An Overview of Shakespeare and Iambic pentameter
William Shakespeare

- Playwright
  - Word wizard
- 1564-1616
- Wrote many plays in free verse and blank verse

Can't find the words he's looking for

INVENTS THEM.
Every TIME we TALK, we STRING together ACCented and UNACCented SYLLables without even THINKing about it.
STRESSED syllable

UNstressed syllable
She stuck out her tongue and it stayed there — it froze!

She screamed when she noticed her mouth wouldn’t close.
Understanding Shakespeare’s Language: poetry Terms

- **Meter**: basic rhythmic structure of a verse or lines in verse
- **Feet**: smallest repeating rhythmic units
- **Iamb**: a foot of two syllables with an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable
- **Iambic pentameter**: ???
Shakespeare Wrote Many of His Plays...

- In blank verse
  - Blank verse is poetry written in regular metrical but unrhymed lines
  - Almost always iambic pentameters
- In a manner that might switch between blank verse and free verse
  - Free verse is unmetered poetry
Iambic pentameter: Breaking It Down

• Consists of five (PENTameter) repeated iambs (IAMBic)

• An iamb is:
  • A unit of two syllables
  • First syllables is unstressed
  • Second syllable is stressed

Unstressed  Stressed

Ü /
Iambic Pentameter: Breaking It Down

- A line of iambic pentameter is a line with ten beats.
- An "iamb" is two beats, or one "foot."
- "Penta" is five (line has five "feet").
- "Meter" is the rhythm of the poem.
- A "foot" is made of an unstressed syllable and a stressed syllable (in that order).
Iambic pentameter: Emphasis

- This is where the pronunciation section of your vocabulary quizzes comes in handy!

**PRONUNCIATION**

Directions: For each of the following words, circle the accentuated syllable.

**EX** → fore (stall)

- Remember EMphasis!
- I AM I AM I AM I AM I AM I AM
- Practice saying some sentences that begin with “I AM” in a weak-STRONG pattern:
  - shall I comPARE thee TO a SUMmer’s DAY?

1 2 3 4 5

Shall I | com PARE | thee TO | a SUM | mer’s DAY?
Iambic pentameter: Why?

- What does iambic pentameter sound like?

Here is the rhythm:
da DUM | da DUM | da DUM | da DUM | da DUM

- Shakespeare loved the beauty of language
- He spoke straight to the hearts of men
Hey girl, I heard you like iambic pentameter.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
The Hokey Pokey

Shakespearean Style

O proud left foot, that ventures quick within
Then soon upon a backward journey lithe.
Anon, once more the gesture, then begin;
Command sinistral pedestal to writhe.
Commence thou then the fervid Hokey-Poke.
A mad gyration, hips in wanton swirl.
To spin! A wilde release from heaven's yoke.
Blessed dervish! Surely canst go, girl.
The Hoke, the poke--banish now thy doubt
Verily, I say, 'tis what it is all about.
Poetry Aerobics: Iambic Pentameter

- “I am a pirate with a wooden leg.”
- To really feel the iambic rhythm, I need a volunteer!
- DO NOT be noisy! (They hear the reverberations downstairs.)
- Drag peg legs on the unstressed syllables and step strongly on the stressed syllables.
Poetry Aerobics: Iambic pentameter

- "I am a pirate with a wooden leg."
- To really feel the iambic rhythm, STAND UP
- Drag peg legs on the unstressed syllables and step strongly on the stressed syllables
Iambic pentameter Worksheet

- Work on your iambic pentameter worksheet individually.
The Shakespearean sonnet is a lyrical poem that consists of 14 lines of iambic pentameter. It is a short poem with a single speaker who expresses some thought and feeling about a subject.

The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into three quatrains of a rhyme scheme of abab, cdcd, efef and a rhyming couplet, gg.

Many of the Shakespearean sonnets are divided into the octave/sestet structure that was characteristic of the earlier Petrachan sonnet. Most of Shakespeare’s 154 sonnets were written between 1594 and 1597.
More Poetry Terms...

