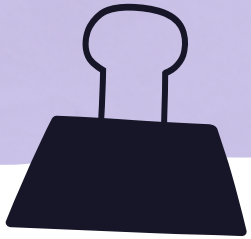


POETRY


LECTURE 11



Verse Forms and Stanza Forms: Stichic verse, Blank verse, Couplet, Tercet, Terza rima, Quatrain, Memoriam stanza, Ballad stanza, Rhyme royal, Ottava rima, Spenserian stanza, Sonnet, Limerick, Villanelle, Composite and irregular forms

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Learning Objectives



- 
- Audiences are expected to gain a good understanding of verse and stanzas in poems.
 - Audiences are expected to gain a good understanding of each category of verse and stanza
 - Audiences are expected to gain the skills of writing poems in certain categories of verse and stanza
- 





Lesson Material



VERSE AND STANZA

STICHIC VERSE

BLANK VERSE

COUPLET

TERZA RIMA

QUATRAIN

MEMORIAM STANZA

BALLAD STANZA

TERCET

OTTAVA RIMA

SPENSERIAN STANZA

SONNET

LIMMERICK

RHYME ROYAL

COMPOSITE

IRREGULAR FORMS

VIANELLE

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



Because poetry is compressed and highly rhythmical, it always exists under self-imposed restrictions, or conventions. Traditionally, many poets have chosen a variety of clearly recognizable shapes or forms—***closed-form*** poetry. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, however, many poets have rejected regular patterns in favor of poems that appear more free and spontaneous—***open-form*** poetry. Both terms refer to the structure and technique of the poems, not to the content or ideas.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).

Closed Form



Closed-form poetry is written in specific and traditional patterns of lines produced through *line length, meter, rhyme, and line groupings*.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).



In the closed form (and also in the open form), the line is, loosely, the poetic equivalent of the prose sentence. A prime characteristic of the closed-form line, as opposed to a sentence, is that its length is usually measured or restricted.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).

Various numbers of lines may be grouped together through rhyme and other means to form a **stanza**, which is the poetic equivalent of a paragraph in prose. Stanzas consist of groups of lines that are both connected and also separated by developments of subject, idea, or expression of feeling.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).

As time went on, more and more poets moved away from closed form to experiment with open form poetry (sometimes called **free verse** or ***vers libre***), varying line length within a poem, dispensing with stanzaic divisions, breaking lines in unexpected places, and even abandoning any semblance of formal structure.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).


An open form poem may make occasional use of rhyme and meter but has no easily identifiable pattern or design: no conventional stanzaic divisions, no consistent metrical pattern or line length, no repeated rhyme scheme. Still, open form poetry is not necessarily shapeless, untidy, or randomly ordered.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).



A piece of white grid paper is pinned to the background with a purple paperclip on the left side. The paper is decorated with several stickers: a purple circle with a white center at the top, a green wavy line on the right, a purple building with a yellow paperclip on the left, and a purple leafy branch on the right. The text "Stanza has some different forms" is written in the center of the grid in a black, handwritten font.

Stanza has
some different
forms






A continuous **run of lines of the same length and the same metre**. Most narrative verse is written in such continuous lines.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)




Stichic Verse ✨



As wreath of snow, on mountain-breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay:
No word her choking voice commands;
She show'd the ring, she clasp'd her hands.
O! not a moment could he brook,
The generous prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her; and, the while,
Check'd with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:
Yes, fair, the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
(From: Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*, Canto VI)



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)





Blank verse is unrhymed poetry with each line written in a set pattern of five stressed and five unstressed syllables called iambic pentameter.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).



Blank Verse ✨



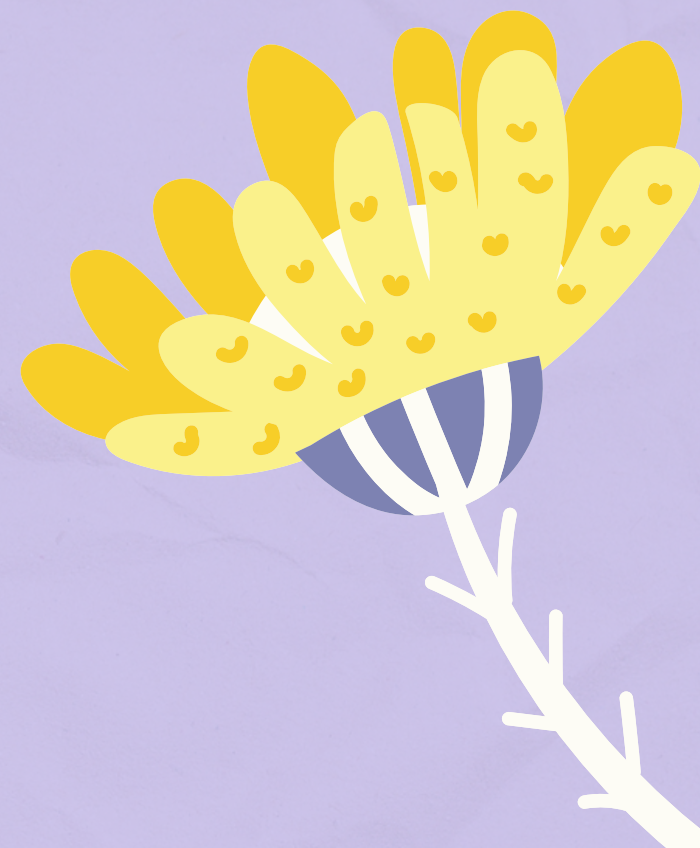
[...]





