

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF POETRY

1. ALPHABET POETRY

A form of poetry which states a creative or humorous idea using part of the alphabet. An alphabet poem is often written as a list.

Highly
Ignorant
Jumping
Kangaroos
Love
Making
Noise
Obnoxiously

2. CLERIHEW POETRY

A form of humorous or light verse created by Edmund Clerihew. A clerihew poem consists of two rhyming couplets. The name of some well-known person creates one of the rhymes.

*The only way to pitch Pete Rose
Is to throw the ball near his nose.
Throw a pitch which he can hit
And he'll blast a drive no one will get.*

3. CONCRETE POETRY

A form of poetry in which the shape or design helps express the meaning or feeling of the poem.



Pedro Xisto

4. CONTRAST COUPLET

A couplet in which the first line includes two words that are opposites. The second line makes some sort of comment about the first line.

*It really doesn't matter if you're young or old.
There's always someone to say: "Do as you're told."*

5. DEFINITION POETRY

A form of poetry which defines a word or idea creatively.

*Styrofoam -
a strange stuff
which bends, dents and rips
when poked or pulled.*

6. DIAMANTE POETRY

A diamante is a diamond-shaped poem that tells about opposites. Start with a pair of opposites such as day-night, new-old, etc.

Line 1 and 7 name the opposites.

Lines 2 and 6 each give two adjectives describing the opposite nearest it.

Lines 3 and 5 give three participles (ing words) describing the nearest opposite.

Line 4 is in the middle. It changes from the first idea to the opposite by giving two nouns for each.

Day
Bright, colorful
Sunrise, sunshine, shadows, sunset
Closing, slowing, sleeping
Dark, colorless
Night

7. DREAM POETRY

A form of poetry which describes a personal dream.

Witches

*I wait to feel happiness
familiar or brand new...
But I dream of witches.
Evil curls like smoke
from the corners of their eyes
and out between lips
parted in false smiles.
Spiny fingers reach for me.
My mind races, but my feet are still.
I wake, but still their cruel laughter
echoes through my head.
They'll return,
these wicked ladies,
to dance upon my bed.*

8. HEADLINE POETRY

A form of poetry which is created from the words of newspaper or magazine headlines.
The words in the headlines are organized in a creative way.

9. LIST POETRY

A form of poetry which lists words or phrases.

Rooms

*There are rooms to start up in
Rooms to start out in
Rooms to start over in
Rooms to lie in
Rooms to lie about in
Rooms to lay away in
Rooms to lay up in
Rooms to lay over in
Rooms to lie low in...
-Ray Griffith*

10. NAME POETRY

A form of poetry in which a name is used as the first letter of each line in the poem.

Basically
All kinds of activity
Readng a good book
Bring out
All that is
Right
About me.

11. PHRASE POETRY

A form of poetry which states an idea with a list of phrases.

Cross Country
Off with a bang
around the bushes
up the exhausting hill
toward the finish
without any breath

12. RIDDLE POETRY

A form of poetry which makes the reader guess the subject of the poem.

What Am I?

I
am tall
but can be
small. I have limbs,
but cannot walk. I live
for centuries, but can be killed
with powder. I shed, but have no
hair. I cannot think, have no heart, but

I
L
I
V
E

- Doug Robertson (a tree)

13. TERSE POETRY

A form of humorous verse made up of 2 words that rhyme and have the same number of syllables.

Old Flower

Lazy
Daisy

Worms

Great
Bait

Braces

Tin
Grin

14. TITLE-DOWN POETRY

A form of poetry in which the subject of the poem is used as the first letter in each line.

Being down is
Lousy,
Ugh, but
Everyone is down sometimes.

TRADITIONAL FORMS OF POETRY

1 . BALLAD

A ballad is a poem which tells a story. They are usually written in four-line stanzas called quatrains.