- **Rhythm**: the sound patterns in poetry produced in metered verse by repeating various patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables
- **Rhyme**: the regular return of sounds in final words of lines
- **Assonance**: the repetition of vowel sounds in poetry
- **Consonance**: the repetition of consonant sounds in poetry
- **Alliteration**: the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more words in a line of poetry
- **Meter**: the rhythmic pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry. The metrical foot consists of a number of accented and unaccented syllables
Shakespeare's Sonnet 18

- Paraphrase EACH line with your shoulder partner.
- Please annotate for other devices and analyses on your poems.
- TPCASTT this poem
Shakespeare's Sonnet 18: Paraphrase

SONNET 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.
Shakespeare's Sonnet 18: Paraphrase

SONNET 18  PARAPHRASE

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Shall I compare you to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate: You are more lovely and more constant:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, Rough winds shake the beloved buds of May

And summer's lease hath all too short a date: And summer is far too short:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, At times the sun is too hot,

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; Or often goes behind the clouds;

And every fair from fair sometime declines, And everything beautiful sometime will lose its beauty,

By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd; By misfortune or by nature's planned out course.

But thy eternal summer shall not fade But your youth shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest; Nor will you lose the beauty that you possess;

Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade, Nor will death claim you for his own,

When in eternal lines to time thou growest: Because in my eternal verse you will live forever.

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long as there are people on this earth,

So long lives this and this gives life to thee. So long will this poem live on, making you immortal.
Shakespeare's Sonnet 18: Paraphrase (An exercise in reading comprehension)

O000H Baby I think I shall compare you to a summer day
But, you know, you’re prettier and even better, even calm
Because sometimes it gets windy and the buds on the trees get shaken off
And sometimes summer doesn’t last very long
Sometimes it’s too hot
And everything gorgeous loses its looks
By getting hit by a truck Or just because everyone and everything gets old and ugly and shabby
BUT (and here’s the turn) you’re going to keep your looks for ever
Your beauty will last for ever
I’m going to make sure that you never lose your good looks
And that nasty old Death can never brag about owning you
Because I shall write this poem about you
As long as men can breathe (are you breathing?)
As long as men can see (are you looking at this poem?)
Then this poem lives, and it gives life and memory to your beauty.
Shakespeare's Sonnet 18: Paraphrase

If beauty was inches,

you'd go on for miles

But, you know, you

Sometimes it's too

And everything goes

By getting hit by a

shabby

BUT (and here's the)

Your beauty will last

I'm going to make

And that nasty old

Because I shall write

As long as men can

Then this poem lives
SONNET 18 by William Shakespeare
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
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So long lives this and this gives life to thee.
Shakespeare's Sonnet 18: Theme

TRUE LOVE NEVER ENDS
Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18

- One of Shakespeare’s best known and most well-loved of all 154 sonnets
- Focuses on the stability of love and its power to immortalize the poetry and the subject of that poetry
The poet's only answer to such profound joy and beauty is to ensure that his friend be forever in human memory, saved from the oblivion that accompanies death. He achieves this through his verse, believing that, as history writes itself, his friend will become one with time. The final couplet reaffirms the poet's hope that as long as there is breath in mankind, his poetry too will live on, and ensure the immortality of his muse.

Interestingly, not everyone is willing to accept the role of Sonnet 18 as the ultimate English love poem. As James Boyd-White puts it:

What kind of love does 'this' in fact give to 'thee'? We know nothing of the beloved's form or height or hair or eyes or bearing, nothing of her character or mind, nothing of her at all, really. This 'love poem' is actually written not in praise of the beloved, as it seems, but in praise of itself. Death shall not brag, says the poet; the poet shall brag. This famous sonnet is on this view one long exercise in self-glorification, not a love poem at all; surely not suitable for earnest recitation at a wedding or anniversary party, or in a Valentine. (142)

Note that James Boyd-White refers to the beloved as "her", but it is almost universally accepted by scholars that the poet's love interest is a young man in sonnets 1-126.

Sonnets 18-25 are often discussed as a group, as they all focus on the poet's affection for his friend.

For more on how the sonnets are grouped, please see the general introduction to Shakespeare's sonnets.

For more on the theme of fading beauty, please see Sonnet 116.
Iambic pentameter and Romeo and Juliet

Early on, the play's full title was "The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet." Juliet is only 13 years old when she first meets Romeo. Romeo & Juliet has been adapted for film 77 times. There are 13 suicides in Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare had seven siblings.
I THINK I'LL MAKE A LOVE STORY
EVERYBODY DIES

DEAR TAYLOR SWIFT
BOTH ROMEO AND JULIET DIE IN THE END