



English Sonnet

Also known as the Shakespearean Sonnet

Basic Rules

- 14 Lines
- iambic pentameter (10 syllable lines)
- Love Poem (of any sort)
- Rhyme scheme (end rhyme)
 - abab, cdcd, efef, gg

There's more than just structure

Content meets Form

First Quatrain: Exposition of the problem or theme

Second Quatrain: Extension of metaphor or images which build the argument of the problem

Third Quatrain: The Turn—this begins in line 9 and turns us toward a solution or the difficulty of the persona finding a solution

Final Couplet: A final solution that resolves the conflict or offers some reflection for the persona

A Few Tips

- Keep speech natural and contemporary
- Don't let rhymes control lines & syntax
- Avoid easy, cliché rhymes (me/be, you/too)
- Use slant rhymes
- A line does not need to stop at the end—use enjambment!
- Interpret Love in broad terms

Example of enjambment and rhyme

Under the moon that lights against the pool
That I am walking in, I see her eyes
And think and ask if I was just a fool.