

THE BASIC POETIC FEET

Scansion: Applying stress syllables to lines of poetry. Note: Scansion is not an exact science; stressed and unstressed syllables are not always instantly identifiable.

Key: U = unstressed / = stressed

IAMBIC (u /) re called de light (This is the basic foot; other are variations)

The CUR / few TOLLS / the KNELL / of PART / ing DAY (here is an example of iambic pentameter; a series of 5 groups of unstressed, then stressed syllables)

From conversation:

I'd like to in tro duce a friend of mine; Sup pose you take your damn feet off the chair

From poetry & music

It's knowing what to do with things that counts (Frost)

I hate to see that eve in sun go down (blues)

And gilded honor shamefully misplaced

SPONDEE (/ /) dead weight Dead Sea old loves

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse (Shakespeare)

I laid down my long net in the big tide (Ghiselin)

And the mind whirls and the heart sings (Frost)

TROCHEE (/ u) hap py token over only tro chee

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer (Shakespeare)

They were all struck for thee! Naught that I am... (Shakespeare)

By the shores of Gitche Gumee

By the shining big sea water (Longfellow)

ANAPEST (u u /) dis a gree re pro duce in a dream an a pest

The world and life's too big to pass for a dream (Browning)

And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold

DACTYL (/ u u) mem o ries black like me (less common)

Woman much missed how you call to me call to me

FOOT **EXAMPLE**

Iambic (Iamb) u / to-day	Was this the face that launched a thousand ships And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? (Christopher Marlowe)
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Trochaic (Trochee) / u dai-ly	Double, Double, toil and trouble Fire burn, and cauldron bubble. (William Shakespeare)
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Anapestic (Anapest) u u / in-ter-vene	Like a child from the womb, Like a ghost from the tomb. (Percy Shelley)
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Dactylic (Dactyl) / u u yes-ter-day	Night coming tenderly, Black like me. (Langston Hughes)
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