Poetic Forms and Metre

KS3 English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Work out the rhyme scheme of Lear's limerick.

Step 1 · Write down the end word of each line

beard · feared · Hen · Wren · beard

Step 2 · Give the first sound A

beard = A, feared rhymes = A.

Step 3 · A new sound gets B

Hen = B, Wren rhymes = B.

Step 4 · Last line

beard = A again.

Answer: AABBA: the pattern of every limerick.

Check: Five lines, two rhyme sounds.

2. Now try one with the steps

Scan 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day'.

Step 1 · Count the syllables

Step 2 · Mark the stresses

Step 3 · Name the foot and number

Step 4 · Comment on effect

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. How many lines are there in a sonnet? Write the number. [1]

2. How many syllables does a haiku have altogether? Write the number. [1]

3. How many lines are there in a limerick? Write the number. [1]

4. What is a three-line stanza called? [1]

5. How many strong beats are in a line of tetrameter? Write the number. [1]

6. Write the rhyme scheme of a stanza whose end words are night / tree / bright / sea. [1]

7. What is the difference between blank verse and free verse? [2]

8. Is 'be-LOW' an iamb or a trochee? [1]

9. How many syllables are in 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' Write the number. [1]

10. What is the rhyme scheme of a Shakespearean sonnet? [2]

11. Why does Blake's trochaic rhythm in 'Tyger Tyger, burning bright' suit his subject? [2]

12. What is a volta, and where does it usually come in a Shakespearean sonnet? [2]

13. A ballad tells a story and often repeats a line or chorus. Why might repetition suit a ballad? [2]

14. Explain why a poet might suddenly break a regular metre at one point in a poem. [2]

4. Before you hand it in

'The poem is a sonnet because it is about love.'
Check the structure: 14 lines, a rhyme scheme, usually iambic pentameter.

Counting syllables by eye.
Say the line aloud and clap or tap each syllable.

Confusing blank verse with free verse.
Blank verse = unrhymed but with a regular beat; free verse = no regular beat.

Naming the form and stopping.
Say what the form does: why a sonnet, a ballad or a broken rhythm suits this subject.