | **.. .. Two Syllables** | | | | ...Trochee (Trochaic) | Stressed + Unstressed | | ....Two Syllables | | ...Spondee (Spondaic) | Stressed + Stressed | | ....Two Syllables | | Anapest (Anapestic) | Unstressed + Unstressed + Stressed | | ....Three Syllables | | ..Dactyl (Dactylic | Stressed + Unstressed + Unstressed | | .. .Three Syllables |   .   The length of lines–and thus the meter–can also vary. Following are the types of meter and the line length: Monometer-one foot, dimeter-two feet, trimeter-three feet, tetrameter-four feet, **pentameter-five** feet, hexameter-six feet. Though there is a great deal of information, you will only need to know **Iambic Pentameter** . |

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| The **Shakespearean** or **Elizabethan** sonnet is a ***fixed form*** poem that includes the following:   * 14 lines * 3 quatrains and a couplet * Iambic pentameter (10 syllables, 5 iambs) * Rhyme scheme of ***abab cdcd efef gg*** |