

FORMS OF POETRY

(sample)

Object Poem

There is no standard format for an object poem. Typically, the writer brainstorms a list of words and phrases that he or she associates with the subject, then writes the poem by incorporating as many of these words as possible. The poem usually rhymes, but not always.

Cinquain Poem

This is a five-line poem that can be written in one of two ways: by counting words (1/2/3/4/1), or by counting syllables (2/4/6/8/2). Either way, the same basic structure applies. This type of poem does not have to rhyme.

Subject
Adjectives or phrase describing the subject
Action verbs
Feeling words, or phrase expressing feelings
Synonym

Synonym Poem

In a synonym poem, the writer thinks of words that are similar to the subject. The last two lines should rhyme.

Subject
3 or 4 synonyms
Descriptive phrase

Diamante Poem

Taking its name from the diamond shape, this poem is more flexible than it appears. Some diamantes focus solely on one subject, while others may show the differences between two opposing subjects.

Subject
2 adjectives that describe line 1
3 *-ing* verbs that describe line 1
4 nouns or a 4-word phrase showing transition
3 *-ing* verbs that describe line 7
2 adjectives that describe line 7
Subject restated/Synonym/Antonym

Formula Poem

In this type of poem, the writer chooses words that relate to the subject of the poem. Other variations of the formula poem may devote one line each to how the subject looks, feels, tastes, smells, and sounds.

Verb, verb, verb
Noun
Adverb showing how
Verb
Adverb showing where or when

Haiku

This type of poem does not rhyme or use figurative language. The most common form is three lines, the first and third being the same length and the middle one being a little longer. In English-speaking countries, this has been translated into a 5/7/5 syllable structure, but this is not set in stone.

Tanka Poem

Similar to a haiku, but this type of poem uses figurative language such as similes, metaphors, and personification.

5 syllables
7 syllables
5 syllables
7 syllables
7 syllables

Acrostic Poem

Also called an alphabet poem, this poem has the subject written vertically, with each letter as the start of each line. The poem may or may not rhyme.

Free Verse

Typically patterned by speech rather than meter, this form of poetry is very open to the author's discretion and usually does not rhyme. Visual and sound effects are often employed.