And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again;
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope

[...]

(From: Wordsworth, *Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*)

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



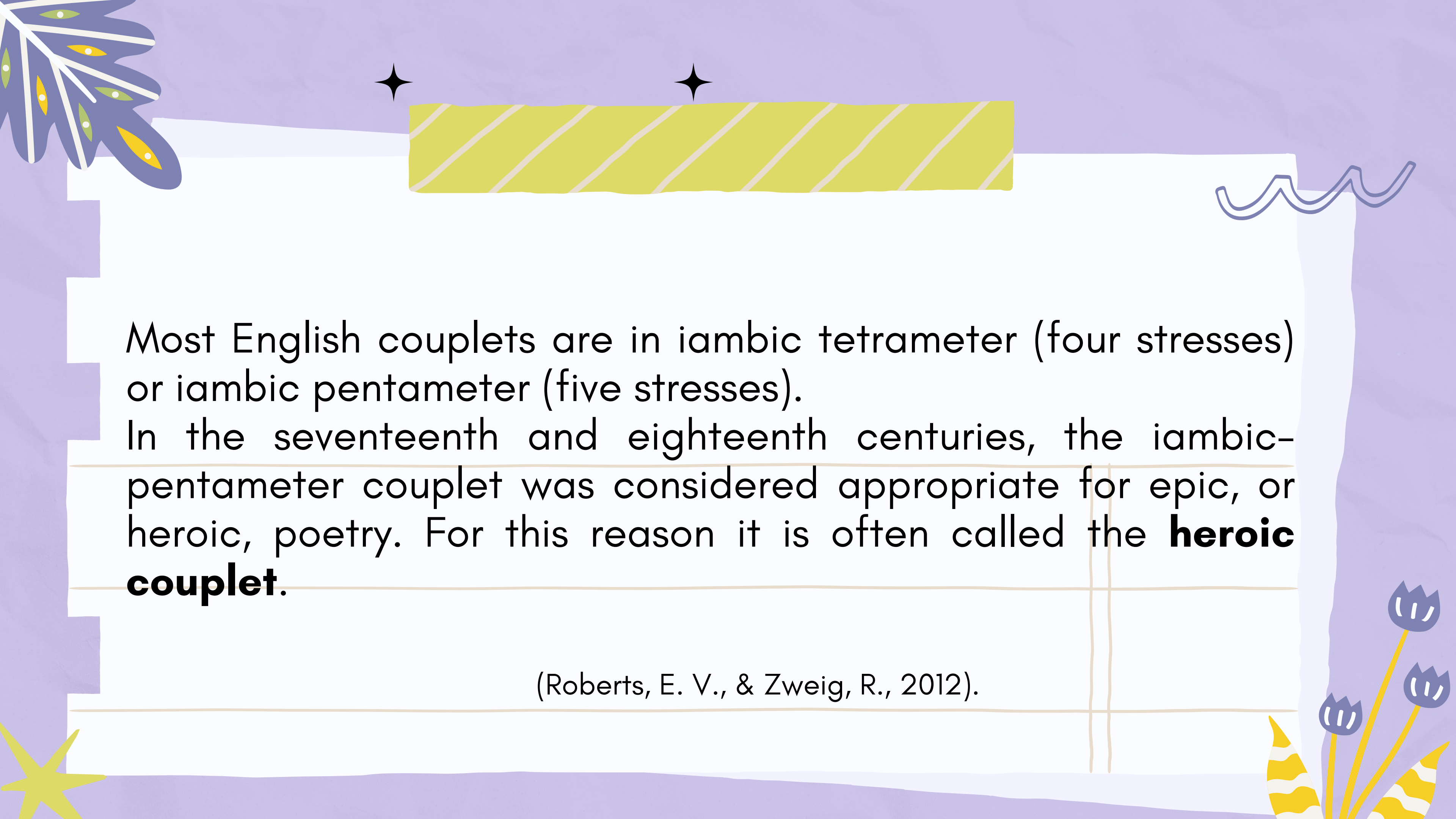


The couplet contains two rhyming lines and is the shortest distinct closed form. The two lines are usually identical in length and meter.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).

