

# The Sonnet: Types, Examples, and Poets

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A sonnet is a 14-line poem with a specific rhyme scheme and meter, traditionally written in iambic pentameter.

There are several types of sonnets:

## 1. Shakespearean (English) Sonnet

- Structure: Three quatrains + a rhymed couplet
- Rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG
- Example: William Shakespeare - Sonnet 18 ("Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?")

## 2. Petrarchan (Italian) Sonnet

- Structure: An octave + a sestet
- Rhyme scheme: ABBAABBA CDECDE
- Example: Francesco Petrarch - Canzoniere

## 3. Spenserian Sonnet

- Structure: Three quatrains + a couplet
- Rhyme scheme: ABAB BCBC CDCD EE
- Example: Edmund Spenser - Amoretti

## 4. Miltonic Sonnet

- Similar to the Petrarchan sonnet but with flexible volta placement
- Example: John Milton - On His Blindness

## 5. Curtal Sonnet

- Shortened form (10½ or 11 lines)
- Example: Gerard Manley Hopkins - Pied Beauty

## 6. Terza Rima Sonnet

- Uses interlocking rhyme: ABA BCB CDC DED EE
- Example: Percy Bysshe Shelley - Ode to the West Wind

## 7. Modern/Free Verse Sonnet

- 14 lines but breaks traditional rules

- Example: William Butler Yeats - Leda and the Swan

Famous Sonnet Sequences:

- William Shakespeare - Shakespeare's Sonnets (154 sonnets)
- Sir Philip Sidney - Astrophel and Stella
- Edmund Spenser - Amoretti
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning - Sonnets from the Portuguese

Sonnets have been used across literary periods to explore themes of love, beauty, time, and philosophy.