Poetry

TLC/College of the Canyons

Poetic Feet

- Iamb / u
  - Two syllables: unstressed, stressed
    - a-BOVE
- Trochee / u
  - Two syllables: stressed, unstressed
    - CARE-less
- Spondees / /
  - Two syllables: unstressed, unstressed
    - well-loved
- Anapest / u / u
  - Three syllables: unstressed, unstressed, stressed
    - in-ter-VENE
- Dactyl / u / u
  - Three syllables: stressed, unstressed, unstressed
    - TEN-der-ly

Poetic Meter

Determined by the number of feet per line

- 1 foot = monometer
- 2 feet = dimeter
- 3 feet = trimeter
- 4 feet = tetrameter
- 5 feet = pentameter
- 6 feet = hexameter
- 7 feet = heptameter
- 8 feet = octameter

Stanza Types

- 3 lines = tercet
- 4 lines = quatrain
- 6 lines = sestet
- 7 lines = septet
- 8 lines = octave

Common Terms

- Couplet:
  - A pair of successive lines of verse, especially when rhyming together and of the same length
- Sonnet:
  - 14 lines
  - Iambic pentameter
  - Two main rhyme schemes:
    - Shakespearean (English):
      - ABAB CDCD EFEF GG
    - Petrarchan (Italian):
      - ABBA ABBA CDE CDE (with some variation)
- Enjambment:
  - The carrying over of a sentence from one line to the next
- Caesura:
  - A pause or breathing-place about the middle of a metrical line, generally indicated by a pause

How to Cite Poetry (In-Text)

Citations for poems use line numbers rather than page numbers. Line numbers, however, are only marked every five lines; or if you only find a poem online, the line numbers might not be marked at all. In that case, you'll need to count them out. For the first in-text citation, use the word “lines”. Subsequently, use numbers.
Look for a small number off to the side:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

If you are citing a three lines or fewer, you will need to indicate a line break with a forward slash (/):

“At length did cross an Albatross, / Thorough the fog it came” (63-64).

For four or more lines, you will recopy the poem as closely to its original format as possible. For some poems, this can be difficult:

Buffalo Bill’s
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat. (1-6)

Note: For long quotations, punctuation will appear before the parenthetical citation.

When citing verse plays, you must provide the act and scene number as well as the line numbers. Numbers will be separated by periods. If you are citing a line from act four, scene two, it will look like this:

“The first thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers” (4.2.77).

How to Cite Poetry (Works Cited)
Most poetry will come from a larger work. Follow the citation format for a work from an anthology:


If you find the poem online, cite as you would a short work from a website: