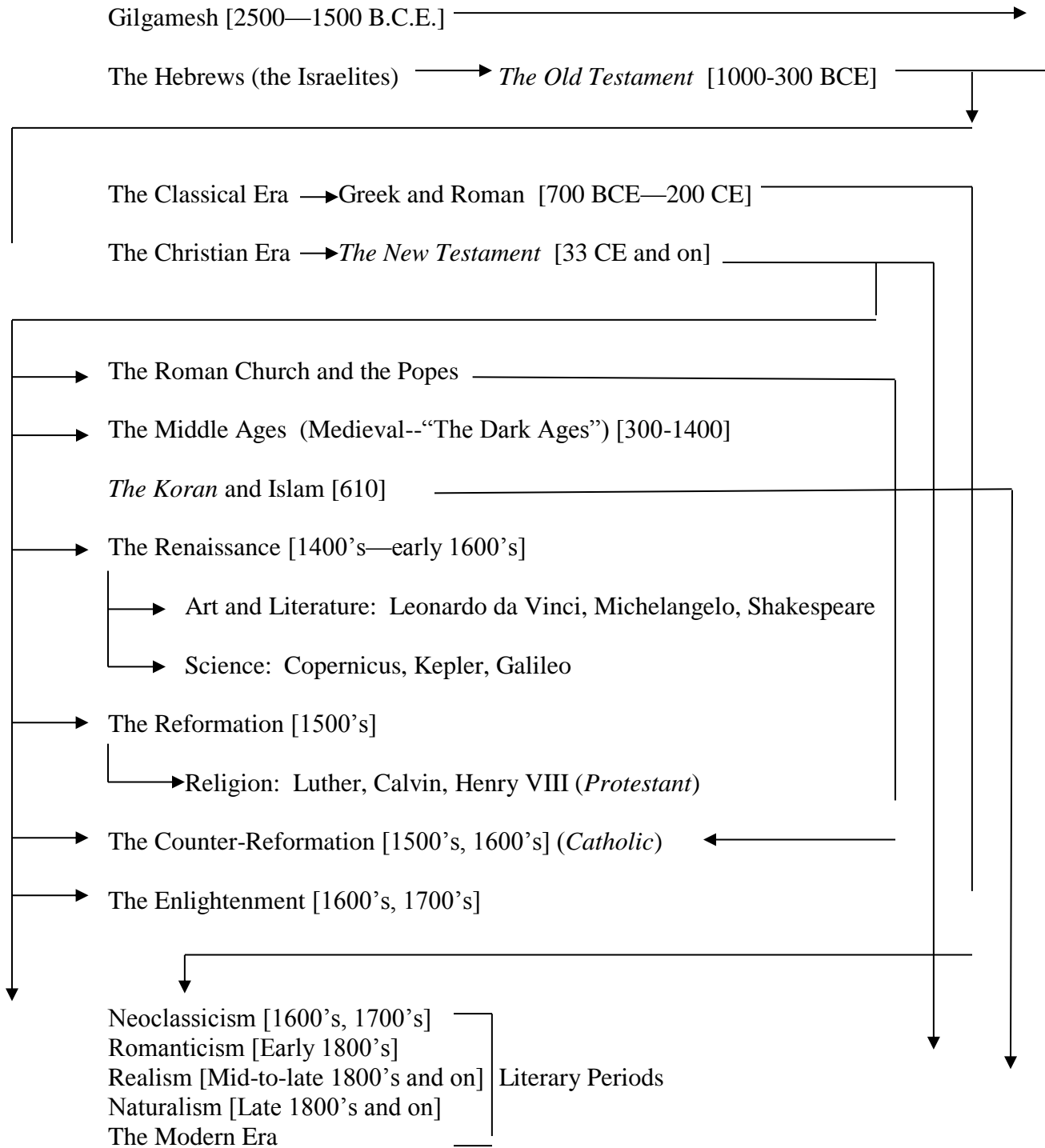


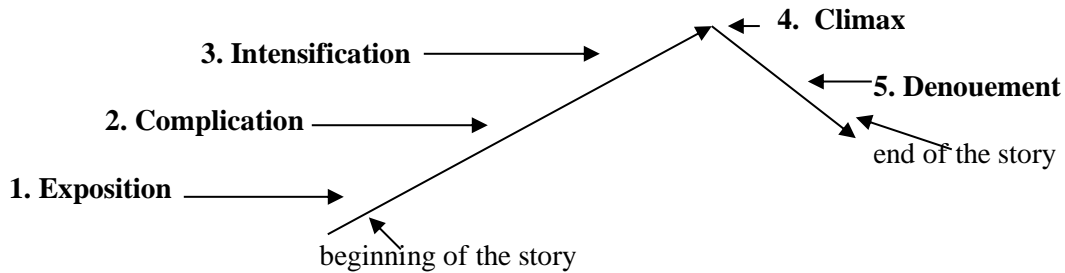
Rough Timeline of Periods and Events



FICTION TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

PLOT

The Classical Plot Line



1. **Exposition:** In general, the setting is established and certain characters are introduced.
2. **Complication:** A problem is introduced that creates conflict.
3. **Intensification:** The problem and the conflict get worse.
4. **Climax:** The most exciting part of the plot.
5. **Denouement:** The resolution—a look at the characters and situation after the climax.

PLOT--continued

- **Protagonist**—the central character
- **Antagonists**—characters, forces, etc., that oppose the protagonist
- **Conflict**—where opposing forces meet—a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills.
- **Suspense**—the quality in a story that makes us want to read on.
- **Mystery**—an unusual set of circumstances for which readers crave an explanation.
- **Dilemma**—two choices—neither favorable.
- **Plot Manipulation** (deus ex machina)—a plot turn unjustified by the situation or characters.

CHARACTER

- **Direct Presentation**—we are told straight out what the characters are like.
- **Indirect Presentation**—we are shown what the characters are like by watching them in action and then making inferences.
- **Flat Character**—a character about which we know little—one-dimensional.
- **Round Character**—a character about which we know a great deal—multi-faceted, more fully developed.
- **Stock Character**—a character who is of a recognizable type and whose actions are predictable.

- **Static Character**—a character that does not change significantly through the action of the story.
- **Developing (Dynamic) Character**—a character that changes significantly through the action of the story.

THEME

- **Theme**—the central insight or unifying generalization about life presented in a story. Not all stories have themes. In addition, a theme is stated as a generalization about experience rather than specific to the story in which it is found.

NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW

- **First Person Narration**—a character is the narrator.
- **Limited Omniscient Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—**one** character’s thoughts are revealed.
- **Omniscient Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—**at least two** characters’ thoughts are revealed.
- **Objective Narration**—the narrator is outside of the story—no character’s thoughts are revealed. Often called “camera eye” or “fly-on-the-wall.”

SYMBOL

- **A symbol**—something that means more than what it is. It is something that represents itself plus something of a different kind. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story but suggests or represents other meanings as well.

IRONY

- **Verbal Irony**—when the opposite of what is said is meant. (Not to be confused with satire).
- **Dramatic Irony**—a contrast between what the character says and what the reader knows to be true.
- **Situational Irony**—when the opposite of what is expected to happen happens.

EASY STEPS TO READING AND UNDERSTANDING A POEM

Reading, understanding, and enjoying poetry is possible for all of us. It only requires that we follow a process. Follow these steps for each poem you study.

FIRST: **SCAN** the poem for difficult words and look these up in a dictionary. Remember, every word in a poem is significant.

SECOND: **READ** the poem two or three times **ALOUD**.

THIRD: **ASK** yourself who is the speaker and what is the occasion. Do not assume the speaker of the poem is the poet. Often this is not the case.

FOURTH: **PARAPHRASE** the poem line-by-line or stanza-by-stanza until you get a meaning that makes sense. Remember, a paraphrase is a translation into common language.

FIFTH: **READ** the poem **ALOUD** a time or two more for new understanding and enjoyment.

