

RHYTHM

{ “I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as the Rhythmical Creation of Beauty.” --Edgar Allan Poe

- ‡ *Stress* = An emphasis, or **accent**, placed on a syllable in speech; the high point in a syllabic meter: *ta*.
- ‡ *Pause* = An unstressed syllable, creating a low point in a syllabic meter: *dum*.
- ‡ *Rhythm* = The recurring pattern of stresses and pauses in a poem: ta- dum, ta-dum, ta-dum

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↳ *Meter* = When stresses recur at fixed intervals, creating a predictable pattern of sound, such as iambic or trochaic; line-lengths also factor into meter, the most common being tetrameter and pentameter, determined by the number of stressed syllables per line.

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- ‡ *Caesura* = a pause anywhere in a poetic line, or at the end of the line.
- ‡ *End-stopped line* = a line of verse that ends in a full pause, often indicated by a mark of punctuation.
- ‡ *Run-on line* = a line of verse that does not end in punctuation but carries on grammatically into the next line; also called **enjambment**.
- ‡ *Scansion* = the art of determining the metrical pattern of verse in a poem by counting syllables, marking the accents, and indicating caesuras.

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& Specimen: "When I Was One and Twenty"
by A. E. Houseman

& Specimen: "We Real Cool"
by Gwendolyn Brooks

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Checklist: Scanning a Poem

- ⌘ Read the poem aloud.
- ⌘ Mark the syllables on which the main stresses seem to fall.
- ⌘ How many syllables are there on each line?
- ⌘ Does the poem fall into a regular metrical pattern?
- ⌘ How does the rhythm of the poem reinforce its tone? Its theme?

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⌘ Specimen: “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”
by W. B. Yeats

⌘ Specimen: “Those Winter Sundays”
by Robert Hayden

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Journal Topic: Read silently to yourself Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy" (Gwynn & Lindner pages 197-200). Then read the poem aloud. Describe the effect of Plath's use of sound and rhythm to underscore the tone of voice. In what ways do the poem's sonic effects help communicate the poem's central theme?

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