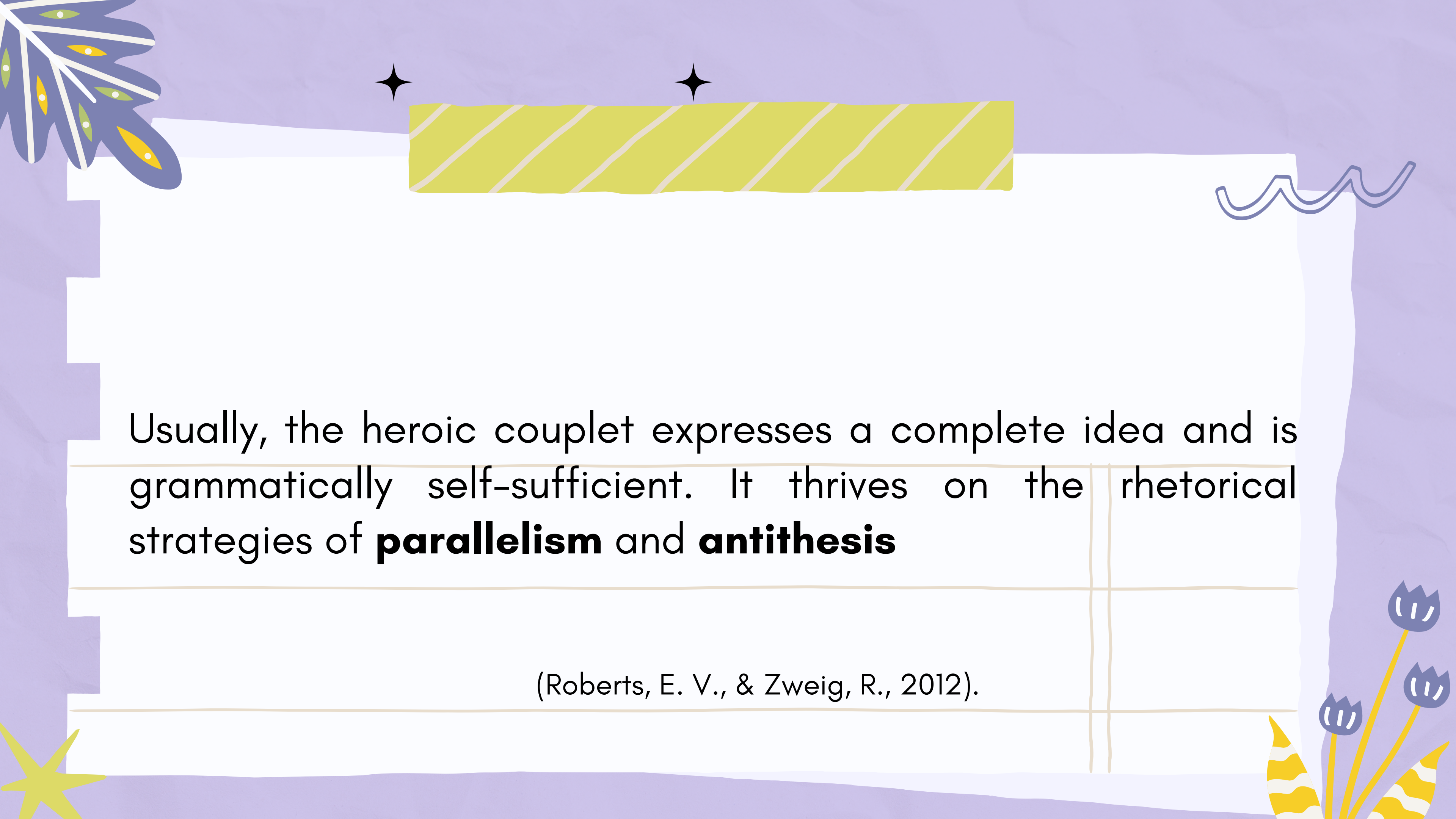


Couplet



Most English couplets are in iambic tetrameter (four stresses) or iambic pentameter (five stresses).
In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the iambic-pentameter couplet was considered appropriate for epic, or heroic, poetry. For this reason it is often called the **heroic couplet**.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).



Usually, the heroic couplet expresses a complete idea and is grammatically self-sufficient. It thrives on the rhetorical strategies of **parallelism** and **antithesis**

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).



✦ ✦


"The Rape of the Lock"

Alexander Pope

Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;

Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey.
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).




A tercet, sometimes also called a triplet, is a **stanza with three lines of the same rhyme**. Tercets may be written in any uniform line length or meter and most commonly contain three rhymes {aaa, bbb, and so on), which are, in effect, short stanzas.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).



Tercet





Released from the noise of the butcher and baker,
Who, my old friends be thanked, did seldom forsake her,
And from the soft duns of my landlord the Quaker;

From chiding the footmen, and watching the lasses,
From Nell that burned milk too, and Tom that broke glasses
(Sad mischiefs through which a good housekeeper passes!);

From some real care, but more fancied vexation,
From a life parti-coloured, half reason, half passion,
Here lies after all the best wench in the nation.

(From: Prior, *Jinny the Just*)

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)




The Eagle
by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.