A Primer on Poetic Feet

All poems have structure, which can be divided roughly into **rhythm** and **rhyme**.

Just as the music we listen to has rhythm or beat, so, too, does language and, therefore, poetry. The terminology we use to identify certain rhythm patterns is a bit strange but not difficult to understand.

We first start with what is called a “**poetic foot**,” which is usually made of two or three syllables.

Here are the two-syllable feet:

The **iamb** has this beat: $\cup -$ or $\cup /$. This means that the second syllable is accented or stressed, but the first syllable is not. The word “today” is iambic because we stress the “DAY” syllable, but not the “to” syllable.

Here’s a whole line of iambs (Stress syllables written in capital letters):

i WANT to RUN and JUMP and SING/ i WILL not REST for AN-y-THING.

A **trochee** is the opposite of the iamb. It has this rhythm pattern: $- \cup$ or $/ \cup$. Notice that the first syllable is accented or stressed, but the second syllable is not. A good trochaic word is “daily” because the “day” gets the stress, but the “ly” does not.

How’s this for a line of trochees:

TELL me NOT in MOURN-ful NUM-bers

or, to quote Shakespeare . . .

DOU-ble, DOU-ble TOIL and TROU-ble

Now on to the three-syllable poetic feet.

First is the **anapest** with this rhythm pattern: $\cup \cup -$ or $\cup \cup /$.

An example is the word *intervene*. Say it aloud and you’ll hear stress on the last syllable but not the first two (*in-ter-**VE**NE*).

An anapestic line?

i am MAS-ter of ALL i pos-SESS

A bit of irony? The word “anapest” is an example of a dactyl. Go figure.

The opposite of the anapest is the **dactyl**. Far from dinosaur ancestry, this poetic foot has this rhythm pattern: – ∪∪ or / ∪∪.

A good example of a dactyl is *yesterday* because the accent is on the first syllable only (*YES-ter-day*).

A whole line of dactyls is difficult to write, but here’s a start:

TEN-der-ly, TEN-der-ly SPOKE the crazed SHOE salesman

Now on to measuring poetic feet. A long time ago, the word *meter* meant “measure of.”

Penta is Greek for “five.” If we add “meter” to the end of *penta*, we get “pentameter” which means “measure of five.” If we have five iambs in a row, we have “iambic pentameter.”

Back to Shakespeare:

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? (depends on the weather!)

Say the line aloud and try to exaggerate the accents. This is the rhythm pattern you can uncover:

shall I com-PARE thee TO a SUM-mer’s DAY?

Five iambs, right? Thus, hence, ergo *Iambic pentameter*.

Here are other measure words:

dimeter (two feet), trimeter (3), tetrameter (4), pentameter (5), hexameter (6), heptameter (7), octameter (8)

Let’s talk about **rhyme** and **rhyme scheme** for a bit.

Most poems have rhyme. Usually rhyme occurs when poetic lines end with similar sounds, a quality somehow pleasing to our ear. Music and song employ rhyme most of the time. Take, for example, these lines from a Johnny Rivers song:

*People say I’m the life of the party
Because I tell a joke or two.
Although I may be laughin’ loud and hardy,
Deep inside I’m blue.*

Check out the end rhyme. We have *party* rhyming with *hardy* as well as *two* rhyming with *blue*.

We mark the rhyme scheme of a poem by using the alphabet. The first line's ending sound is given the letter "A." Any similar ending sounds in that poem also are given the letter "A." The next new end-of-the-line sound is given the letter "B," the next "C," and so on.

Johnny Rivers' lines would have the **rhyme scheme** of *A,B,A,B*. See?

Try to determine the rhyme scheme of the following:

*In literature class we toss and turn
To understand the great unknown
Throughout the class, some seeds are sown
That grow to plants that we can learn.*

*Quizzes come and quizzes go
But the lectures just go on and on
We watch the clock and wait till dawn
Or at least until we think it's so.*

Not great poetry but definitely the rhyme scheme of *A,B,B,A C,D,D,C*.

