

# HOW TO WRITE POETRY

## 1 Alliteration

This verse uses alliteration and counting, beginning at one and working up to ten. Each word in each line begins with the sound that the number begins with. For example:

*One wild walrus or One wandering wolf or One wily woodpecker.*

Notice that although the word "one" begins with the letter "o", the sound is "w".

Look at the example.

*One wandering wallaby,  
Two terrible tarantulas,  
Three thriving thrips,  
Four frantic flamingos,  
Five fierce falcons,  
Six slippery sturgeon,  
Seven silent stingrays,  
Eight aging aphid,  
Nine naughty newts,  
Ten terrible toads,  
All came home for tea.*

.....

## 2 Definition Poems

This form is built up in the following way:

- Think of a subject
- Think of three words that describe the subject
- Add a group of words, or phrase to complete the image.

### ***My Kitten***

*Soft,  
    Black,  
        Fluffy  
            Snoozing in the sun.*

### ***The new Chick***

*Soft,  
    Yellow,  
        Fluffy,  
            Wobbling on new feet.*

.....

### 3 Cinquain

Cinquain (pronounced **san-kane**) is a form of poetry that is based on a set pattern. It has five lines and a set number of words in each line.

The pattern is as follows:

- Line 1, one word title*
- Line 2, two words describing the subject*
- Line 3, three words expressing action*
- Line 4, action line (often a group of words or phrase)*
- Line 5, The one-word title or another word for the subject of the title.*

#### **Clouds**

*Dull, oppressive,  
Building, bruising, boiling,  
Rolling from the west,  
Storm.*

#### **Witch**

*Black-clad, hunchback,  
Cackling, mumbling, chanting,  
Stirring up a brew.  
Hag.*

.....

### 4 Haiku

This form of poetry is very old. It was known in Japan over 700 years ago. Each Haiku has only three lines with a set number of syllables for each line. They do not rhyme.

The pattern for Haiku is as follows:

#### **The Title**

- Line 1, five syllables
- Line 2, seven syllables
- Line 3, five syllables.

#### **Night Beach**

*On wave sculptured sand  
Sea shells glimmer in the light  
Of the waning moon.*

.....

### 5 Diamond Poems

You can form a poem in the diamond pattern by using the following pattern.

**The Title**  
Line 1, one syllable

Line 2, two syllables  
Line 3, three syllables  
Line 4, four syllables  
Line 5, five syllables  
Line 6, four syllables  
Line 7, three syllables  
Line 8, two syllables  
Line 9, one syllable.

***The Race***  
*Off!*  
*Running*  
*Sprinting well*  
*Forging ahead*  
*Pushing through the tape*  
*My best race yet*  
*The winner*  
*Breathless*  
*Wow!*

.....

## 6 Question Poems

These poems each ask a question that begins with the words 'Have you ever seen ...?' and then describes the subject. The poems may be rhymed or unrhymed. The description has a set pattern. Look at the following examples to see the pattern.

*Have you seen our coach?*  
*Ball-throwing whistle-blowing, rule-yelling, pride.*  
*Coach.*

*Have you ever seen my dog?*  
*Tail-wagging, slipper-dragging, heel-nipping, paper-ripping.*  
*Puppy.*

*Have you ever seen a computer?*  
*Keyboard-chattering, printer-clattering, lights-blinking, machine-thinking.*  
*Computer.*

.....

## 7 Feeling Poems

These poems are of four lines. Each line is a complete thought but linked in some way to the lines that follow. They can be rhymed or unrhymed. In the first of the following examples, the third line rhymes with the first and the fourth line rhymes with the second.

**My relatives**

*Nanna makes me happy,  
Granny makes me sad.  
Aunt Jane makes me snappy  
But Poppa makes me glad.*

**My Day**

*Morning makes me bouncy,  
Lunchtime makes me hungry,  
Evening makes me sleepy  
And darkness makes me jumpy.*

.....

**8 Building a Poem**

For poem building, you begin with one word, the title. At each new line, add another word that builds on the image. At the fifth line, add an action and at the last line repeat the title.

**The Title**

Adjective and title  
Adjective, adjective, title  
Adjective, adjective, adjective, title  
Action  
Title

**Ghost**

Wailing ghost  
Pale, wailing ghost.  
Eerie, pale, wailing ghost.  
Drifting through the night.  
Ghost.

.....

**9 Shape Poems**

A shape poem is written in the shape suggested by the subject. It can be any length, and can be rhymed or unrhymed.

For example, a poem about a balloon could be written round and round to make a balloon shape. Or a poem about a snail could be written to form the shape of a snail.

***Balloon at the Beach***

*At the beach,  
a red balloon anchored to the Earth by a wide eyed child,  
lunges for freedom,  
envious of the gulls flying above*

.....

**10 Counting Rhymes**

You have read counting rhymes many times in books. They are very easy to compose. You may begin at any number and count back to zero or begin at one and count to ten or more. The example has a simple counting rhyme to use as a model.

*Five little teddy bears sitting on the floor  
One went off to bed and then there were four.*

*Four little teddy bears sitting in a tree  
One fell off the branch and then there were three.*

*Three little teddy bears lying in the sun  
One went off to town and then there was one.*

*One little teddy bear wanted to have fun  
She ran off to play and then there were none.*

.....

## **11 Descriptive Poems**

This form of poetry uses words that appeal to our senses so that we can “see and feel” the scene or action being described. The verses can be quite short and can either rhyme or not. For example:

*Black clouds roll,  
Thunder roars,  
Shaking windows,  
Banging doors.*

*Fun is  
Running through  
Wet grass  
On a dewy morning.*

.....

## **12 Recipes**

These poems are written like a recipe in a cookery book and show ingredients and method.

### **Recipe for Friendship**

*Take a bright smile and mix with a helping hand.  
Add a dash of kindness and a large pinch of forgiveness.  
Mix in a generous measure of unselfishness  
And bake over many years.  
Ice with understanding.*