The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls.
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

(Roberts, E. V., & Zweig, R., 2012).




The terza rima uses a **chain rhyme**: the second line of each stanza rhymes with the first and the third line of the next stanza (**aba bcb cdc etc.**)

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)




Terza Rima






The snow came down last night like moths
Burned on the moon; it fell till dawn,
Covered the town with simple cloths.



Absolute snow lies rumpled on
What shellbursts scattered and deranged,
Entangled railings, crevassed lawn.





As if it did not know they'd changed,
Snow smoothly clasps the roofs of homes
Fear-gutted, trustless and estranged
(From: Wilbur, *First Snow in Alsace*)



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)





A four-line stanza with lines of similar length and a set rhyme scheme is called a quatrain.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).

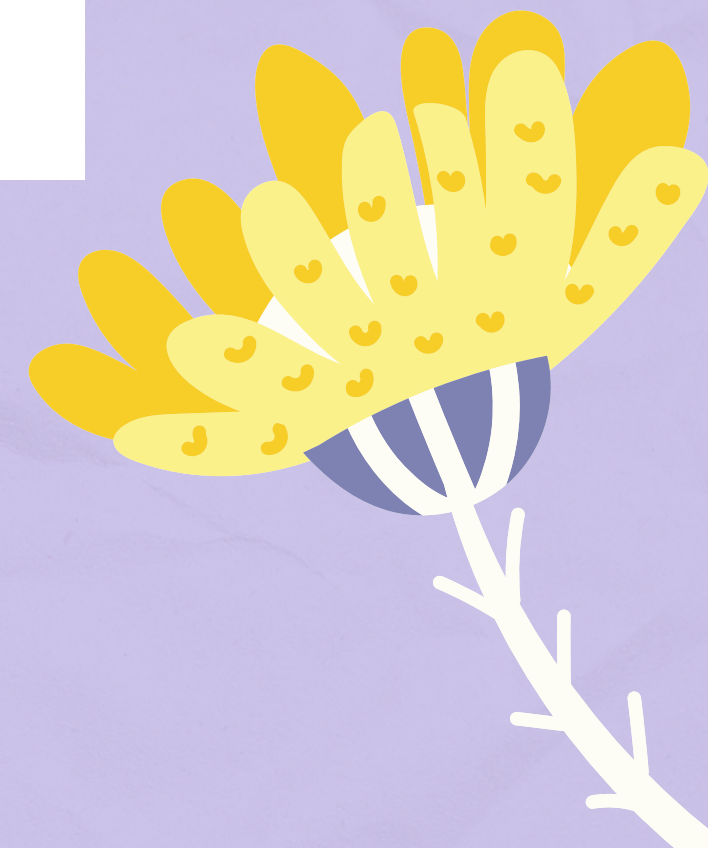


Quatrain






The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
(From: Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*)





(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)




A quatrain in iambic
tetrameter with a
rhyme scheme of *abba*.
- the **Memoriam**
stanza.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



