**Villanelle**

The highly structured villanelle is a nineteen-line poem with two repeating rhymes and two refrains. The form is made up of five tercets followed by a quatrain. The first and third lines of the opening tercet are repeated alternately in the last lines of the succeeding stanzas; then in the final stanza, the refrain serves as the poem’s two concluding lines. Using capitals for the refrains and lowercase letters for the rhymes, the form could be expressed as: *A1 b A2 / a b A1 / a b A2 / a b A1 / a b A2 / a b A1 A2*.

Strange as it may seem for a poem with such a rigid rhyme scheme, the villanelle did not start off as a fixed form. During the Renaissance, the *villanella* and *villancico* (from the Italian *villano*, or peasant) were Italian and Spanish dance-songs. French poets who called their poems “villanelle” did not follow any specific schemes, rhymes, or refrains. Rather, the title implied that, like the Italian and Spanish dance-songs, their poems spoke of simple, often pastoral or rustic themes.

While some scholars believe that the form as we know it today has been in existence since the sixteenth century, others argue that only one Renaissance poem was ever written in that manner—Jean Passerat’s “Villanelle," or *“J’ay perdu ma tourterelle”—*and that it wasn’t until the late nineteenth century that the villanelle was defined as a fixed form by French poet Théodore de Banville.

Regardless of its provenance, the form did not catch on in France, but it has become increasingly popular among poets writing in English. An excellent example of the form is Dylan Thomas’s [“Do not go gentle into that good night”](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/do-not-go-gentle-good-night).

Contemporary poets have not limited themselves to the pastoral themes originally expressed by the free-form villanelles of the Renaissance, and have loosened the fixed form to allow variations on the refrains. Elizabeth Bishop’s [“One Art”](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/one-art) is another well-known example; other poets who have penned villanelles include [W. H. Auden](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/w-h-auden), Oscar Wilde, [Seamus Heaney](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/seamus-heaney), David Shapiro, and [Sylvia Plath](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/sylvia-plath).

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/villanelle-poetic-form>

Ballad

A typical ballad is a plot-driven song, with one or more characters hurriedly unfurling events leading to a dramatic conclusion. At best, a ballad does not tell the reader what’s happening, but rather shows the reader what’s happening, describing each crucial moment in the trail of events. To convey that sense of emotional urgency, the ballad is often constructed in quatrain stanzas, each line containing as few as three or four stresses and rhyming either the second and fourth lines, or all alternating lines.

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poems?field_form_tid=401>

## Characteristics of a Ballad

Characteristics of a ballad are as under:

* Every ballad is a short story in verse, which dwells upon only on one particular episode of the story. There is certainly only one episode of the story in a ballad and the poet needs to complete the story within the limits of small number of stanzas. John Keats’s ballad ***La Belle Dame sans Merci*** is an excellent example in this regard.
* Another fundamental characteristic of a ballad is its universal appeal. Every single ballad touches upon a specific subject, which bears universal significance. It’s not simply restricted to his personality or his country, rather; it deals with the whole humanity. John Keats’s ballad ***La Belle Dame sans Merci***convinces the readers that most of the women are perfidious and double-crossing.
* Use of colloquial language is an indispensable feature of a ballad. The poet has a tendency to make use of day-to-day and commons words instead of bombastic and flowery language in the ballad. Read John Keats’s ballad ***La Belle Dame sans Merci*** to know how the poet has used colloquial language in his ballad.
* Unlike other kinds of poems, ballad has an abrupt and unexpected opening. The poem starts all of a sudden, without providing any details about the subject matter. Similarly, the ending of many ballads may also be abrupt and unexpected.
* There are no extra details about the surroundings, atmosphere or environment. The poem starts suddenly and the reader has to visualise the setting himself through the words of the poet. Thus ballads lack in superfluous details.
* Dialogue is also an indispensable feature of a ballad. The story is mostly told through dialogues. Look at of John Keats’s ballad ***La Belle Dame sans Merci***, which is a complete dialogue between the speaker and the knight.
* Generally, in every ballad, there is a refrain. Refrain is a phrase or a line, which is repeated again and again after a stanza.
* The poet tends to use stock phrases so that it may be easier to be memorized by the readers. That is why; every ballad is easier than any poem to be memorized.
* Use of ballad stanza is another remarkable characteristic of a ballad. Every ballad is written a ballad stanza. Ballad stanza is a stanza, which consists of four lines with ***abcb rhyme scheme.***There are four accented syllables in the first and third line, while in the second and the fourth lines there are three accented syllables.
* Use of supernatural elements is an imperative feature of a ballad. Johan Keats and Coleridge’s ballads are best examples in this regard.
* Usually, the themes of most ballads are tragic, but is must be kept in mind that there are some ballads, which are comic in nature.
* Simplicity is an additional characteristic of a ballad. Approximately, all ballads are simple in structure, style and diction, which make them the most popular form of poetry. Look at the ballads of John Keats and Coleridge! They are very easy to be comprehended and remembered.

