How to Write a Poem

To write a poem you must start with a topic. A poem can be about any topic you want, but it also expresses strong feeling about the topic so choose something you that makes you feel strongly to write about.

After you have a topic, decide how you feel about it and think of some metaphors and similes to use in your poem.

Finally decide what type of poem you will write and begin drafting. You won't write a good poem on the first try.

Think of this **process** like this:

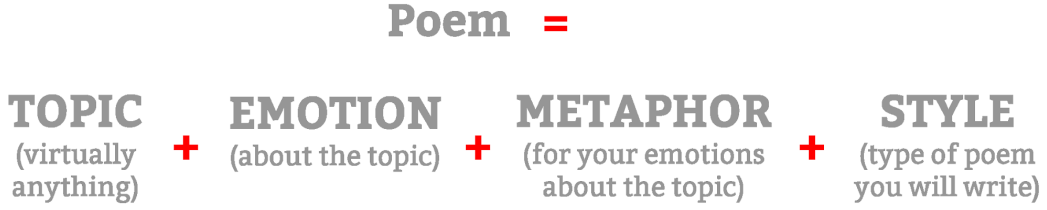
1. Pick a topic
2. Ask how you feel about it
3. Think of it as a metaphor
4. Explain the metaphor in as few words as possible
5. Find a clever way to end

Example

Topic = homework
Feeling = hate, killing me
Style = free verse poem
Metaphor = homework is cancer
Explanation = slowly and painfully wasting away my life
Ending = I would look for a cure, but I have homework to do

Homework

I hate homework
It's a cancer
I can't escape
Relentlessly eating
devouring my time
my will
my love of life and learning
I would quest for the cure
But, alas, I have homework to do



Poetry Book Assignment

Poetry is a very artistic form of writing. You combine careful word choice with rhythm, versification, and figurative language to make very beautiful, emotive poems. For this assignment you will make a digital book of at least 6 poems using a Google Doc. This means you will write one poem from five of the different styles below and then at least one more of your choice of style all of which need to be about the same general theme. You will draft your poems in your journal and edit them, and then put a final draft in in a Google Doc to publish as a digital file. Your poems will be displayed on the class and school website and at graduation, so while you may write about anything you wish, if you don't want people to read it, don't write it. Below are the five kinds of poems you must include, an explanation of each, and examples.

Acrostic Poem

Acrostic Poetry is where the first letter of each line spells a word, usually using the same words as in the title. It can be rhymed or unrhymed, but it must use poetic language and have rhythm like all other poems.

Example: Mother by Mr. Brunken

My mom is there to help
On weekdays or weekends
There's no end to the help she lends
However, her help is not what I love
Every second of every day she
Rights my wrongs and always loves me

Free Verse Poem

Free verse is an irregular form of poetry in which the content is free of traditional rules of versification (fixed meter, rhythm, rhyming patterns.) The art of the style lies in moving from line to line. The poet's consideration is where to insert line breaks Some ways of doing this include breaking the line where there is a natural pause or to create a moment of suspense or deep thought for the reader.

Example: When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer by Walt Whitman

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts, the diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the learned astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

Shape Poem

Poetry can take many shapes and forms, but one of the most inventive forms is for the poem to take on the shape of its subject. Therefore, if the subject of your poem was a flower, then the poem would be written in the shape of a flower. The shape can be obviously related to the subject of the poem, or require more thought from the reader to connect the two. For example, a poem about confusion or dizziness, written in the shape of a spiral.

Example: My Body by Andrea Forbing

my
body
is
a
walking representation
the outward visual caption
of what it means
to be
me
from the
outside
looking
in
at times I hide
from you but mostly
what you see is
what you will get

Rhymed Poem (Quatrain)

A quatrain is a poem made of four lined stanzas (paragraphs) arranged in a specific rhyming pattern.

Examples of rhyming patterns would be as follows:

1. abab – where the 1st and 3rd lines rhyme and the 2nd and 4th lines rhyme
2. abba – envelope rhyme
3. aabb
4. aaba, bbcb, ccdc, dddd – chain rhyme

Example: Weather Rhyme by unkown

Evening red and morning gray, **a**
Set the traveler on his way, **a**
But evening gray and morning red, **b**
Bring rain upon his head. **b**

Cinquain

A cinquain is a short, usually unrhymed poem consisting of twenty-two syllables distributed as 2, 4, 6, 8, 2, in five lines. It was developed by the Imagist poet, Adelaide Crapsey.

An easy way to make a good cinquain is as follows:

Line 1: Noun
Line 2: Description of Noun
Line 3: Action
Line 4: Feeling or Effect
Line 5: Synonym of the initial noun.

Example: Angles by Unknown

angels
kind beyond words
they protect and forgive
and make feelings of blissfulness
cherubim

Haiku/Senryu

A haiku or senryu are a Japanese style of poetry about nature or people that forces you to limit the amount of syllables you use and focus on the essence of what you are trying to describe. This kind of poem MUST be under 17 syllables and are usually written in the pattern of three lines with 5, 7, and then 5 syllables. It does not have to be 5/7/5 but should be short/long/short.

A **good structure** for beginning haiku poets is:

setting
subject and action (on two lines)

Examples:

Beautiful doll –
A little girl
Counts her pennies

Good morning breeze!
Crooked and meandering
Your homeward journey

Watching the plane
The kid playing third base
Misses the ball