Memoriam
Stanza

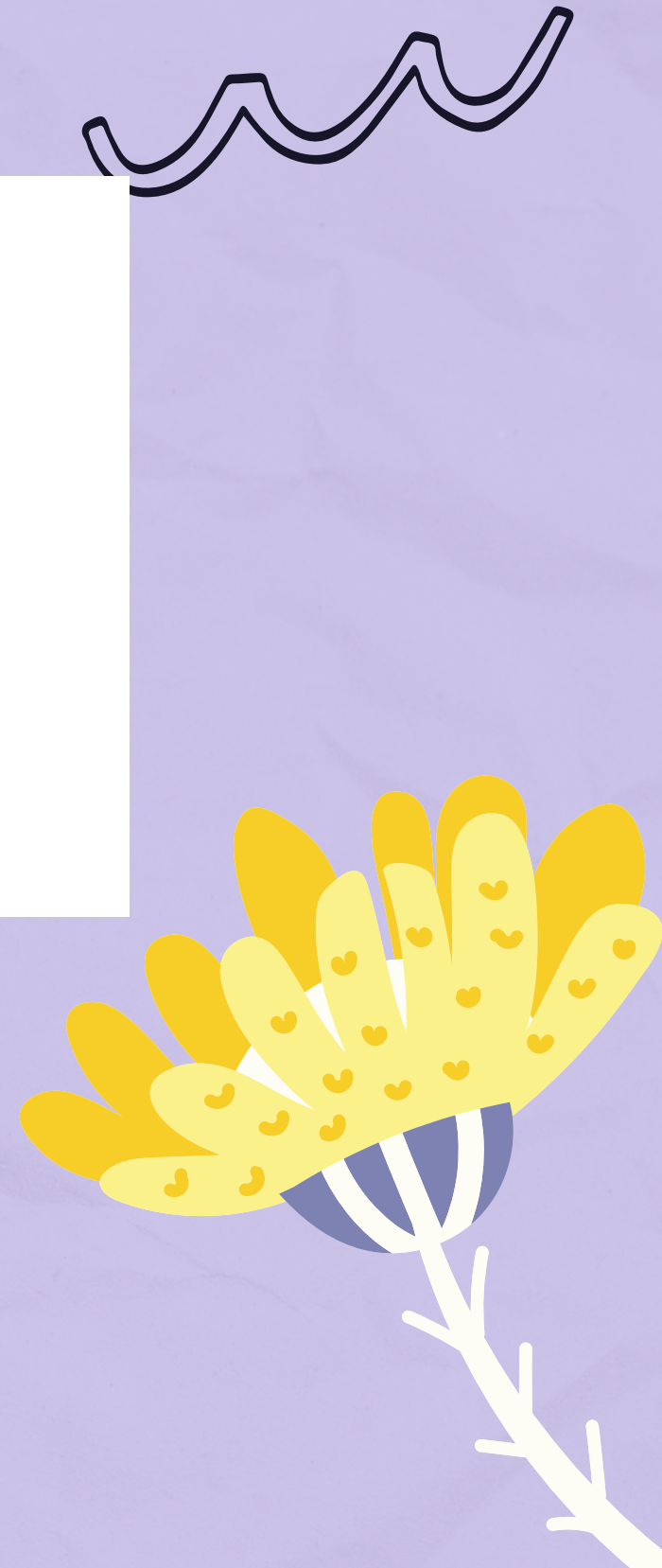





In Memoriam A.H.H

by Alfred Tennyson

O, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



The ballad stanza is a variant of the quatrain. Most commonly, it alternates lines of eight and six syllables; typically, only the second and fourth lines rhyme

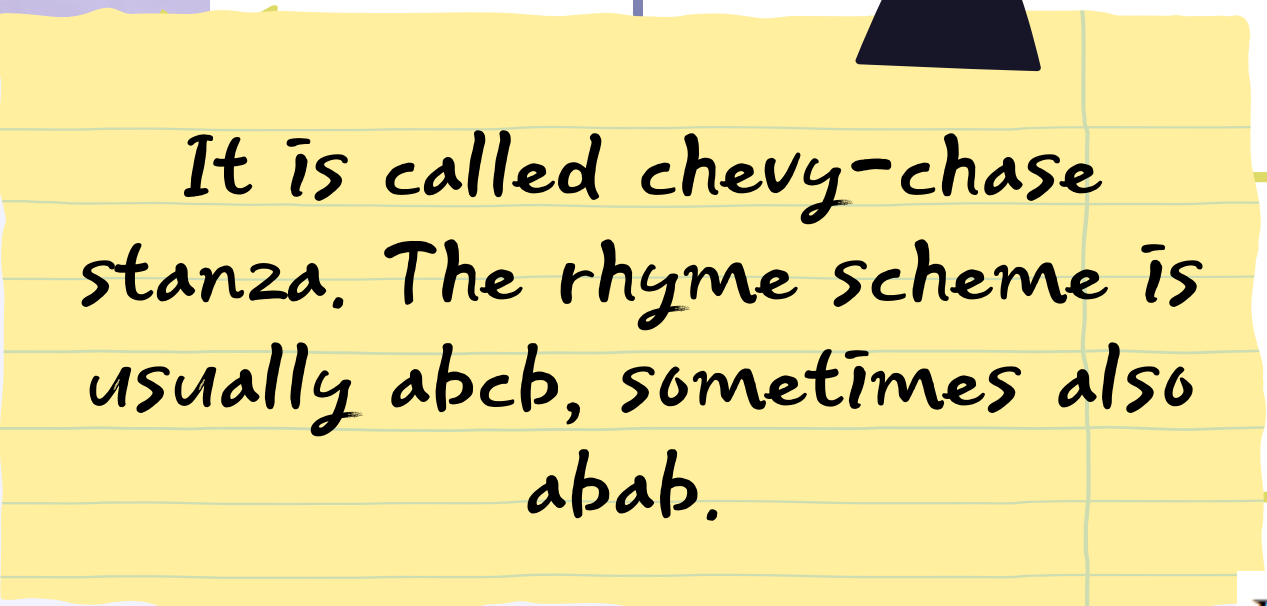
(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).