How about this one?

*Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!*

Did you get *A, A, B, B*?

Let's put it all together:

Using what we've learned, determine the rhyme scheme and rhythm pattern of the following Robert Frost poem:

Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening

*Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.*

*My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.*

*He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sounds the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.*

*The woods are lovely dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

SONNETS MADE EASY

A **sonnet** is a poem whose structure and content meet specific standards. Its success relies on exactness and perfection of expression. It is an art form that truly challenges a poet's artistry and skill.

Structure:

In general, a sonnet is a fourteen-line poem where each line is written in a particular musical rhythm called **iambic pentameter**. In addition, these fourteen lines have to conform to a specific rhyme scheme.

Don't be confused or put off by the term **iambic pentameter**. An iamb is simply a two-syllable unit of sound where the first syllable is unaccented and the second is accented. Words like *today*, *forget*, and *garage* are iambs. If you say these words aloud, you will notice that you accent the second syllable more strongly than the first.

Pentameter means *measure* (meter) of *five* (penta). So iambic pentameter simply means five iambs to each line. Check this line out: "Today I will forget to weep for you" Can you identify the five iambs?

On to rhyme scheme: Rhyme scheme simply means the pattern made by the ending sounds of each line.

Consider this:

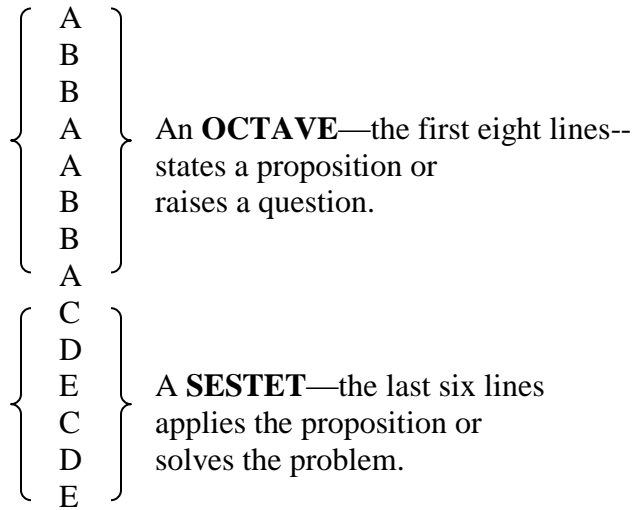
*Please listen to my voice above them all,
So you, my friend, be spared the pain and grief
Of failing, falling hard against that wall
Which makes a time of happiness so brief.*

We mark the rhyme scheme of a poem by using the alphabet. The first line's ending sound is given the letter "A." Any similar ending sounds in that poem also are given the letter "A." The next new end-of-the-line sound is given the letter "B," the next "C," and so on.

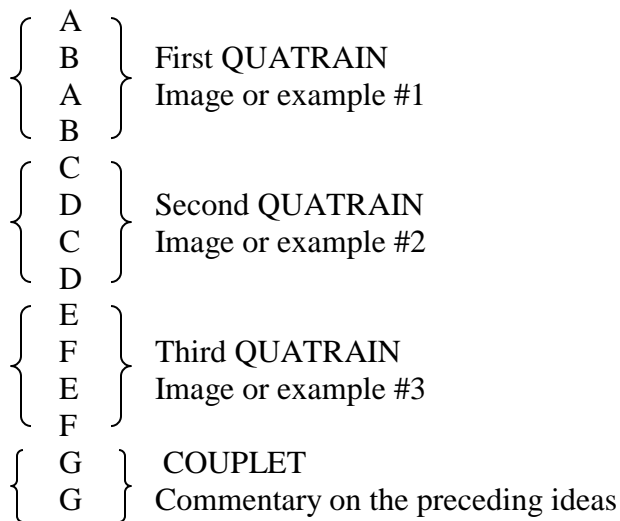
The four lines above have the rhyme scheme **A,B,A,B**. See?

Since there are two major types of sonnets—the *Petrarchan* (or *Italian*) and *Shakespearean* (or *English* or *Elizabethan*)—there are two major rhyme schemes.

