

# Verse & Scansion

## Common Vocabulary

- **Syllabification:** dividing a word into its syllables (each syllable has its own \_\_\_\_\_)
- **Scansion:** \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the STRESSED (👉) and unstressed (☺) syllables of the words in the lines of a poem to determine the pattern of foot and meter
- **Rhythm:** the \_\_\_\_\_ created by the STRESSED (👉) and unstressed (☺) syllables of the words in the lines of a poem
- **Foot:** the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in a line of poetry
- **Meter:** \_\_\_\_\_ the number of \_\_\_\_\_ in a line of poetry

## Scansion Steps

1. Mark every \_\_\_\_\_ to determine whether each is stressed or unstressed.  
*The stressed and unstressed beats in polysyllabic words are already set—they don't change.*

Example: the word tomorrow will always be pronounced *to-MOR-ow*

*Whether a monosyllabic word is stressed or not depends on the rhythmic pattern created by the other words surrounding it.*

2. Identify any rhythmic \_\_\_\_\_—look for the \_\_\_\_\_ of a poetic \_\_\_\_\_.

Ex. "And the **sheen** of their **spears** was like **stars** on the **sea**"  
Repeated foot: [     ]

3. Count the number of feet in each line to determine meter. [     ] x 4

## The Poetic Foot

- The \_\_\_\_\_ unit of measurement in a line of poetry
- Made up of given \_\_\_\_\_ of stressed and unstressed beats
- Repetition of a foot creates a regular rhythm

**Iamb** (n) / \_\_\_\_\_ (adj) foot

- u|nite
- de|pend
- be|neath

**Trochee** (n) / \_\_\_\_\_ (adj) foot

- tro|chee
- rea|per
- tea|cher

**Anapest** (n) / \_\_\_\_\_ (adj) foot

- to the dance
- not a chance
- in between

**Dactyl** (n) / \_\_\_\_\_ (adj) foot

- yes|ter|day
- hap|pi|ly

**Spondee** (n) / \_\_\_\_\_ (adj) foot (*sounds like . . . \_\_\_\_\_* )

- Two house|holds
- Who's there?
- Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum!

**Dibrach** (n) (aka: \_\_\_\_\_ foot)

- "When the blood creeps and the nerves prick"
- "To a green thought in a green shade"

**Meter**—the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in a line of verse/poetry

- ⊙ **one** foot = \_\_\_\_\_ meter
  - Ex. one trochee in a line = *trochaic* \_\_\_\_\_
- ⊙ **two** feet = \_\_\_\_\_ meter
  - Ex. two dactyls in a line = *dactylic* \_\_\_\_\_
- ⊙ **three** feet = \_\_\_\_\_ meter
  - Ex. three anapests in a line = *anapestic* \_\_\_\_\_
- ⊙ **four** feet = \_\_\_\_\_ meter
  - Ex. four dactyls in a line = *dactylic* \_\_\_\_\_
- ⊙ **five** feet = \_\_\_\_\_ meter
  - Ex. five iambs in a line = *iambic* \_\_\_\_\_
- ⊙ **six** feet = \_\_\_\_\_ meter
  - Ex. six trochees in a line = *trochaic* \_\_\_\_\_

So What? (What are the effects?) Scan the following lines of poetry, identify foot and meter, and then connect the rhythm to the meaning/content of the lines. \_\_\_\_\_

(foot)

(meter)

Tiger, tiger, burning bright

*So what? How is the rhythm significant to the content?*

In the forests of the night,

What immortal hand or eye

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

# Practice Scansion with Shakespeare!

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun.

\_\_\_\_\_

(foot) (meter)

*If you find any anomalies in the rhythms of the following lines—explain what effect they have on the lines' meaning or what they signify about the speakers.*

.....

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes

A pair of star-crossed lovers takes their life.

\_\_\_\_\_

(foot) (meter)

.....

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.

Hover through the fog and filthy air.

\_\_\_\_\_

(foot) (meter)

.....

Double, double, toil and trouble,

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

\_\_\_\_\_

(foot) (meter)

# Poetic Stanzas

- Couplet: two lines
  - Heroic Couplet: two \_\_\_\_\_ lines of \_\_\_\_\_
- Tercet: three lines
- Quatrain: four lines
- Quintain: five lines
- Sestet: six lines
- Septet: seven lines
- Octave: eight lines

**Sonnet:** \_\_\_\_\_ lines of \_\_\_\_\_