

# Free Verse

## Definition of Free Verse

Free [verse](#) is a literary device that can be defined as poetry that is free from limitations of regular [meter](#) or [rhythm](#), and does not [rhyme](#) with fixed forms. Such poems are without rhythm and rhyme schemes, do not follow regular [rhyme scheme](#) rules, yet still provide artistic expression. In this way, the poet can give his own shape to a poem however he or she desires. However, it still allows poets to use [alliteration](#), rhyme, cadences, and rhythms to get the effects that they consider are suitable for the piece.

## Features of Free Verse

Free verse poems have no regular meter or rhythm. They do not follow a proper rhyme scheme; these poems do not have any set rules. This type of poem is based on normal pauses and natural rhythmical phrases, as compared to the artificial constraints of normal poetry. It is also called *vers libre*, which is a French word meaning “free verse.”

## Examples of Free Verse in Literature

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### Example #1: *A Noiseless Patient Spider* (By Walt Whitman)

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“A noiseless patient spider,  
I mark’d where on a little promontory it stood isolated,  
Mark’d how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,  
It launch’d forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,  
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you O my soul where you stand,  
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space...

Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor  
hold,  
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.”

If you are looking for free verse examples, then Walt Whitman is your guy. He is known as the father of free verse English poetry. In this poem, only a simple [metaphor](#) is used to mesmerize readers without employing regular rhyme scheme or rhythm. We can see normal pauses in the poem unlike the typical limitations of metrical feet.

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### **Example #2: *Soonest Mended* (By John Ashbury)**

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“Barely tolerated, living on the margin  
In our technological society, we were always having to be rescued  
On the brink of destruction, like heroines in *Orlando Furioso*  
Before it was time to start all over again.  
There would be thunder in the bushes, a rustling of coils...  
The whole thing might not, in the end, be the only solution...  
Came plowing down the course, just to make sure everything was  
O.K. ...  
About how to receive this latest piece of information.”

This is one of the best examples of free verse poetry. In this poem, there is no regular rhyme scheme or rhythm. It is without poetic constraints, but has a flow that gives it a natural touch.

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### **Example #3: *Come Slowly, Eden* (By Emily Dickinson)**

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“Come slowly, Eden  
Lips unused to thee.  
Bashful, sip thy jasmines,  
As the fainting bee,  
Reaching late his flower,  
Round her chamber hums,  
Counts his nectars—alights,

Emily Dickinson is famous as the mother of American English free verse. This poem does not have consistent metrical patterns, musical patterns, or rhyme. Rather, following the rhythm of natural speech, it gives an artistic expression to the ideas it contains.

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#### **Example #4: *The Garden* (By Ezra Pound)**

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“Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall  
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens,  
And she is dying piece-meal  
of a sort of emotional anemia.

And round about there is a rabble  
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.  
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.  
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive...  
will commit that indiscretion.”

Ezra Pound is also renowned for writing free verse poetry. He has created this modern free verse poem with musical quality. There are stressed and unstressed patterns, but they are created in a very clever way. It is not following a regular rhyme scheme, but we can see alliteration in words such as “like,” “loose,” “round rabble,” “exquisite,” and “excessive.”

### **Function of Free Verse**

Free verse is commonly used in contemporary poetry. Some poets have taken this technique as a freedom from rhythm and rhyme, because it changes people’s minds whimsically. Therefore, free verse is also called *vers libre*.

The best thing about free verse is that poets can imagine the forms of any sound through intonations instead of meters. Free verse gives a greater freedom for choosing words, and conveying their meanings to the [audience](#). Since it depends upon patterned elements like sounds, phrases, sentences, and words, it is free of artificiality of a typical poetic expression.