The Unquiet Grave (first stanza)

*The wind doth blow today, my love,
And a few small drops of rain.
I never had but one true love,
In cold grave she was lain.*

2 . BLANK VERSE

Blank verse is rhymed poetry with meter. The lines in blank verse are 10 syllables in length, however not every line will have exactly 10 syllables.

Birches (first three lines)

*When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines straight and dark trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.*

3 . CINQUAIN

Cinquain poems are five lines in length. There are syllable and word cinquain poems.

Syllable Cinquain

Line 1:	Title	2 syllables
Line 2:	Description of Title	4 syllables
Line 3:	Action About the Title	6 syllables
Line 4:	Feeling About the Title	8 syllables
Line 5:	Synonym for Title	2 syllables

Word Cinquain

Line 1:	Title	1 word
Line 2:	Description of Title	1 word
Line 3:	Action About the Title	1 word
Line 4:	Feeling About the Title	1 word
Line 5:	Synonym for Title	1 word

4 . COUPLET

A couplet is two lines of verse that usually rhyme. Often, a couplet states one complete idea.

*"Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble."*

*"The old dog barks backwards without getting up,
I can remember when he was a pup."*

5 . EPIC

An epic is a long story poem which describes the adventures of a hero. Homer's *Iliad*

and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* are examples of famous epic poetry.

6 . FREE VERSE

Free verse is poetry which does not require meter or a rhyme scheme.

Song of Myself (first three lines)

*I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest.*

7 . LIMERICK

A limerick is a humorous verse of five lines. Lines one, two and five rhyme, as do lines three and four. Lines one, two and five have 3 stressed syllables; lines three and four have 2 stressed syllables.

*A man with a chest cold named Bill
Ingested a nuclear pill.
The doctor said "cough,"
The damn thing went off,
And they picked up Bill's head in Brazil.*

8 . LYRIC

A lyric is a short poem that expresses personal feelings.

My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold (first five lines)

*My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky;
So it was when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old.*

-William Wordsworth

9 . ODE

An ode is a long lyrics that is deep feeling and rich in poetic devices and imagery.

"Ode on Solitude" by Alexander Pope and "Ode to a Grecian Urn" by John Keats are examples of famous odes.

10 . PARODY

A parody is a poem which humorously copies or exaggerates the style of another poem or poet.

11 . QUATRAIN

A quatrain is a four-line stanza. The lines in a traditional quatrain are written with meter and rhyme. Common rhyme schemes in quatrains are aabb, abab and abcb.

From **The Hippopotamus**

*The hippopotamus' day
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way –
The Church can sleep and feed at once.*

-T.S. Eliot

12 . SONNET

A sonnet is a fourteen-line poem which states a poet's personal feelings. One common sonnet is the Shakespearean sonnet which follows the abab cdcd efef gg rhyme scheme. Each line in a sonnet is 10 syllables in length; every other syllable is stressed, beginning with the second syllable.

13 . TANKA

A tanka is a form of Japanese poetry which gives a clear picture of nature in five lines. The first and third lines have 5 syllables; the other lines have 7.

*Is the inlaid box
With a gilt hasp concealing
A letter, a jewel?
Within, a bunch of feathers,
The small bones of a bird.*

-Carolyn Kizer

14 . HAIKU

A haiku is a form of Japanese poetry, usually detailing the poet's perception of nature. The poem is three lines in length. The first line is 5 syllables; the second, seven; and the third 5 syllables.

*Soaked
in morning dew
a parking ticket*

-Chusaburo Ito

*Bass
picking bugs
off the moon*

-Nicholas A. Viegilio

(Tr. David Aylward)

15 . TRIOLET

The triolet is an eight-line poem with two rhymes and two repeating lines. The first line is repeated as the fourth and seventh lines, and the second and eighth lines are the same.

A Triolet

A triolet fits on a postal card.

The triolet's for me.

Ballades spin on for many a yard

(A triolet fits on a postal card!)

To France With Love From Indolent Bard -

Hail, Gallic brevity!

A triolet fits on a postal card.

The triolet's for me.

-Jeannette Cushman