

MODEL 1: BLANK VERSE

The fact that Shakespeare wrote in verse should not intimidate you. Since iambic pentameter is fairly close to English speech patterns, it can be spoken naturally, without much awkwardness. Read the following excerpt aloud to get a feel for its rhythm.

From Act Two, Scene 2

Lines 2-6

~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ |

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ |

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!

~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ |

Arise fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ |

5 Who is already sick and pale with grief

~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ |

That thou her maid art far more fair than she.

Close Read

1. Reread the excerpt, tapping your foot at each stressed syllable. How many stressed syllables are in each line?
2. Point out a place where the pattern breaks. One example has been boxed. What ideas are emphasized by these variations in rhythm?