

UNDERSTANDING

COUPLETS



WHAT IS COUPLET IN POETRY?

- A couplet is two lines of verse that follow one another and are connected by rhythm and rhyme. They make a poem pop with their lyrical language and pacing.
- A couplet is a pair of consecutive lines of poetry that create a complete thought or idea. The lines often have similar syllabic patterns, called a meter.



WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF COUPLETS IN POETRY?

1. Heroic couplet
2. Split couplet
3. Open couplet
4. Closed couplet
5. Chinese couplet
6. Qasida



HEROIC COUPLET

This is the most common couplet used in English poetry. Heroic couplets follow an iambic pentameter — a rhythm that has a five two-syllable beat with emphasis placed on the second syllable.



Example:

From Richard Steere's "On a Sea-Storm Nigh the Coast"

Wave after wave in hills each other crowds,
As if the deeps resolved to storm the clouds.

SPLIT COUPLET

Split couplets have asymmetrical rhythms. The first line is iambic pentameter—five beats. The next line is iambic dimeter—two beats.

Example:
From Richard Steere's,
"On a Sea-Storm Nigh the Coast"

The weighty seas are rowled from the deeps
In mighty heaps,
And from the rocks' foundations do arise
To kiss the skies.



OPEN COUPLET

A couplet that flows from the first line to the second line as one continuous sentence is an open couplet. They are also referred to as run-on couplets.



Example:

From Robert Frost's "The Tuft of Flowers"

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen,
Before I came to view the levelled scene

CLOSED COUPLET

A couplet that has two separate sentences is a closed couplet. They are also called formal couplets.



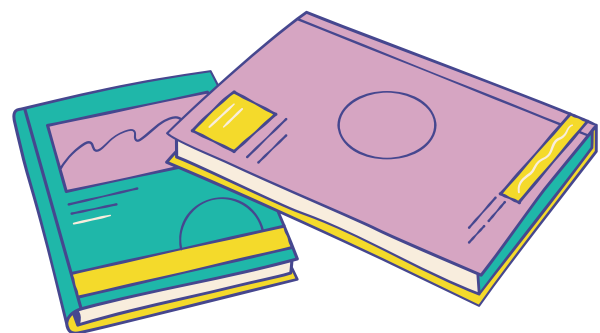
Example:

From “Sonnet 18” by William Shakespeare

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

CHINESE COUPLET

Couplets have been used in Chinese poetry for two thousand years. In Chinese poetry, couplets are written as individual poems. The couplet poems are hung around doorways on special occasions like New Year's Day, birthdays, and weddings, with wishes for a prosperous life.



QASIDA

A qasida is an Arabic poem that is a series of couplets. There can be dozens of couplets in a qasida.