Ballad

★ Stanza





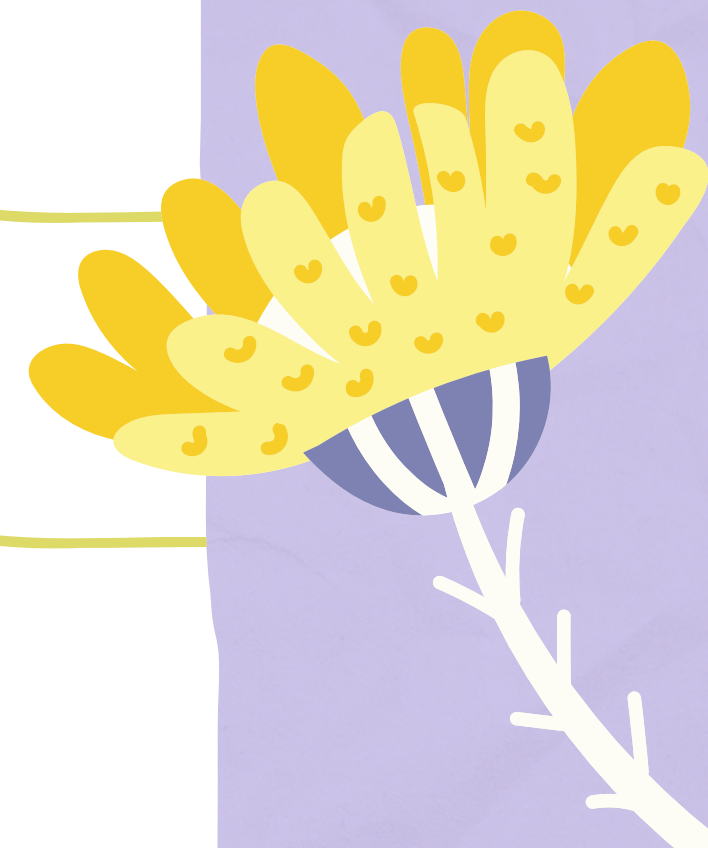
It is called chevy-chase stanza. The rhyme scheme is usually abcb, sometimes also abab.

Down dropped the breeze, the sails dropped down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.
(From: Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*)

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



Sir Patrick Spens


by Scottish anonymous

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
“O whar will I get guid sailor
To sail this schip of mine?”

Common measure, a four-line stanzaic pattern closely related to the ballad stanza, is used in hymns as well as in poetry. It differs from the ballad stanza in that its rhyme scheme is abab rather than abcb

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).

A plain without a feature, bare and brown,
No blade of grass, no sign of neighbourhood,
Nothing to eat and nowhere to sit down,
Yet congregated on its blankness, stood
An unintelligible multitude,
A million eyes, a million boots in line
Without expression, waiting for a sign.
(From: Auden, *The Shield of Achilles*)




The ottava rima is a stanza with eight lines rhyming *abababcc*.


(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



Ottava



Rīma







Beppo
by Lord Byron

'Tis known, at least it should be, that throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
The People take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
However high their rank, or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masquing,
And other things which may be had for asking.

<https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/ottava-rima/>






“And oh! if e’er I should forget, I swear –
But that’s impossible, and cannot be –
Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
Than I resign thine image, Oh, my fair!
Or think of anything, excepting thee;
A mind diseased no remedy can physic” –
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew seasick.)




(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)








The Spenserian stanza has nine lines rhyming *ababbcbcc*. The first eight lines are iambic pentameter, the last line is an alexandrine, which breaks the slight monotony of the pentameters and is often employed to emphasise a point


(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)




Spenserian Stanza



But on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead as living ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For souveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.
(From: Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*)

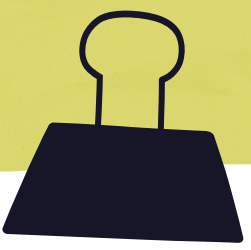



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)




A fourteen-line poem with a distinctive rhyme scheme and metrical pattern (usually iambic pentameter).

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).



Sonnet



Petrarchan sonnet

One distinguishes between two main rhyme patterns in the sonnet: The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet is divided into an **octave** or **octet** (eight lines) rhyming *abbaabba* and a **sestet** rhyming *cdecde* or some variation (for example *cdccdc*).

Sonnet develops two sides of a question or a problem and a solution, one in the octave and, after a **turn** often introduced by 'but', 'yet' or a similar conjunction that indicates a change of argument, another in the sestet.

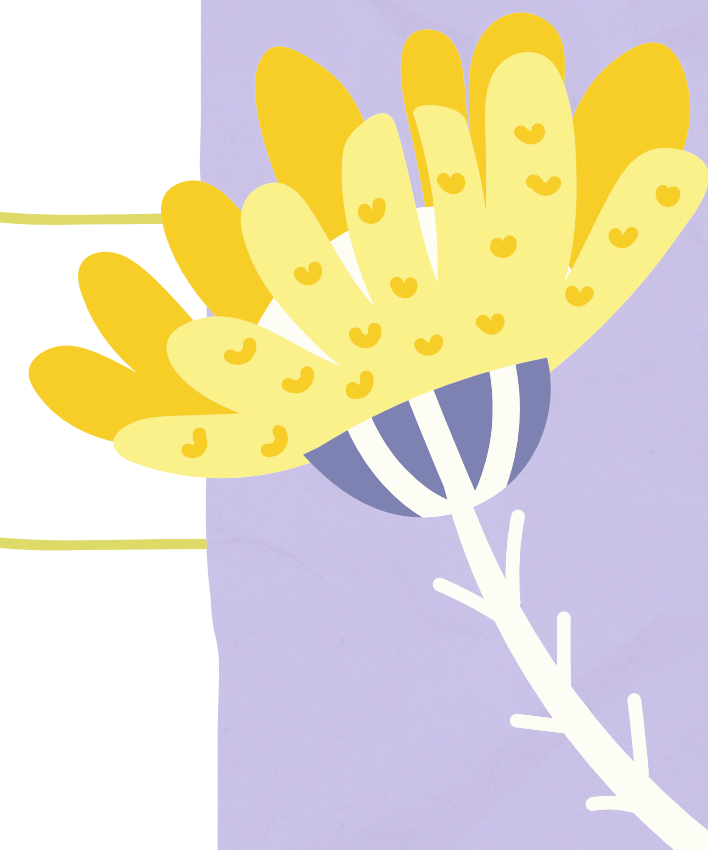
(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

