

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 some time 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 wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breath or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

The sonnets comprise four stanzas of three [quatrains](#) and a final [couplet](#) composed in iambic pentameter^[1] with the [rhyme](#) scheme *abab cdcd efef gg*

An iambic foot is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. We could write the rhythm like this:

da	DUM
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A line of iambic pentameter is five of these in a row:

da	DUM	da	DUM	da	DUM	da	DUM	da	DUM
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We can notate this is with a 'x' mark representing an unstressed syllable and a '/' mark representing a stressed syllable. In this notation a line of iambic pentameter would look like this:

x	/	x	/	x	/	x	/	x	/
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The following line from [John Keats'](#) ode [To Autumn](#) is a straightforward example:^[1]

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

We can notate the [scansion](#) of this as follows:

x	/	x	/	x	/	x	/	x	/
To	swell	the	gourd,	and	plump	the	ha-	zel	shells

We can mark the divisions between feet with a |, and the [caesura](#) (a pause) with a double vertical bar ||.

x / x / x / x / x /
To swell | the gourd, || and plump | the ha- | zel shells