

Verstory

A Look at the Past Through Poetry

On the following pages is information about, and examples of, six different types of short poems. Your task is to write four poems - each of a different type – based on four key issues from the *Age of Jackson* – the time when Andrew Jackson was our nation’s president.

Write a draft of each poem, have your drafts approved, and then publish your poems. You may create a paper booklet of your poems, or turn them into a Hyperstudio presentation.

A **Quatrain** is a poem consisting of four rhymed lines. It is the most common form of poetry stanza in the English language.

The rhyme scheme can take many forms, but the most common is ABAB. Notice in the example below that the first line rhymes with the third, and the second line rhymes with the fourth. Also, notice that the lines that rhyme have the same rhythm.

Sectionalism

*The Northeast loved a high tariff,
The South felt tariffs were wrong.
The West just wanted a sheriff.
How could they all get along?*

The **Limerick** is really the only form of poetry that is original to the English language. It first appeared in *Songs for the Nursery* by Elizabeth Goose.

A limerick has five lines and in its most common form has a special rhyme scheme of aabba. An example:

Pollution

*Factories made production faster,
But lately they’ve proved a disaster.
They mess up the air,
And to fish aren’t fair.
Machines really may be our master!*

A **Clerihew** is a short poem consisting of two couplets. It is always about a famous person, whose name forms one of the lines. Of course, since it is two couplets, the rhyme scheme is aabb. For example:

DeWitt Clinton

*Made us number one.
The Erie Canal was Clinton’s Ditch,
But in the end it made New York rich.*

An Acrostic is a verse where the opening letters of the lines, or the closing letters, or letters arranged at by some other system, name a person or convey a special message. For example:

*What he really wanted was
A cup of
Tea. Instead, his steam engine changed
The world!*

A Wingspark is a type of poetry “invented” by students at Wings Park School on Long Island. It has five lines, does not rhyme, and has some very special requirements.

Each line of a Wingspark has a specific purpose. The special requirements are listed below. Study the form carefully.

- Line 1: *I dreamed...*(your Wingspark will begin like this.)
- Line 2: Answer the question “who?” (someone)
- Line 3: Answer the questions “where?” (someplace)
- Line 4: State an action (something that person did)
- Line 5: One word (describe how the person felt or how the action was done.)

*I dreamed...
I was **Peter Cooper**
In Baltimore
Riding on the Tom Thumb
Proudly.*

A LanVan is a five-line poem about a famous person or thing. It has a very specific form that must be followed.

- Line 1: Identify the subject, then write
- Line 2*: a metaphor appropriate to the subject,
- Line 3*: a simile appropriate to the subject,
- Lines 4 and 5: a rhyming couplet about the subject’s significance

*Lines 2 and 3 may switch positions!

For example:

***Steam Locomotive**
The iron horse,
Puffing like a dragon.
Railroads connected the nation,
As trains ran station to station.*