

## I. MEASUREMENT AND FORM

Just as special terms have been created for the measurement of distance, weight, and volume, special terms are used by poets for the measurement of words or sounds. A poet's terms for measuring sounds fall into two general classes: words related to rhythm and *meter* and words for *musical techniques*.

In this section you will study the various metric feet used in English poetry and the effects created by each foot. You will also become familiar with the terms used by poets to indicate the number of feet in a line. Among the techniques used by poets to create musical effects that you will study in this section are *rhyme*, **alliteration**, **consonance**, **assonance**, and **onomatopoeia**. These odd names represent familiar practices and are not so difficult as they appear. In addition, you will discover that all poetry is not alike and that different poetic forms serve different purposes.

### SECTION OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives to learn what you should be able to do when you have completed this section.

1. Scan a poem to determine the dominant foot and the number of feet per line.
2. Identify specific musical effects in samples of poetry.
3. List five styles of poetry and to cite characteristics of each.

### VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

alliteration	consonance	iamb	pyrrhic
anapest	dactyl	onomatopoeia	trochee
assonance	dominant foot	spondee	

### METRICAL FEET

To measure the sound of his poem, a poet uses a device called a *metrical foot*. In English poetry, the foot consists of a specific number of accented and unaccented syllables. By choosing a particular dominant foot and by consciously varying from it on occasion, the poet can create a particular tone and atmosphere that suit his subject. He can also create the emotional response that he wants from his reader. The wrong foot can spoil a poem.

**Iamb.** The **iamb** is the most common metrical foot in English poetry. Consisting of only two syllables, the iamb creates a 'da DUM' sound pattern. In this sound pattern the first syllable is unaccented and the second syllable is accented, as in the word *a bout*'. Words of more than two syllables also may have an iambic pattern. *A ban' don ment'* is an example. When the pattern of unstressed syllable and stressed syllable continues throughout a poem, the poem is iambic.

Many familiar poems use the iamb as their **dominant foot**. In the following lines the stressed syllables are marked with an accent mark [´] and the unstressed syllables with a breve (˘).

Thăt tímé öf yéar thöu máyst ín mé bëhöld.

Thě wóods äre lövelý, dárk, aňd déep.

Thě wórlđ iš tóo múch wíth ús; láte aňd sóon.

Mý löve iš líke ä rěd rěd róse.

Notice that the iambic pattern is not always perfect. Some stresses are more marked than others when the lines are read aloud.

### Complete this activity.

- 1.1 Read the following lines. Mark the stressed and unstressed syllables. Write *yes* in the blank if the line is iambic or *no* if it is not.
- a. How sweet I roamed from field to field \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Go and catch a falling star \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. When fishes flew and forests walked \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Through wood and dale the sacred river ran \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Take me, Lord, to dwell with thee \_\_\_\_\_

**Trochee.** The **trochee** is a two-syllable foot that stresses the first syllable, as in the word *pa' per*. The trochee stress is the reverse of the iamb. Although the trochee is less common in English, it is not difficult to locate because of the first syllable stress.

The following lines are *trochaic*:

Whén thě stárs thrěw döwn thěir speárs.

Líttlě Laráb whö máde theě?

Qúoth thě rávĕň, "Névěrmóre!"

### Complete these activities.

- 1.2 Mark the trochees in the following line.

By a route obscure and lonely.

- 1.3 Write a phrase, a sentence, or a series of words in trochees. \_\_\_\_\_

**Anapest.** The **anapest** consists of three syllables, the first two unstressed and the last one stressed. Because the anapest produces a strong rhythm, it is often mixed with other metrical feet. The American poets, Poe and Longfellow, were particularly fond of anapests.

The following lines from Poe's "Annabel Lee" mix anapests and iambs:

And thís wás thě réasöñ thăt löng ägó  
iamb      anapest      anapest      iamb

In thís kíngdöñ by thě séa.  
anapest      iamb      iamb

Like many of Poe's works, "Anabel Lee" paints an imaginative picture of his wife Virginia Clemm, who died young.

