

# POETIC FORMS | Quatrain (kwah - trayn)

## WHAT?

A quatrain is a type of stanza, or a complete poem, consisting of four lines.

There are examples of quatrains in many eras and cultures, from Ancient Greece and China to Renaissance England and Iran to contemporary literature.

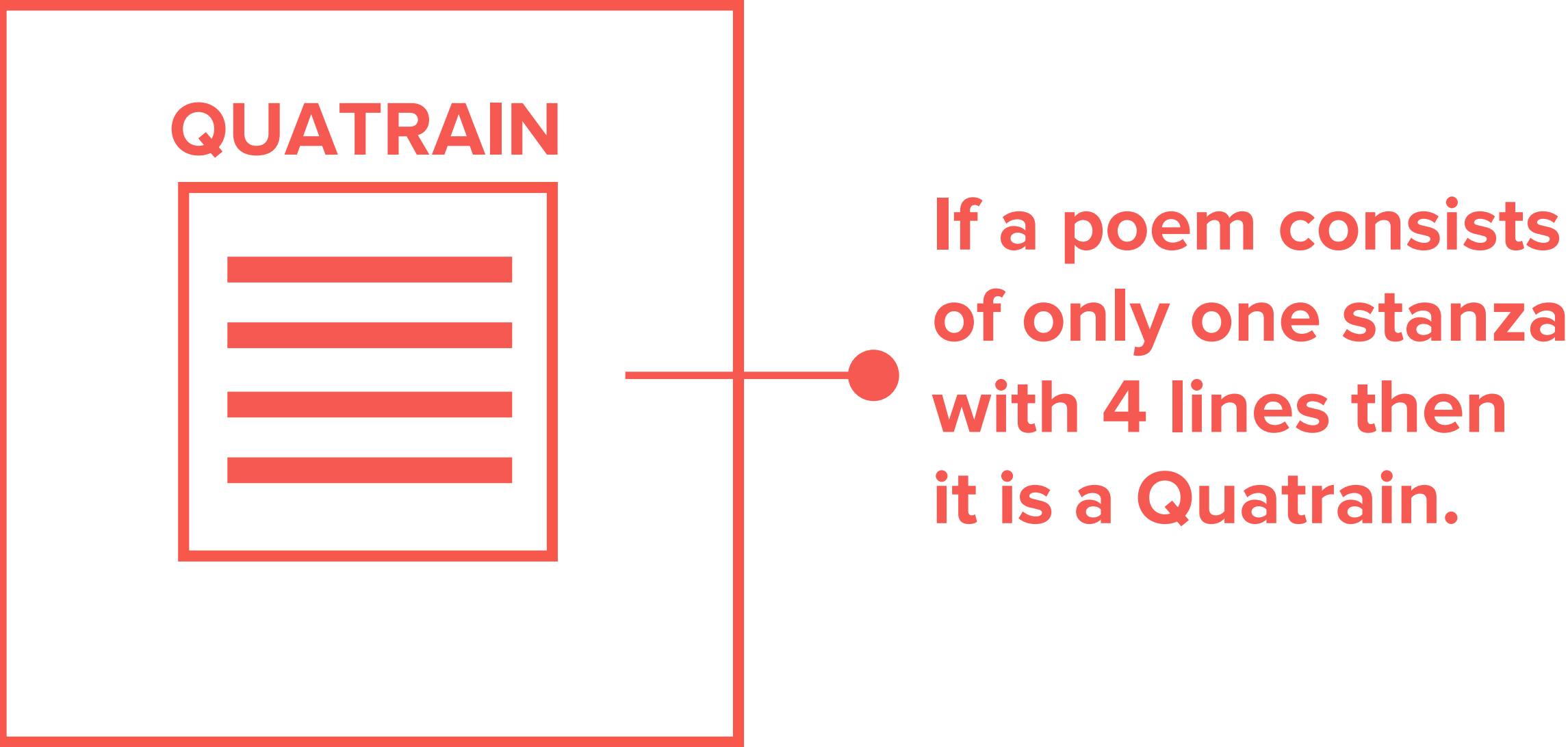
Though there are quatrain examples from around the world, the word quatrain that we use in English comes from French word for four, quatre. This, in turn, comes from Latin quattuor.

## TYPES OF QUATRAINS

	TYPE	METER	RHYME SCHEME
1	<b>Decasyllabic quatrain</b> (elegiac stanza or heroic stanza)	<b>iambic pentameter</b> (Each line has 10 syllables made up of 5 iambs)	ABAB or AABB
2	<b>Common meter</b> (used frequently in ballads and hymns)	Alternate between <b>iambic tetrameter</b> (8 syllables made of 4 iambs) and <b>iambic trimeter</b> (6 syllables made of 3 iambs)	Varies
3	<b>Ruba’i</b> (form of Persian poetry)	– – u u – u – u – – u u – (“–“ represents a long syllable, and "u" a short one.)	AABA or AAAA
4	<b>Envelope stanza</b>	iambic tetrameter	ABBA
5	<b>Shayari</b> (form of Urdu/persian poetry)	Monorhymed	AAAA
6	<b>Shichigon-zekku</b> (Japanese) or <b>Qiyān jueju</b> (Chinese)	7 characters in each line	AAAA
7	<b>Italian quatrain</b>	iambic Pentameter	ABBA

Quatrains which are complete 4 line poems

## POEM



A quatrain can be a subset of a poem or the entire poem itself. Poems can consist of multiple quatrains.

## STRUCTURE AND RULES

- A quatrain has exactly 4 lines.
- Lines in a quatrain can be any length.
- They can follow any meter.
- There is usually a regular rhythm to the lines.
- They usually use some form of rhyme scheme.

## CREATING YOUR OWN QUATRAIN

### STEP 1

Select a theme.  
(e.g. summer, holiday, food etc.)

### STEP 2

Select one of the following rhyme schemes.  
ABAB, AAAA, AABB, ABBA

### STEP 3

Write down the rhyming words in the last block based on the selected rhyme scheme.

### STEP 4

Roll the dice. Multiply this number by 2. This indicates the number of syllables in each line. (e.g. 4 means there will be 8 syllables in each line)

### STEP 5

Get creative!

### BONUS STEP

Check the kind of quatrain you have created. You can also create multiple quatrains to create a bigger poem.

## EXAMPLE

Where you'll find our spirit.  
That place that's made of thirds.  
No light, no sound, no merit.  
Destination between the words.

— — — — —

**iambic trimeter**  
(6 syllables made of 3 iambs)

4 lines

Rhyme scheme

## EXAMPLE BY ME

When the dying midnight sun  
Illuminates the night sky  
The seeker longs for one,  
For eternity to stop by

A  
B  
A  
B

## EXAMPLE OF CREATING THE QUATRAIN

### STEP 1

Theme : Celestial objects

### STEP 2

Rhyme scheme : ABAB

### STEP 3

Rhyming words : (sun & one) - A;  
(sky & by) - B

### STEP 4

Number on dice : 3  
Number of syllables in the poem : 6

### STEP 5

Created the poem as shown in the example above.

### BONUS STEP

Follows the iambic trimeter

— — — — —

SUN

— — — — —

SKY

— — — — —

ONE

— — — — —

BY