

Blank Verse

Blank verse consists of unrhymed five-stress lines; properly iambic pentameters:

- iamb: **unstressed** syllable followed by a **stressed** syllable (e.g. déféat)
- pentameter (a line of poetry with **five** stressed syllables)
- no rhyme

The iambic pentameter was thought to be nearest to be nearest to speech and it is the commonest type of foot in English verse.

Mark the stresses in the following examples:

Beseech you, sir, be merry; you have cause,
So have we all, of joy; for our escape
Is much beyond our loss. Our hint of woe
Is common; every day some sailor's wife,
The masters of some merchant and the merchant
Have just our theme of woe; but for the miracle,
I mean our preservation, few in millions
Can speak like us: then wisely, good sir, weigh
Our sorrow with our comfort.

(The Tempest, II, i, 1-9)

Hubert: My lord?

King John: A grave.

Hubert: He shall not live.

King John: Enough.

(King John, III, iii, 66)