Read the poem.

Annabel Lee

It was many and many a year ago,  
 In a kingdom by the sea,  
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
 By the name of Annabel Lee;  
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 But we loved with a love that was more than love—  
 I and my Annabel Lee;  
 With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven  
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling  
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 So that her highborn kinsmen came  
 And bore her away from me,  
 To shut her up in a sepulcher  
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,  
 Went envying her and me—  
 Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,  
 In this kingdom by the sea)  
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night,  
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
 Of those who were older than we,  
 Of many far wiser than we;  
 And neither the angels in heaven above,  
 Nor the demons down under the sea,  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,  
 In the sepulcher there by the sea,  
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Complete these activities.

- 1.4 a. Mark the anapests in the first line.  
 b. What other foot is used? \_\_\_\_\_

1.5 Paraphrase each stanza as a complete prose sentence.

- a. Stanza 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Stanza 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Stanza 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Stanza 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Stanza 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Stanza 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

1.6 Describe the mood, or atmosphere, of the poem.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the tone, or attitude, of the narrator.

- b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Write a paper.

- 1.7 Discuss your feelings about the poem, "Annabel Lee." Consider the poem as a response to the death of a loved one, not as a literal account of the poet's actions. What can you infer from the poem about Poe's attitude toward death? Is it a Christian one? Does he succeed in making you, the reader, feel as he does? Does his meter help him or hinder him in establishing the poem's mood?



Adult check \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Date

**Dactyl.** The **dactyl**, a three-syllable foot with the stressed syllable coming first, is the mirrored image of the anapest. Like the anapest, it seldom appears alone because an unvaried succession of either dactyls or anapests results in a heavy, sing-song beat. Many poets use dactyls to lend variety to other feet. Look again at "Annabel Lee." Poe used dactyls in the lines:

"Coveted her and me."  
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

Complete this activity.

- 1.8 Mark the anapest or the dactyls in each line and label each correctly.
- On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross \_\_\_\_\_
  - Give of your best to the Master \_\_\_\_\_

**Masculine and feminine endings.** Regardless of the dominant foot that a poet has chosen, he may sometimes find it necessary to end a line with an unstressed syllable. In a trochaic or a dactylic pattern, such unstressed endings are a natural occurrence. If an iamb or an anapest is left incomplete or if a trochee or a dactyl is substituted for an iamb or an anapest, the ending is considered *feminine*. If the line ends on a stressed syllable, the line is considered *masculine*.

Complete this activity.

- 1.9 Label each line as *iambic*, *dactylic*, *trochaic*, or *anapestic*, and each ending as *feminine* or *masculine*.
- |                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| But I have promises to keep.  | a. _____ |
|                               | b. _____ |
| For the moon never beams,     | c. _____ |
| without bringing me dreams.   | d. _____ |
|                               | e. _____ |
| Dost thou know who made thee? | f. _____ |

