

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Rhythm and Scansion in Action!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pd. \_\_\_\_\_

Scansion is the technique of reading a poem with the intention of discovering its underlying metrical (rhythmic) pattern.

## Instructions for this exercise—

Step 1: Mark the stressed and unstressed beats in each of the following lines of poetry.

Step 2: Identify the rhythmic pattern, and in the blank provided beside each example, write its foot and meter.

Step 3: Answer the following question for each poem excerpt: *What connections exist between the rhythm and the meaning of the lines? What effects does the meter (or metrical variations) have on the meaning?*

1. It sifts from Leaden sieves— \_\_\_\_\_ (lines 1, 2, 4)

It powders all the Wood.

It fills with Alabaster Wool \_\_\_\_\_ (line 3)

The Wrinkles of the Road

*Emily Dickenson*

2. Tiger! Tiger! burning bright \_\_\_\_\_

In the forests of the night.

What immortal hand or eye

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

*William Blake*

3. In Breughal's great picture, The Kermess,

the dancers go round, they go round and

around the squeal and the blare and the

tweedle of bagpipes, a bugle and fiddles

tipping their bellies . . .

*William Carlos Williams*



\_\_\_\_\_ Effects?

4. Half a league, half a league,

Half a league onward, . . .

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”

Was there a man dismay'd?

Not tho' the soldier knew

Someone had blunder'd.

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

5. Break, break, break,

On thy cold grey stones, O Sea!

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Not enough of a repeated pattern to define meter,  
but what type of beat dominates these lines?  
What do they describe?  
What is the effect?*

6. Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

*Dylan Thomas*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Focus on the effects of any variation within the established pattern.  
What are these lines about?  
Where does the pattern break?  
What is the effect?*