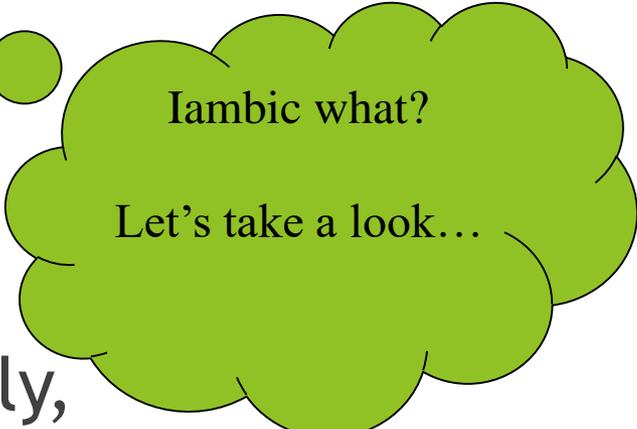


Shakespearean Sonnets

What is a sonnet?

- ▶ A sonnet is a fourteen-line poem in iambic pentameter.



Iambic what?

Let's take a look...

- ▶ Developed in Italy, probably in the thirteenth century.

Iambic Pentameter

- ▶ Iambic Pentameter is a poetic form which poets and playwrights typically used to write poems in Elizabethan England. It is the meter that Shakespeare mostly uses.



Meter in poetry is a rhythm of accented and unaccented syllables arranged into feet.

Iamb: has the **first syllable unaccented** and the **second accented**.

Shall I / com pare / thee to / a sum / mer's day?



foot

Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18"

Syllables

- ▶ What is a syllable?
 - ▶ A syllable is the unit of sound
 - ▶ It is either stressed or unstressed

“But soft, what light through yonder window breaks.”

- ▶ How many syllables are there in that quotation?

Meter: Meter in poetry is a rhythm of accented and unaccented syllables arranged into feet.

- Meter in poetry is what brings the poem to life and is the internal beat or rhythm with which it is read.

Monometer	One Foot
Dimeter	Two Feet
Trimeter	Three Feet
Tetrameter	Four Feet
Pentameter	Five Feet
Hexameter	Six Feet
Heptameter	Seven Feet
Octameter	Eight Feet

Pentameter

- ▶ Well an 'iamb' is 'dee Dum' - it is like a heart beat.

Pentameter:

- ▶ Penta is from the Greek for five.
- ▶ Meter is really the pattern

- ▶ So, there are five iambs per line!

For the sound of Iambic Pentameter, think of a heartbeat

- ▶ it sounds like this:
- ▶ dee DUM, dee DUM, dee DUM,
dee DUM, dee DUM.
- ▶ It consists of
 - ▶ a line of five iambic feet
 - ▶ ten syllables with five unstressed and five stressed syllables