Petrarchan sonnet

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my day, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
“Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?”
I fondly ask; but patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o’er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait.”
(Milton, *On My Blindness*)

a
b
b
a
a
b
b
a
c
d
e
c
d
e

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)





Shakespearean Sonnet

The English or Shakespearean sonnet which consists of fourteen lines divided into three quatrains and a concluding couplet, is written in iambic pentameter and follows the rhyme scheme *abab cdcd efef gg*.

In the English sonnet the turn often occurs in the concluding couplet, which operates rather like a punch line

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



Shakespearean Sonnet

Sonnet 65: Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

a
b
a
b

c
d
c
d

e
f
e
f

g
g





Shakespearean Sonnet

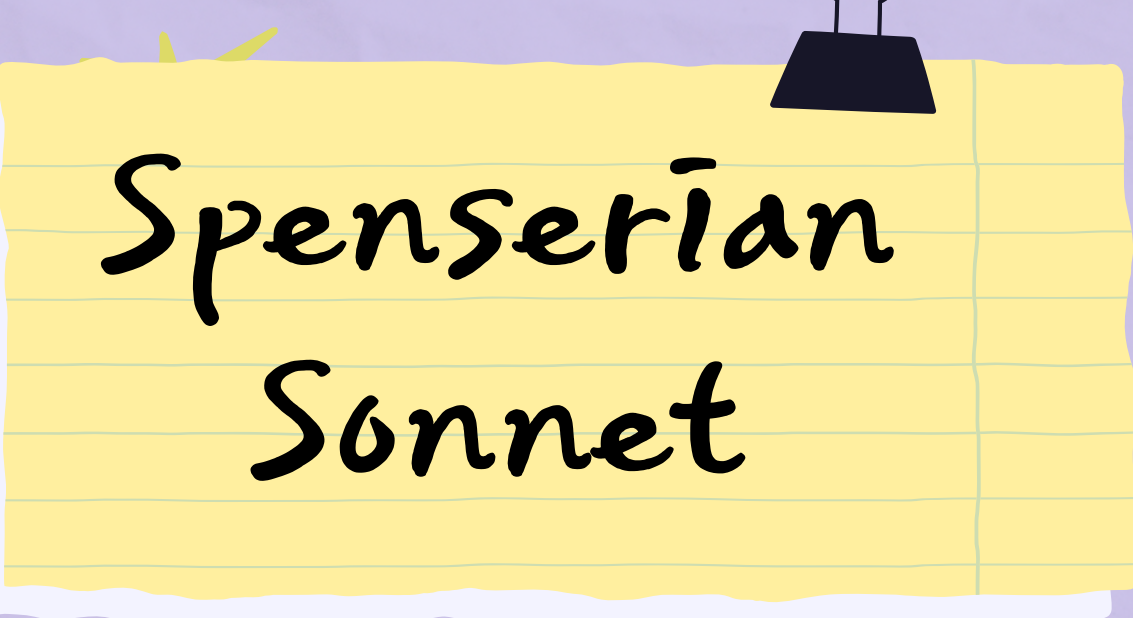
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes (1609)

When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone bewEEP my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless^o cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, 5
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least,
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply^o I think on thee, and then my state, 10
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love rememb'ed such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

(Kirszner, L. G., & Mandell, S. R., 2007).





Spenserian Sonnet

Another important variant of the English sonnet is the Spenserian sonnet which links the quatrains with rhymes: *abab bcbc cdcd ee*.



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)


Spenserian Sonnet

Unrighteous Lord of love, what law is this,
That me thou makest thus tormented be:
The whiles she lordeth in licentious blisse
Of her freewill, scorning both thee and me.
See how the Tyranesse doth joy to see
The huge massácles which her eyes do make:
And humbled harts brings captives unto thee,
That thou of them mayst mightie vengeance take.
But her proud hart doe thou a little shake
And that high look, with which she doth comptroll
All this worlds pride, bow to a baser make,
And al her faults in thy black booke enroll.
That I may laugh at her in equall sort,
As she doth laugh at me and makes my pain her sport.
(Spenser, *Amoretti*, Sonnet 10)

a
b
a
b
b
c
b
c
c
d
d
c
d
e
e.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)









The limerick is used mainly for nonsense verse. It consists of five lines, two longer ones (trimeter, one trochaic foot, two anapaests), two shorter ones (anapaestic dimeter) and another trimeter (one trochee, two anapaests).

