

Ballad — song hits, folk music, and folktales or any song that tells a story are loosely called ballads. In more exact literary terminology, a ballad is a narrative poem consisting of quatrains of iambic tetrameter alternating with iambic trimeter. Common traits of the ballad are that **(a)** the beginning is often abrupt, **(b)** the story is told through dialogue and action **(c)** the language is simple or "folksy," **(d)** the theme is often tragic--though comic ballads do exist, and **(e)** the ballad contains a refrain repeated several times.

Blank verse — (also called **unrhymed iambic pentameter**) unrhymed lines of ten syllables each with the even-numbered syllables bearing the accents. Blank verse has been called the most "natural" verse form for dramatic works, since it supposedly is the verse form most close to natural rhythms of English speech, and it has been the primary verse form of English drama and narrative poetry since the mid-sixteenth Century. Such verse is blank in rhyme only; it usually has a definite meter. (Variations in this meter may appear occasionally.)

Elegy — (in classical Greco-Roman literature) refers to any poem written in elegiac meter (alternating hexameter and pentameter lines). More broadly, elegy came to mean any poem dealing with the subject-matter common to the early Greco-Roman elegies--complaints about love, sustained formal lamentation, or somber meditations. The poem tends to be longer than a **lyric** but not as long as an **epic** and is not plot-driven.

Epic — a poem that is **(a)** a long narrative about a serious subject, **(b)** told in an elevated style of language, **(c)** focused on the exploits of a hero or demi-god who represents the cultural values of a race, nation, or religious group **(d)** in which the hero's success or failure will determine the fate of that people or nation. Usually, the epic has **(e)** a vast setting, and covers a wide geographic area, **(f)** it contains superhuman feats of strength or military prowess, and gods or supernatural beings frequently take part in the action. The poem begins with **(g)** the invocation of a muse to inspire the poet and, **(h)** the narrative starts *in medias res* (starting a story at midway through and then recapping **(i)** The epic contains long catalogs of heroes or important characters, focusing on highborn kings and great warriors rather than peasants and commoners.

Free verse — poetry based on the natural rhythms of phrases and normal pauses rather than the artificial constraints of metrical feet. It often involved the counterpoint of stressed and unstressed syllables in unpredictable but clever ways. Its origins are obscure.

Lyric poetry —short poem (usually no more than 50-60 lines, and often only a dozen lines long) written in a repeating stanzaic form, often designed to be set to music. Unlike a ballad, the lyric usually does not have a plot (i.e., it might not tell a complete story), but it rather expresses the feelings, perceptions, and thoughts of a single poetic speaker (not necessarily the poet) in an intensely personal, emotional, or subjective manner. Often, there is no chronology of events in the lyrics, but rather objects, situations, or the subject is written about in a "lyric moment." Sometimes, the reader can infer an implicit narrative element in lyrics, but it is rare for the lyric to proceed in the straightforward, chronological "telling" common in fictional prose. However, this chain of events is not explicitly a center of plot or extended struggle between protagonist and antagonist. Instead it triggers a moment of contemplation and appreciation.

Narrative — are told from a defined point of view, often the poet's, so there is feeling as well as specific and often sensory details provided to get the reader involved in the elements of the poem.

Elizabethan Sonnet — also known as the Shakespearean Sonnet. It uses three quatrains; each rhymed differently, with a final, independently rhymed couplet that makes an effective, unifying climax to the whole. Its rhyme scheme is **abab, cdcd, efef, gg**. Typically, the final two lines follow a "turn" or a "volta," (sometimes spelled *volte*, like volte-face) because they reverse, undercut, or turn from the original line of thought to take the idea in a new direction

Italian Sonnet — also known as the Petrarchan Sonnet. It has an eight line stanza (called an octave) followed by a six line stanza (called a sestet). The octave has two quatrains rhyming **abba, abba**, the first of which presents the theme, the second further develops it. In the sestet, the first three lines reflect on or exemplify the theme, while the last three bring the poem to a unified end. The sestet may be arranged **cdcedc, cdcdcd, or cdedce**.

Villanelle — poetry consisting of nineteen lines--five tercets and a concluding quatrain. The form requires that whole lines be repeated in a specific order, and that only two rhyming sounds occur in the course of the poem.