**The Sonnet**

**What is a sonnet?**

Sonnets are a kind of rhymed poem written in *iambic pentameter.* An *iamb* is a rhythmic unit that includes an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one. It has the rhythm bah-BAH, as in the words "about," or "predict," or "parade." Iambic pentameter is a line of poetry and each line has 10 syllables – 5 stressed and 5 unstressed.

* The book explained another way to write.
* I think I'll take a walk around the block.

The English sonnet, or Shakespearian sonnet, has fourteen lines in iambic pentameter that are divided into three groups of four lines and one group of two lines. The rhyme scheme looks like this: abab cdcd efef gg.

**Sonnet 18 - Shakespeare**

*Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? (a)*

*Thou art more lovely and more temperate. (b)*

*Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, (a)*

*And summer’s lease hath all too short a date. (b)*

*Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, (c)*

*And often is his gold complexion dimmed; (d)*

*And every fair from fair sometime declines, (c)*

*By chance, or nature’s changing course, untrimmed; (d)*

*But thy eternal summer shall not fade, (e)*

*Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st, (f)*

*Nor shall death brag thou wand’rest in his shade, (e)*

*When in eternal lines to Time thou grow’st. (f)*

*So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, (g)*

*So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (g)*

**Sonnet 14 - Shakespeare**  
*Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck, (a)  
And yet methinks I have astronomy, (b)  
But not to tell of good, or evil luck, (a)  
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality,(b)  
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell; (c)  
Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind, (d)  
Or say with princes if it shall go well (c)  
By oft predict that I in heaven find. (d)  
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive, (e)  
And constant stars in them I read such art (f)  
As truth and beauty shall together thrive (e)  
If from thy self, to store thou wouldst convert: (f)  
Or else of thee this I prognosticate, (g)  
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date. (g)*  
  
You may notice that some of the rhymes are not exact. For example, "art" and "convert" have the same final sound, but the vowel sounds ("a" in art and "e" in convert) are different. This is an example of what is called off-rhyme, or slant-rhyme.

**How to write a sonnet - poetry prompts**

Below are six sentences in iambic pentameter. If you want, use them as starting points for your own poetry. For example, you could use one as the first line of a sonnet. You might even find a way to combine several of them in the same poem.

1. The night was icy but I didn't mind.
2. Your fingerprints were all around the room.
3. My father never tells me what he thinks.
4. There's something hiding underneath my bed.
5. You changed your name but couldn't change your face.
6. I couldn't think of anything to say.