

Blank Verse: Poetry that does not rhyme, but has a musical tone to it because it is written in...

Iambic Pentameter: A line consisting of five beats, each beat having two syllables. Each beat is known as an **iamb**; **pentameter** basically means five beats.

The stress is most often on the second syllable of each beat. For example:

Paris: These **times** of **woe** afford no **time** to **woo**. (3.4.8)

Prose: Common language which does not necessarily have a rhythmical sound to it. Usually it is spoken in Shakespeare's plays by servants or the lower classes. For example:

Servant I: Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift a trencher!
He scrape a trencher! (1.5.1-2)

When written in several lines, you can tell **iambic pentameter** and **prose** apart just from the look on the page – iambic pentameter will appear as shorter lines, looking like poetry, and prose will look more like a normal paragraph in a book.

Sonnet and Rhyming Couplet: A **sonnet** is a poem of (usually) 14 lines that has a particular rhyming scheme. A rhyming couplet is a pair of lines that rhyme at the end. The best examples in *Romeo and Juliet* are the two Chorus parts. Both the prologue and the Act II Chorus have a rhyming scheme of ABABCDCDEFEGG.

In Act 1, Scene 5, the rhyming scheme of Romeo's ten-line sonnet is AABBCDDDEE. Note the rhyme scheme, and also note the use of iambic pentameter:

Romeo: O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in Ethiop's ear:
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hands.
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night. (1.5.43-52)

The **rhyming couplet** is also used at the end of many scenes to indicate to the audience that the scene is over. In Act 1, Scene 5, the scene ends with both Juliet and the Nurse saying the rhyming couplet:

Juliet: Of one I danc'd withal. *note she takes of 6 of the 10 syllables for iambic p.*
[Nurse calls from within]

Nurse: Anon, anon! *note she finishes off the other 4 syllables*
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone. *a full iambic pentameter*