

Pentameter

Definition

- Pentameter is a poetic meter that consists of five feet.
 - A foot is a combination of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Go Beyond...

- The most common form of pentameter is iambic pentameter.
 - Iambic pentameter consists of five feet of two syllables.
 - Each foot has one unstressed and one stressed syllable.
 - A line in iambic pentameter would sound like this: unstressed stressed, unstressed stressed, unstressed stressed, unstressed stressed, unstressed stressed.
 - The fact that there are five feet makes the line pentameter.

Examples

William Shakespeare uses pentameter, primarily iambic pentameter, in most of his plays and poems. An example would be his famous line from *Romeo and Juliet*. “But soft, what light through yonder window breaks.” The five feet are but soft, what light, through yon, der win, dow breaks. If you were to read each foot out loud you would notice that the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable is stressed. This makes the line iambic. The fact that there are five different feet in the line is what makes it pentameter.

Another example is from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. “And sing while though on pressed flowers dost sleep.” In this line the five feet are And sing, while though, on pressed, flowers, dost sleep.

Further Information:

Examples: <http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples/examples-of-iambic-pentameter.html>.

Definition: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pentameter>