

Write Your Own Sonnet

Sonnets are often considered difficult to write. Many poets gravitate toward free verse simply because it seems easier to compose. However, close attention to a tightly organized poem of fourteen lines draws attention to the power of individual words and patterns of sound.

For a poem to be called a sonnet, it must follow these rules:

- **MUST** be 14 lines in length.
- **MUST** have 3 Quatrains (Stanzas of 4 lines) and 1 Couplet (2 lines)
- **MUST** follow the rhyme scheme A B A B / C D C D / E F E F / G G

(The first and third lines of each four-line stanza rhyme, and the second and fourth lines of each four-line stanza rhyme. In other words, an "A" line rhymes with another "A" line, a "D" line rhymes with another "D" line, etc. The two lines of the closing stanza should rhyme with each other.)

First Stanza should introduce the theme; explain an idea, problem, situation, occasion, or subject that you will be talking about.

Second and Third Stanzas develop the tone of the poem – what are the feelings involved? Describe these feelings with figurative language: images, metaphors, similes, personification, etc.

Rhyming Couplet at the end sums up the topic, resolves the conflict, or provides a dramatic twist.

First Stanza:

A
B
A
B

Second Stanza:

C
D
C
D

Third Stanza:

E
F
E
F

Rhyming Couplet:

G
G

EXTRA CREDIT: Write in Iambic Pentameter just like William Shakespeare did! (Ten syllables and five beats per line, made up of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one, like this: blah-BLAH blah-BLAH blah-BLAH blah-BLAH blah-BLAH. It's a rhythm that is natural to English speech, as in this sentence: "I wonder what my friends will think of this?")