<https://owlcation.com/humanities/The-Ballad-Definition-Types-Characteristics>

# Ode

“Ode” comes from the Greek aeidein, meaning to sing or chant, and belongs to the long and varied tradition of lyric poetry. Originally accompanied by music and dance, and later reserved by the Romantic poets to convey their strongest sentiments, the ode can be generalized as a formal address to an event, a person, or a thing not present.

https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poems?field\_form\_tid=417

**Elegy**

The elegy began as an ancient Greek metrical form and is traditionally written in response to the death of a person or group. Though similar in function, the elegy is distinct from the epitaph, ode, and eulogy: the epitaph is very brief; the ode solely exalts; and the eulogy is most often written in formal prose.

The elements of a traditional elegy mirror three stages of loss. First, there is a [lament](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/lament-poets-glossary), where the speaker expresses grief and sorrow, then praise and admiration of the idealized dead, and finally consolation and solace. These three stages can be seen in W. H. Auden’s classic [“In Memory of W. B. Yeats,"](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/memory-w-b-yeats) written for the Irish master, which includes these stanzas:

*With the farming of a verse  
     Make a vineyard of the curse,  
     Sing of human unsuccess  
     In a rapture of distress;  
  
     In the deserts of the heart  
     Let the healing fountain start,  
     In the prison of his days  
     Teach the free man how to praise.*

Other well-known elegies include [“Fugue of Death”](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/fugue-death) by [Paul Celan](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/paul-celan), written for victims of the Holocaust, and [“O Captain! My Captain!”](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/o-captain-my-captain) by [Walt Whitman](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/walt-whitman), written for President Abraham Lincoln.

Many modern elegies have been written not out of a sense of personal grief, but rather a broad feeling of loss and metaphysical sadness. A famous example is the mournful series of ten poems in *Duino Elegies*, by German poet [Rainer Maria Rilke](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/rainer-maria-rilke). The first poem begins:

*If I cried out  
             who would hear me up there  
                    among the angelic orders?  
     And suppose one suddenly  
             took me to his heart  
                     I would shrivel*

Other works that can be considered elegiac in the broader sense are [James Merrill](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/james-merrill)’s monumental *The Changing Light at Sandover*, [Robert Lowell](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/robert-lowell)’s [“For the Union Dead,"](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/union-dead) [Seamus Heaney](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/seamus-heaney)’s *The Haw Lantern*, and the work of [Czeslaw Milosz](https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/czeslaw-milosz), which often laments the modern cruelties he witnessed in Europe.

## Pastoral

Verse in the tradition of Theocritus (3 BCE), who wrote idealized accounts of shepherds and their loves living simple, virtuous lives in Arcadia, a mountainous region of Greece. Poets writing in English drew on the pastoral tradition by retreating from the trappings of modernity to the imagined virtues and romance of rural life, as in Edmund Spenser’s [The Shepheardes Calendar,](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=174485) Christopher Marlowe’s [“The Passionate Shepherd to His Love,”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=173941)and Sir Walter Ralegh’s response, [“The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd.”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=174205) The pastoral poem faded after the European Industrial Revolution of the 18th century, but its themes persist in poems that romanticize rural life or reappraise the natural world; see Leonie Adams’s [“Country Summer,”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=178824) Dylan Thomas’s [“](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=175908)Fern Hill[,”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=175908) or Allen Ginsberg’s [“](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=179386)Wales Visitation[.”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poem.html?id=179386) Browse more [pastoral poems](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems#page=1&subjects=45&poetic-terms=251)[.](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/tool.poem.glossary.1.html?id=13)