

# Octave

## Definition of Octave

Octave has been derived from the Latin word *octāva*, which means “eighth part.” It is a [verse](#) form that contains eight lines, which usually appear in an iambic [pentameter](#). In simple words, it can be any [stanza](#) in a poem that has eight lines and follows a rhymed or unrhymed [meter](#).

## Types of Octave

### Canzonetta

Each stanza of this verse form follows [rhyme](#) scheme of a, b, a, b, c, d, c, D. or a, b, a, b, c, b, c, B. the last line may repeat any meter.

### Cavatina

It appears in quatrains with uneven couplets and ends with a declamatory rhyming [couplet](#). It follows alternating [iambic pentameter](#) and iambic dimeter lines. The [rhyme scheme](#) is: xaxa xbxb xcxc, where x is unrhymed.

### Ottava Rima

This form of octave contains 8 lines, which usually appear in iambic pentameter pattern. Each stanza contains three alternate rhyming lines with one double rhyme. It follows rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b-a-b-c-c.

### Sicilian Octave

This verse form contains eight lines with 11 syllables, called hendecasyllable in Italian. It follows the rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b-a-b-a-b.

### Italian or Petrarchan Octave

Initially, it did not follow any set rhyming patten; however, later on it followed iambic pentameter with rhyme scheme of a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a.

### Hymnal and Common Octave

It follows rhyming pattern a-b-c-b-a-b-c-b. The first one uses iambic tetrameter and the second one uses iambic [trimeter](#).

### Octave

Sometimes it is in the form of free or [blank verse](#) or unusual pattern.

However, the most common rhyming pattern for this verse form is a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a.

### **Huitain**

Huitain consists of 8 or 10 syllables with each line having rhyming pattern of a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c or a-b-a-b-a-c-a-c

### **Sicilian Octave**

It does not have a set form, but commonly follows rhyming pattern of a-b-a-b-a-b-a-b.

### **Strambotto Toscano**

It follows rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b-a-b-c-c. Each line contains 11 syllables.

### **Strambotto Siciliano**

It uses a rhyming pattern a-b-a-b-a-b-a-b. There are 11 syllables in each line.

### **Strambotto Romagnuolo**

It uses rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b-c-c-d-d with 11 syllables in each line.

### **Unwreathed Octave**

It also uses double rhymes with external rhyme as b-a-b-d-c-d-c and [Internal rhyme](#) a-b-a-c-d-c-x. There is no set meter.

### **Wreathed Octave**

It also has double rhymes with external rhyme as a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d and internal rhyme follows the pattern of x-a-b-a-d-c-d-c.

## **Examples of Octave in Literature**

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### **Example #1: *The New Colossus* (By Emma Lazarus)**

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‘Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame...  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

This is an example of Petrarchan Octave, which follows the rhyme scheme of a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a. It is the first part of Petrarchan or Italian [sonnet](#).

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### **Example #2: *Of the Gentle Heart* (by Guido Guinicelli)**

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Within the gentle heart [Love](#) shelters him  
As birds within the green shade of the grove.  
Before the gentle heart, in nature's scheme,  
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love...  
And Love has his effect in gentleness.

This stanza presents an example of Canzonetta, a verse form that uses rhyming pattern of a, b, a, b, c, d, c, D.

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### **Example #3: *Filiocola* (by Giovanni Boccaccio)**

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Qui, d'Atropos il colpo ricevuto,  
giace di Roma Giulia Topazia,  
dell'alto sangue di Cesare arguto  
discesa, bella e piena d'ogni grazia...  
Dio biasimar che fè sí gran fallazia.

Boccaccio has used this 8-line verse Sicilian Octave in his earlier poem *Filiocola*. This form follows rhyme scheme of a-b-a-b-a-b-a-b.

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### **Example #4: *Sonnet 16* (by John Milton)**

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When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent...  
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"  
I fondly [ask](#). But Patience, to prevent...

This is an example of octave, which is the first part of Italian sonnet that ends with a contrasting [sestet](#). It commonly uses a metrical pattern of iambic pentameter, 5 iambs in each line, which is shown as underlined in the second last line.

### **Function of Octave**

An octave serves as a musical interval or plays the role of a short distance

similar letter names. In poetry, it represents eight lines of a poem, often the first part of a sonnet, where it poses questions, while the second part, sestet, answers them. To put it in simple words, an octave provides a [dilemma](#) or a problem in the first part, which, sestet, as the second part resolves.