

Verse

Definition of Verse

The literary device verse denotes a single line of poetry. The term can also be used to refer to a [stanza](#) or other parts of poetry.

Generally, the device is stated to encompass three possible meanings, namely a line of metrical writing, a stanza, or a piece written in [meter](#). It is important to note here that the term “verse” is often incorrectly used for referring to “poetry” in order to differentiate it from [prose](#).

Types of Verse

There are generally two types of verse, namely [free verse](#) and [blank verse](#).

Free Verse

A free verse poem has no set meter; that is to say there is no rhyming scheme present, and the poem doesn’t follow a set pattern. For some poets this characteristic serves as a handy tool for the purpose of camouflaging their fluctuation of thoughts, whereas others think that it affects the quality of work being presented.

Example #1 Free Verse

After the Sea-Ship (By Walt Whitman)

“After the Sea-Ship—after the whistling winds;
After the white-gray sails, taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves, hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship:
Waves of the ocean, bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves—liquid, uneven, emulous waves,

Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves,
Where the great Vessel, sailing and tacking, displaced the
surface...”

As can be seen from the stanza quoted above, there is an absence of rhyming effect and structure in each verse.

Example #2 Free Verse

Fog (By Carl Sandburg)

“The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.”

Here, it can be observed that there is no form or [rhyme](#) scheme present in the verse.

Blank Verse

There is no rhyming effect present in a blank verse poem. However, it has an iambic [pentameter](#). It is usually employed for presenting passionate events, and to create an impact on the reader. Shakespeare was an ardent user of blank verse.

Example #1 Blank Verse

Furball Friend (Author Unknown)

“Sweet pet by day, hunter by night. She sleeps,
she eats, she plays. My feet, caught in white paws.
She’s up the fence, watching her prey – a bird.
Poor thing, better run quick, ’cause watch, she’ll pounce!
She’ll sweetly beg for fuss, but don’t be fooled.

She'll spit and hiss – and oh – surprise! A mouse.
He's dead. A gift. Retracts her claws. Miaow!
Figure of eight between my legs, looks up
at me and purrs. The sound pulls my heartstrings.
Her big blue eyes like dinner plates – so cute.
Cunning she is, she knows I can't resist.
Curling up tight, we sleep entwined as one.
Despite her quirks, I would not change a claw
of her. Cheeky Sammy: my snow-white queen.”

The poem quoted above depicts the use of blank verse throughout. Here, it is important to note that there is no rhyming scheme present. Also, it can be seen that there is a presence of [iambic pentameter](#) throughout the verses.

Short Examples of Verse

The difference between ambience and silence,
When nature speaks, you are silent.
(Blank Verse)
Words limit the silence
Upsetting the peace
Of infinite tranquility...
(Blank Verse)
Flower in a faraway valley,
Wind carries it away as butterflies move around.
(Blank Verse)
A ship sailor
from the West
lands on the land
between the mountains and the seas.
(Blank Verse)
Cold cold,
Winter sticks to the trees and the seas.
(Free Verse)
Just off the road to city,
Twilight bounds swiftly froth on the plants.
(Free Verse)
What thought I'd think tonight, for I walk down the street
Under thick trees with a self-conscious mind looking at full moon.
(Free Verse)

The sea is silent to-day,
The tides are high, the moon sparks
Upon the curved stairs; on the coast
The light shines and goes; the cliffs stand,
Gleaming and huge, out on a tranquil shore.

(Free Verse)

A land filled with ice
Covered by the arches of sky,
Hurls into eternity.

(Free Verse)

Many stars tonight
And their memory.
Yet how much room is there for quiet clouds?

(Free Verse)

Forgetfulness is a melody
That frees itself from measure and beat, wanders.

(Free Verse)

Above the ruffles of surf
The sun sparkles on the waves,
And the waves carry thunder on the shore.

(Free Verse)

Standing out vibrantly in the garden
A dream flower blossoms.

(Free Verse)

Beneath the earthly and cosmos sky,
Floral butterfly ascends towards showers.

(Free Verse)

I entered the forest for a walk,
I cross by many trees with overhead shades
With small beam of light straining through them.

(Free verse)

Examples of Verse in Literature

Example #1: *Fairies and Fusiliers* (By Robert Graves)

"I now delight
In spite
Of the might
And the right
Of classic tradition,

And reciting
Straight ahead,
Without let or omission...
Because, I've said,
My rhymes no longer shall stand arrayed
No! No!
My rhymes must go
Twinkling, frosty,
Will-o'-the-wisp-like, misty..."

This is an excellent example of a free verse poem, as it's free from artificial expression of poetry. Without any poetic restraints, it gives a natural flow of reading experience.

Example #2: *Feelings, Now* (By Katherine Foreman)

"Some kind of attraction that is neither
Animal, vegetable, nor mineral, a power not
Solar, fusion, or magnetic...
And find myself sitting there."

This is another instance of free verse poetry that does not follow any rules, nor any [rhyme scheme](#). However, it still gives an artistic and creative expression.

Example #3: *Thanatopsis* (By William Cullen Bryant)

"To him who in the love of Nature holds
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a [voice](#) of gladness, and a smile..."

The above mentioned poem presents an example of blank verse that adds [cadence](#) and a subtle [rhythm](#), mimicking the pattern of the language that is audible in nature.

“Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature’s patient, sleepless Eremite,...”

This is an example of a rhymed verse poem that has used an ABAB rhyme scheme, which means the first and third, and the second and fourth lines rhyme with one another.

Example #5 *Daffodils* (By William Wordsworth)

“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.”

The above quoted stanza from William Wordsworth’s poem *Daffodils* presents to the reader various examples of verse. It can be noted here that the use of the tool of verse adds a scenic element to the structure of poetry.

Function of Verse

The use of verse in a piece of writing has a pleasing effect on the reader’s mind. It is usually employed in poetry writing. The poets make use of the tool of verse in order to provide their poetry with a desired structure. It serves as an avenue through which writers project their ideas in the form of a composition having rhyme, rhythm, and deeper meanings. The device provides the writer with a framework for poetry writing.