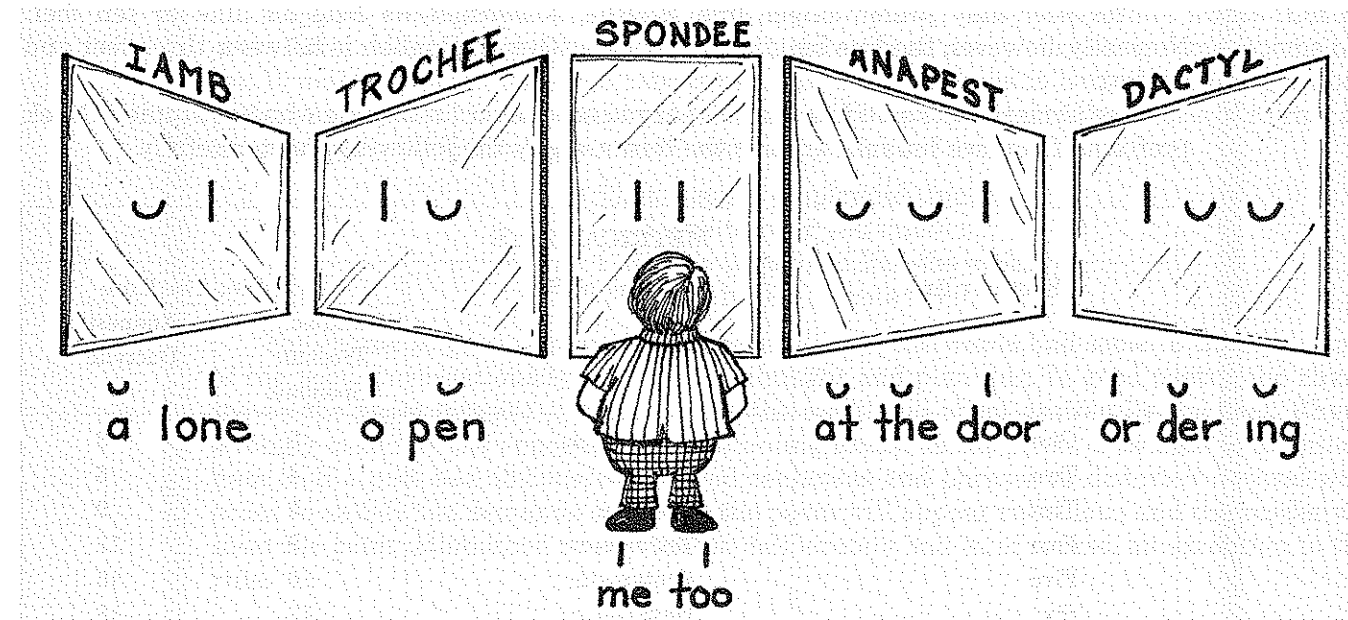
**Substitute feet.** The **spondee**, a metrical foot composed of two accented syllables, is used to lend variety to a poem written in another meter. The spondee is called a *substitute foot* because it takes the place of a foot of the dominant meter. The **pyrrhic** is another substitute foot that consists of two unaccented syllables most often used in place of a trochee or an iamb.

A poet can also vary his meter, as Poe did in "Annabel Lee," by substituting any other metrical foot for the dominant foot.

The following poem, James Russell Lowell's "Ode Recited at the Harvard Commemoration," is a tribute to Abraham Lincoln. Although its rhythm is basically iambic, it contains a spondee.

How beautiful to see  
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,  
Who loved his charge but never loved to lead;  
Once whose meek flock the people joyed to be,  
Not lured by any cheat of birth,  
But by his clear-grained human worth,  
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!

Spondees, pyrrhics, and other substitute feet can be identified through the technique of *scansion*, the division or analysis of lines of verse according to a metrical pattern. You have already scanned several lines of poetry in this LIFE PAC, marking the stressed and unstressed syllables to identify the meter.



Complete this activity.

- 1.10 Scan the following lines from Lowell's poem to identify the spondee. Mark all the feet.
- Which two words compose the spondee? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What other type of substitute foot is used? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Which words compose it? \_\_\_\_\_

Who loved his charge but never loved to lead;  
One whose meek flock the people loved to be,  
Not lured by any cheat of birth.

**METRICAL SETS**

*Metrical sets*, or planned groups of syllables in specific patterns, tie metrical feet together. A metrical set has much the same relationship to a metrical foot that a yard has to a twelve-inch foot, except that the number of feet within the metrical "yard" is not always three. A metrical set is a line length consisting of a particular number of feet.

When a poet designs a poem, he will often decide how many metrical feet he wishes to place in each line. He may decide to use only one foot in each line, as in the following poem:

Spring

A bee  
A tree  
For thee  
And me.  
Come see  
With me  
This be  
That tree  
That be.