

Meter= a recurring pattern of stressed (accented, or long) and unstressed (unaccented, or short) syllables in lines of a set length. Meter is determined by the type of foot and the number of feet in a line.

For example, a line has: 10 syllables (set length)

- 1st= unstressed,
- 2nd = stressed,
- 3rd= unstressed,
- 4th= stressed,
- and so on until the line reaches the 10th syllable.

The line would look like the following (Shakepears’s “Sonnet 18” opening line)

The unstressed syllables are regular font and the stressed syllables in **BOLD**.

Shall **I** com **PARE** thee **TO** a **SUM** mer’s **DAY**?

FOOT= Each **PAIR**, or unit, of unstressed and stressed syllables. This line contains 5 feet (each separated by |)

....1..... 2.....3.....4..... 5
 Shall.**I**..|..com.**PARE**..|..thee.**TO**..|..a.**SUM**..|..mer’s **DAY**?

Foot= containing an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (as above) is called an **iamb**. Because there are five feet in the line, all iambic, the **meter** of the line is **iambic pentameter**.

FEET= have different stress patterns. There are **six types** of feet=

Iamb (Iambic)	Unstressed + Stressed	Two Syllables
Trochee (Trochaic)	Stressed + Unstressed	Two Syllables
Spondee (Spondaic)	Stressed + Stressed	Two Syllables
Anapest (Anapestic)	Unstressed + Unstressed + Stressed	Three Syllables
Dactyl (Dactylic)	Stressed + Unstressed + Unstressed	Three Syllables
Pyrrhic	Unstressed + Unstressed	Two Syllables

Types of meter and the line length=

Monometer	One Foot
Dimeter	Two Feet
Trimeter	Three Feet
Tetrameter	Four Feet
Pentameter	Five Feet
Hexameter	Six Feet
Heptameter	Seven Feet
Octameter	Eight Feet

Ex= A line with three iambic feet = iambic trimeter.

Ex= A line with six dactylic feet = dactylic hexameter.