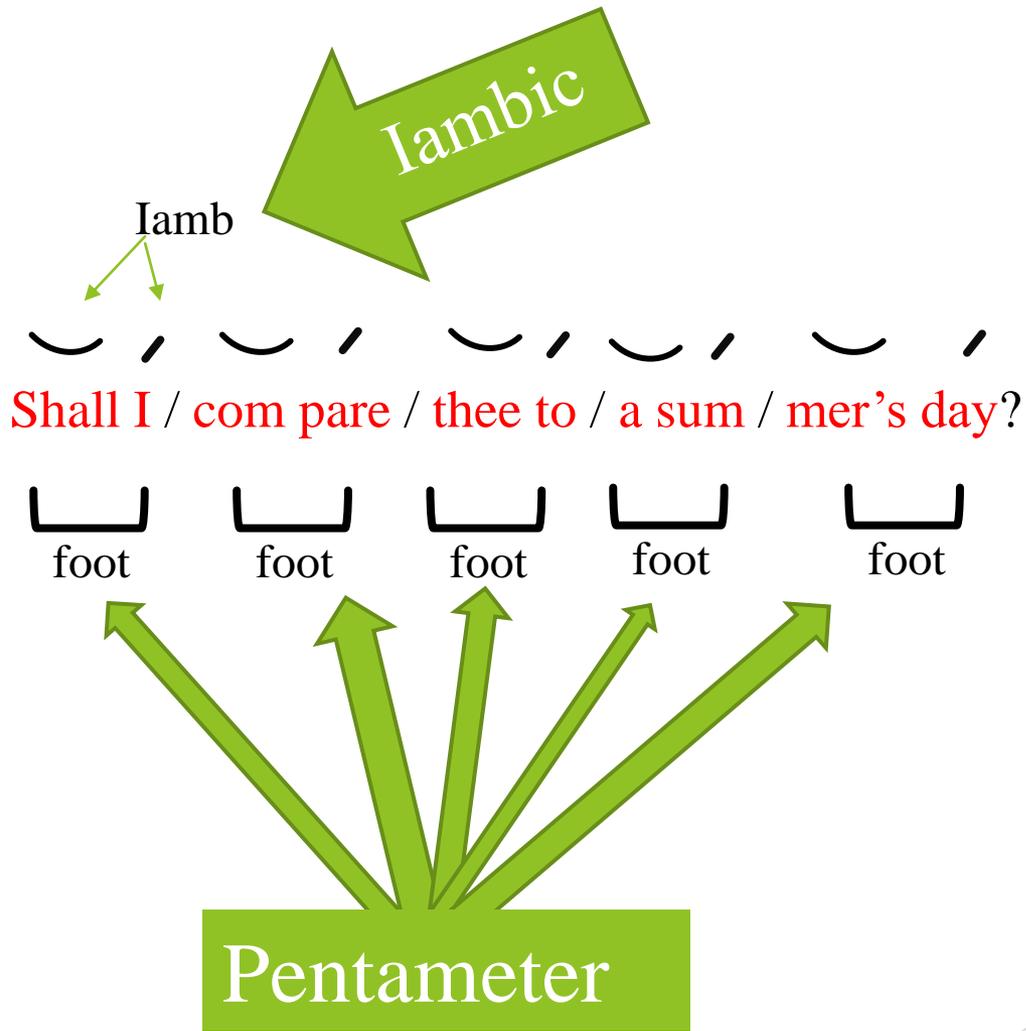


- ▶ An example of iambic pentameter from Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*:



but SOFT what LIGHT through YONder WINdow BREAKS

Iambic Pentameter - put it all together



Rhyming patterns

- ▶ The Shakespearean sonnet has three **quatrains** followed by a **couplet**, the scheme being: *abab cdcd efef gg*.

Quatrain: 4 lines of
rhymed verse

Couplet: 2 lines of
rhymed verse

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds (a)
Admit impediments. Love is not love (b)
Which alters when it alteration finds,(a)
Or bends with the remover to remove:(b)

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,(c)
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;(d)
It is the star to every wandering bark,(c)
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.(d)

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks(e)
Within his bending sickle's compass come;(f)
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,(e)
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.(f)

If this be error and upon me proved,(g)
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.(g)

3 Quatrains

Couplet

Shakespearean Sonnets

- 1609 Quarto only source of most 154 Shakespearean Sonnets.
- There are 3 categories of poems in this Quarto:
 - 1-126 are addressed to The Fair Youth
 - 127-152 are addressed to The Dark Mistress
 - 153 & 154 - Traditional Love Sonnets
 - *A Lover's Complaint* a 329 line poem written in Rhyme Royal

Shakespeare's Addressees

▶ The Fair Youth (sonnets 1-126)

- ▶ An unnamed young man
- ▶ Written to in loving and romantic language
- ▶ Some suggest this may be a homosexual love, others find support that it is platonic, or father-son love

▶ The Dark Lady (sonnets 127-152)

- ▶ Given this name because of she is described as being dark haired
- ▶ The sonnets written about her express infatuation and are more sexual in nature

The sonnet's argument

- ▶ **A sonnet is also an argument** – it builds up a certain way. And how it builds up is related to its metaphors and how it moves from one metaphor to the next. In a Shakespearean sonnet, the argument builds up like this:
 - ▶ **First quatrain:** An exposition of the main theme and main metaphor.
 - ▶ **Second quatrain:** Theme and metaphor extended or complicated; often, some imaginative example is given.
 - ▶ **Third quatrain:** Peripetia [per-uh-pi-tahy-uh, -tee-uh] (a twist or conflict), often introduced by a "but" (very often leading off the ninth line).
 - ▶ **Couplet:** Summarizes and leaves the reader with a new, concluding image.

Interpret vs. Paraphrase

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

- ▶ Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
- ▶ Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
- ▶ Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
- ▶ And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
- ▶ Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
- ▶ And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
- ▶ And every fair from fair sometime declines,
- ▶ By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
- ▶ But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
- ▶ Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
- ▶ So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
- ▶ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

- ▶ Should I compare you to a summer's day?
- ▶ You are more lovely and more measured
- ▶ Rough winds shake the flowers in May
- ▶ And summer is very short
- ▶ Sometimes it is hot in heaven
- ▶ And gold is sometimes not so shiny
- ▶ Everything that is fair will decline at some point
- ▶ Because that is just the way it is in nature
- ▶ But your summer will never go away
- ▶ You will never walk in the shade of death
- ▶ You will grow old at some point
- ▶ As long as people live and can see
- ▶ My poem will live and you will live in it.

- ▶ Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
- ▶ Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
- ▶ Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
- ▶ And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
- ▶ Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
- ▶ And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
- ▶ And every fair from fair sometime declines,
- ▶ By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
- ▶ But thy eternal summer shall not fade, Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
- ▶ Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
- ▶ When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
- ▶ So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
- ▶ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

- ▶ In the first four lines of this poem, Shakespeare is basically saying that the person is more beautiful than a summer's day. He also talks about how nature will sometimes have an impact on beauty and that beauty does not last forever.
- ▶ In the next four lines he states that some people are given more beauty than others. But no matter how much beauty you have, everyone grows old and will lose their beauty. It is a natural process.
- ▶ The next four lines Shakespeare says that this person's beauty will never go away. He says that the person will never lose his/her beauty to old age or death. He actually says that his beauty will grow over time because of this poem.
- ▶ In the last two lines, he says that as long as there are people living and eyes to read this poem, it will last forever and his/her beauty will live forever in the lines of the poem.