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)

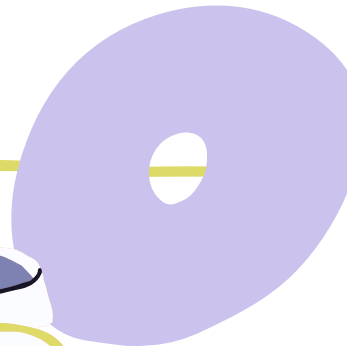



Limmerick







There was an old person of Dutton
Whose head was as small as a button.
So, to make it look big,
He purchased a wig
And rapidly rushed about Dutton
(Lear, from: *Book of Nonsense Verse*)



(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)




It is a nineteen-line poem composed of five tercets and a concluding quatrain; its rhyme scheme is aba aba aba aba aba abaa. Two different lines are systematically repeated in the poem: line 1 appears again in lines 6, 12, and 18, and line 3 reappears as lines 9, 15, and 19. Thus, each tercet concludes with an exact (or close) duplication of either line 1 or line 3, and the final quatrain concludes by repeating both line 1 and line 3.



Vianelle





Vianelle

**“Do not go gentle into
that good night”**

by Dylan Thomas



Do not go gentle into that good night, a (line 1)
Old age should burn and rave at close of day; b (line 2)
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light. a (line 3)

Though wise men at their end know dark is right, a
Because their words had forked no lightning they b
Do not go gentle into that good night. a (line 1)

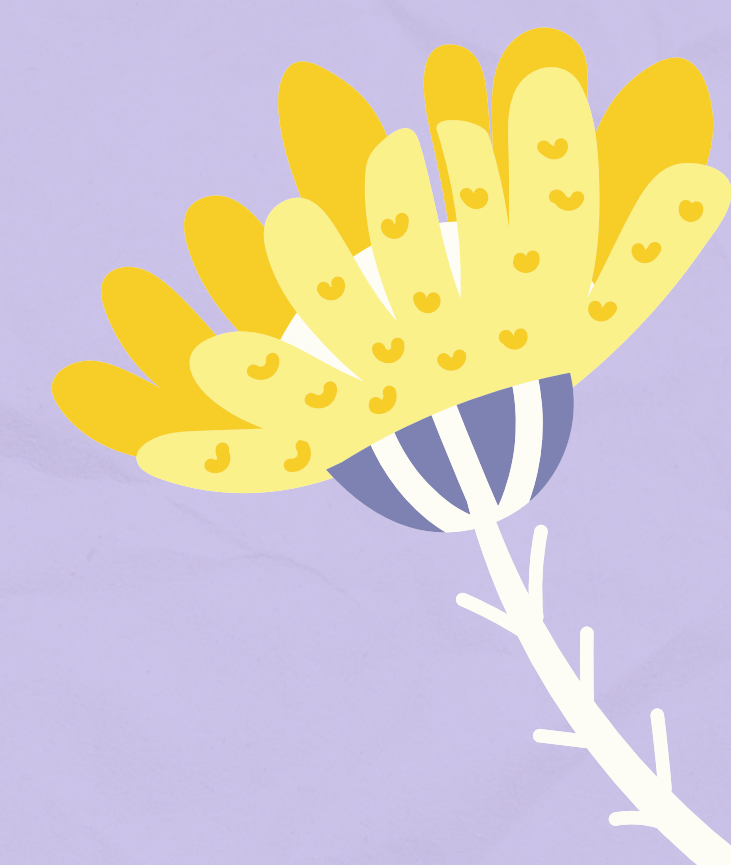
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright a
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, b
Rage, rage against the dying of the light. a (line 3)


Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, a
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way, b
Do not go gentle into that good night. a (line 1)

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight a
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, b
Rage, rage against the dying of the light. a (line 3)

And you, my father, there on the sad height, a
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray. b
Do not go gentle into that good night. a (line 1)
Rage, rage against the dying of the light. a (line 3)





(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)






Quite frequently poets combine various forms or employ no regular formal rhyme pattern, though rhyme and metre are nonetheless used

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



Composite
and Irregular
verbs





The Canonization

BY John Donne

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,	(pentameter)
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,	(tetrameter)
My five grey hairs, or ruined fortune, flout,	(pentameter)
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,	(pentameter)
Take you a course, get you a place,	(tetrameter)
Observe his Honor or His Grace,	(tetrameter)
Or the King's real, or his stampèd face	(pentameter)
Contémptrate; what you will, approve,	(pentameter)
So you will let me love.	(trimeter)



Five stanzas of nine lines each varies iambic pentameter with iambic tetrameter and a concluding line in iambic trimeter.

(Lethbridge, S., & Mildorf, J., 2003)



The question for interpretation is not primarily what is this stanza form called but what does this stanza form do, how does it contribute to the meaning of the poem.

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