Poetry Types & Poetry Samples Name:

Date:

ABC - A poem that has five lines and creates a mood, picture, or feeling. Lines 1 through 4 are made up of words, phrases, or clauses while the first word of each line is in alphabetical order. Line 5 is one sentence long and begins with any letter. Example: Petra Sheane’s “If Only”.

Acrostic - Poetry that uses certain letters, usually the first in each line form a word or message when read in a sequence. Example: Edgar Allan Poe’s “A Valentine”

Ballad - A poem that tells a story similar to a folktale or legend which often has a repeated refrain. Example: “John Henry” by an anonymous author.

Bio - A poem written about one’s self and his/her life, personality traits, and ambitions. Example: Jean Ingelow’s “One Morning, Oh! So Early”

Carpe Diem - Latin expression that means “seize the day”. Carpe diem poems have a theme of living for today. Example: Robert Herrick’s “To The Virgins, Make Much of Time”

Cinquain - Poetry with five lines. Line 1 has one word (the title). Line 2 has two words that describe the title. Line 3 has three words that tell the action. Line 4 has four words that express the feeling, and line 5 has one word, which is the title. Example: Adelaide Crapsey's "November Night".

Concrete - Also known as ‘size poetry’. Concrete poetry uses typographical arrangements to display an element of the poem. The can either be through re-arrangement of letters of a word or by arranging the words as a shape. Example: George Herbert’s “Easter Wings”.

Couplet - Poem with two lines which may be rhymed or unrhymed. Example: Walt Whitman’s “To You”

Epigram - A very short, ironic, and witty poem usually written as brief couplet or quatrain. Term derived from the Greek epigramma, meaning inscription. Example: “Auguries of Innocence” by William Blake. (Used in the movie Tomb Raider)

Free Verse (Vers Libre) - Poetry written in either rhyme or unrhymed lines that have no set of fixed metrical pattern. Example: Walt Whitman’s “A Noiseless Patient Spider”

Haiku - A Japanese poem of seventeen syllables composed of three unrhymed lines of five syllables, then seven syllables, and last five more syllables, usually containing a season word. Example: “Haiku Year” by Paul Holmes.

Iambic Pentameter – One short syllable followed by one long syllable, five sets in a row, which makes up one line in the poem. Used mostly in sonnets. Example: “Ode to Autumn” by John Keats.

Idyll (Idyl) – Poetry that either, depicts a peaceful, idealized country scene, or a long poem telling a story about heroes of a bye-gone age. Example: “Hermann and Dorothea” by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Limerick – A short sometimes vulgar, humorous poem consisting of five anapestic lines. Lines 1, 2, and 5 have seven to ten syllables rhyme and have the same verbal rhythm. The 3rd and 4th lines have five to seven syllables, rhyme and have the same rhythm. Example: “There Was an Old Man With a Beard” by Edward Lear

List – A poem that is made up of a list of items or events. It can be any length and rhymed or unrhymed. Example: “Sick” by Shel Silverstein

Lyric – A poem that expresses the thoughts and feelings of the poet. Many songs are written using this type of writing. Example: “Syntax” by Carol Ann Duffy

Name – Poetry that tells about the word being used where the first word of each line is a letter in the name in the same order as the name. Example: “Nicky” by Marie Hughes

Narrative – A poem that tells a story. Example: “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe

Pastoral – a poem that depicts rural life (farm, countryside, woods, or mountains) in a peaceful, romanticized (a sort of perfect, simple, natural life) way. Example: “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” by Christopher Marlowe.

Quatrain – A stanza or poem consisting of four lines. Lines 2 and 4 must rhyme while having a similar number of syllables. Example: “Hope is the Thing With Feathers” by Emily Dickinson.

Senryu – A short Japanese style poem (three lines), similar to haiku in structure that treats human beings rather than nature, often in a humorous or satiric (sarcastic or mocking) way. Example: “Catching Him” by Karai Senryu, which goes “When I catch, the robber, my own son.”

Sestina – A poem consisting of six, six-line stanzas and a three-line envoy (envoi, which is written as the last stanza of a poem and is something being said to someone or to an emotion being personified, it is around three lines and has a refrain/chorus as the last line, plus the last line is repeated throughout the poem). The end words of the first stanza in a sestina are repeated which means they are the last line in the envoy of the sestina. Example: “A Miracle for Breakfast” by Elizabeth Bishop.

Sonnet – A lyric poem that consists of only 14 lines which usually have one or more conventional rhyme schemes. ABAB; AABB, ABCA etc. Example: “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” by William Shakespeare.

Tanka – A Japanese poem of five lines, the first and third composed of five syllables and the others seven syllables. Example: Ono no Komachi wrote:

Color of the cherry blossoms  
Has already faded away  
While spending in vain  
My life passes  
As I had watched the long rains fall.