

Blank Verse

Definition of Blank Verse

Blank [verse](#) is a literary device defined as un-rhyming verse written in iambic [pentameter](#). In poetry and [prose](#), it has a consistent [meter](#) with 10 syllables in each line (pentameter); where, unstressed syllables are followed by stressed ones, five of which are stressed but do not [rhyme](#). It is also known as “un-rhymed [iambic pentameter](#).”

Features of Blank Verse

Blank verse poetry has no fixed number of lines.

It has a conventional meter that is used for verse [drama](#) and long [narrative](#) poems.

It is often used in descriptive and reflective poems and dramatic monologues — the poems in which a single [character](#) delivers his thoughts in the form of a speech.

Blank verse can be composed in any kind of meter, such as iamb, trochee, [spondee](#), and [dactyl](#).

Types of Blank Verse Poetry

Iamb pentameter blank verse (unstressed/stressed syllables)

Trochee blank verse (stressed/unstressed syllables)

[Anapest](#) blank verse (unstressed/unstressed/stressed syllables)

Dactyl blank verse (stressed/unstressed/unstressed syllables)

Short Examples of Blank Verse

The dreams are clues that tell us take chances.

The source of faith in happiness and

Daylight changes, and it is time to take

The night frost drips silently from the roof

Human cadences always searching for this

The moon takes its bath in lovely silver dust.

The buds luminous in white sway happily,
and sparkling valleys darkened by angst.
Only if mountains might give me a push.
Only if sunrise lights could converse hope.
Listen to your heart while using your wisdom
A valuable treasure you have is your ta
Beholding red and golden sparkles of sunlight
Sweet-sparks of light glowing before the eyes.
Within the stars your dreams can be fulfilled,
now you can fly the unlimited starlight
If passports are passwords to the heaven above,
then we shall read the riddle
If there is a twelfth player, who does not play,
He only leaves the field when free.
Birds chirp in the orchard of the cherry and try to sing a little later.
Enemies reached at the inimical stage of enmity.

Examples of Blank Verse from Literature

The Earl of Surrey introduced blank verse in English literature in 1540. Milton, Shakespeare, Marlowe, John Donne, John Keats, and many other poets and dramatists have used this device in their works. Have a look at some examples of blank verse:

Example #1: *Mending Walls* (By Robert Frost)

Something there **is** that **doesn't** love a **wall**.
That **sends** the **frozen-ground-swell** **under it**,
And **spills** the **upper boulders** **in** the **sun**;

This poem has no proper [rhyme scheme](#). However, there is consistent meter in 10 syllables of each line. It is following the iambic pentameter pattern with five feet in each line. Only the first line is written in trochee pattern. All the stressed syllables are marked in bold.

Example #2: *Hamlet* (By William Shakespeare)

But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,

That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must. ...

Hamlet gives us a perfect example of a typical blank verse, written in iambic pentameter. Shakespeare employed the deliberate effort to use the syllables in a particular way. He brought variation by using caesuras (pause) in the middle of the line, as in the third line. Shakespeare has other literary pieces that are also good sources of blank verse examples.

Example #3: *Dr. Faustus* (By Christopher Marlowe)

You stars that reign'd at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
Into entrails of yon labouring clouds, ...
So that my soul may but ascend to Heaven ...

Marlowe developed this potential in the late 16th century. Marlowe was the first author who exploited the potential of blank verse for writing a powerful speech, as given here. The pattern utilized here is iambic pentameter.

Example #4: *Ulysses* (By Alfred Lord Tennyson)

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race ...
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

Just look at the above example in which the first line is written in regular pentameter. However, there is a little variation in the stressed pattern in the following lines that is again revived in the last two lines, and does not follow any rhyme scheme.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death ...

William Shakespeare wrote verses in iambic pentameter pattern, without rhyme. Macbeth is a good example of blank verse. Many speeches in this play are written in the form of blank verse.

Example #6: *Thanatopsis* (By William Cullen Bryant)

But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores.
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God...

Coleridge has used iambic pentameter – ten syllables, with five stressed syllables in this example. Though there is no rhyme scheme, readers can feel the rhythm of a real speech due to proper use of meter in this blank verse.

Example #7: *Frost at Midnight* (By Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

To him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language; for his gayer hours
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile.

This blank verse does not have any rhyme scheme, but it brings a slight rhythm and cadence that mimics a pattern readers could hear and feel like

Example #8: *Tintern Abbey* (By William Wordsworth)

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! And again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. – Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs ...
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose ...

This example does not follow any rhyme scheme, but it is written in blank verse with iambic pentameter patterns of unaccented and accented syllables.

Example #9: *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison* (By S.T. Coleridge)

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
had dimmed mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile...
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined ...

Coleridge has jotted down these lines as a spontaneous feel while sitting in his garden. He has written it in a blank verse without any rhyme scheme, yet it follows iambic pentameter.

Function of Blank Verse

Originating from Latin and Greek sources, blank verse is widely employed as a vehicle in English dramatic poetry and prose, to create specific grandeur. Blank verse has similarity to normal speech but it is written in a variety of patterns, which bring interruptions such as pauses. Therefore,

effect. Hence, it tends to capture the attention of the readers and the listeners, which is its primary objective.