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| Form | Description | Rules |
| **Short Forms** | | |
| Haiku | Traditionally about the seasons, or nature.    The main idea is to express a brief moment in time, or contrast two moments. | 3 lines  5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables  No rhyme  No set metre |
| Limerick | A short funny poem.  Uses puns, wordplay, or intentionally incorrect spellings to play with language.  The last line is often the ‘punch line’ of the joke | 5 lines  Rhyme scheme: AABBA  Line 1-2: 8 syllables  Line 3-4: 5 syllables  Line 5: 8 syllables  Strong rhythm to each line, 2 weak beats followed by 1 strong beat (da-da-DA, da-da-DA, da-da-DA) |
| **Lyric Poems – expressing thoughts or feelings** | | |
| Ode | A poem expressing praise or admiration for a person or thing.  Use similes, metaphors and sometimes hyperbole (exaggeration). | No set rhyme or metre  No set rules for lines or syllables  Often addressed directly to the thing it praises |
| Sonnet | A poem with very specific rules. Originally used to express romantic love, but can be on any topic  Has a ‘shift’ or change in tone or mood halfway through, usually at line 9, indicated by words like ‘but’, ‘so’, ‘then’, or ‘and yet’. | 14 lines  Rhyme structure: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG  Each line has 10 syllables  Rhythm pattern: 5 sets of a weak beat followed by strong beat (da-DA, da-DA, da-DA, da-DA, da-DA) |
| Free verse | Poetry without any strict meter or rhyme scheme.  Often use ‘enjambment’ (putting a line break in an unusual place, like in the middle of a thought) | Lines can be any length  No rhyme or rhythm pattern  Verses of any length, or none at all |
| Villanelle | A poem with a specific pattern of repeated rhyming lines.  Introduces an idea or theme and then develops on it a little more in each stanza – building intensity, giving a different example | 19 lines, divided into six stanzas:   * 5 tercets (3-line stanzas) with rhyme ABA * 1 quatrain (4-line stanza) with rhyme ABAA   Should have a consistent metre/rhythm (but doesn’t always)  Has two repeating refrain lines that alternate all the way through it |
| Psalm | A Hebrew poem where the structure of ideas is very important.  Stanzas are arranged in a particular order and ideas must be balanced – key point is often in the middle  Psalms usually include a lot of figurative language – similes, metaphors, hyperbole, personification | Often use parallelism  Sometimes had a refrain (e.g. “for his mercy endureth forever”)  Sometimes rhymes (in Hebrew)  Sometimes acrostic – each line begins with a letter of alphabet (in Hebrew)  Sometimes use rhyme, alliteration, consonance or assonance (in Hebrew) |
| **Narrative poems – telling a story** | | |
| Ballad | A poem that tells a story about a hero or a dramatic or tragic event  Ballads are often set to music | Rhyme scheme – often ABAB or AABB  Regular metre  Often has several stanzas (verses)  Often has a refrain (chorus) |
| Epic | A very long (novel-length) poem that tells feats and adventures of heroes from long ago | Often have regular metre  Often in couplets (groups of 2 rhyming lines) |