Though rhyme scheme variations exist (particularly in the last six lines (**the sestet**), the Petrarchan (or Italian) sonnet rhyme scheme usually is



A *Shakespearean* (or English or Elizabethan) sonnet is different:



Now the hard part—a sonnet must have meaning, too. A Petrarchan sonnet presents a situation or premise in the first eight lines (the octave) and provides some sort of resolution or statement about the situation in the final six lines (the sestet).

The Shakespearean sonnet, in contrast, presents three four-line (a quatrain) examples or premises, with the couplet at the end providing some sort of closure.

Examples? For a Petrarchan sonnet, how about this masterpiece:

Fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme of abbaabbacdecde and a structured message breaking at the end of the eighth line.

My college life has left me without sleep.
I study every night locked in my room.
The walls at times feel almost like a tomb;
The loneliness doth cause my soul to weep.
Great tears of sadness flow from eyes that keep
Returning to the text where answers loom,
Enshrouded in a chapter like a womb,
My eyes throughout the words do futilely creep.
I must a Big Mac eat or I will die
Of hunger gnawing at my fragile mind
That cannot read another word of this.
I also want a piece of apple pie
That Ronald has so patiently refined.
I must these eat or I will be a mess.

First note the rhyme scheme—it is one kind of Petrarchan sonnet rhyme scheme (abbaabbacdecde). Next note how the thought changes direction after the eighth line. The first eight lines (the octave) develop the situation; the final six lines (the sestet) provide resolution.

Now on to a Shakespearean sonnet. Let's start with the same idea:

Fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme of ababcdcdefefgg and a structured message consisting of three four-line premises and a two-line (a couplet) resolution.

My college life has left me without sleep.
I study every night locked in my room.
The loneliness doth cause my soul to weep,
The walls at times feel almost like a tomb.

My social life has vanished in the haze
That drifts about me when I think of love,
And hours doeth creep by in a blurry daze
With hope of romance stolen from above.
My health is really starting to erode.
I cannot walk and talk 'cause I must pant
And wheeze because my bod cannot the load
Endure; and as to run, well I just can't.
So from the doctor I must seek some help.
I bet he will suggest I eat some kelp.

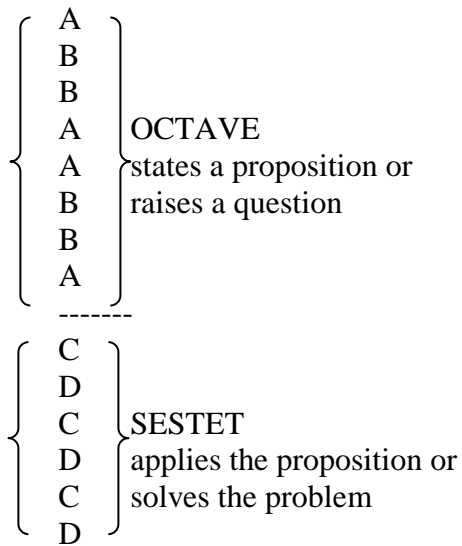
A classic? Time will tell, but while we wait, note the structure of the thought. The first, second, and third four-line groups (quatrains) provide examples of the situation. The final two lines, the couplet, provide closure.

More on Petrarchan and Shakespearean Sonnets

The two major types of sonnets are Petrarchan (or Italian) and Shakespearean (or English or Elizabethan).

Both types have fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme scheme.

Petrarchan (or Italian)



Nature

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave her broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more;
So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scare knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

--Longfellow

Shakespearean (or English or Elizabethan)

{ A }
 { B } First QUATRAIN
 { A } Image or example #1
 { B }

{ C }
 { D } Second QUATRAIN
 { C } Image or example #2
 { D }

{ E }
 { F } Third QUATRAIN
 { E } Image or example #3
 { F }

{ G } COUPLET
 { G } Commentary on the preceding ideas

That Time of Year

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon these boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

--William Shakespeare