Name: _____
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Shakespearean Sonnets

Sonnets are structured poems of fourteen lines. Shakespearean Sonnets are arranged as three **quatrains** (stanzas of four lines) followed by a **couplet** (a two-lined stanza). The traditional rhyme scheme used for Shakespearean sonnets is abab, cdcd, efef, gg. Each line must be written in iambic pentameter–that is, a line of ten syllables that follows the unstressed/stressed rhythm pattern.

Meter: The rhythmical pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in verse. Most of Shakespeare's sonnets and plays are written in ***iambic pentameter***, a pattern of five sets of unstressed-stressed syllables.

Iambic Pentameter:

The rhythm in each line sounds like:
ba-**BUM** / ba-**BUM** / ba-**BUM** / ba-**BUM** / ba-**BUM**
If **mu-** / -sic **be** / the **food** / of **love**, / play **on**

Rhyme Scheme: The pattern of rhyme between lines of a poem or song. It is usually referred to by using letters at the end of each line to indicate which lines rhyme.

Beyond the stanzaic structure, the rhyme scheme, and the iambic pentameter, a Shakespearean sonnet must present a conflict and resolve it in the couplet. Each quatrain can present a different point of view about the problem. The couplet at the end is for the poet's final thoughts on the subject. The conclusion can be clever (funny) or poignant (serious). It may also be a surprise twist.

My **mis**tress' **eyes** are **noth**ing **like** the **sun**;	A
Co**ral** is **far** more **red** than **her** lips' **red**:	B
If **snow** be **white**, why **then** her **breasts** are **dun**;	A
If **hairs** be **wires**, black **wires** grow **on** her **head**.	B
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,	C
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;	D
And in some perfumes is there more delight	C
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.	D
I love to hear her speak,--yet well I know	E
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;	F
I grant I never saw a goddess go,	E
My mistress when she walks, treads on the ground;	F
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare	G
As any she belied with false compare.	G