

## *Rhythm*

Rhythm in music refers to repetition of certain kind of sound or beat. This can also be found in some languages. A certain kind of stress pattern tends to reoccur in English sentences. This repetition of sound pattern is known as the Rhythm of Spoken English. The combination of stressed and unstressed syllable form the sound pattern of rhythm in English. The number of unstressed syllables between stressed syllables varies. Still, in English poetry, a regular pattern or combination of stressed and stressed syllable can be identified. This constitutes the rhythm of that piece of poetry. Thus rhythm in poetry refers to the recurrence of regular units of stress pattern. This can be understood with the following line:

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.

The above line consists of ten syllables. The stress falls on the second, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth syllable.

It is obvious that a pattern of Unstressed-Stressed syllables is used in this line. This kind of repetition of regular unit of stress pattern forms rhythm in English poetry.

### *Foot*

Foot refers to a little unit or group stressed and unstressed syllables. This unit or foot is repeated in lines written in meter. Thus a foot can be defined as the basic unit of meter. The number of syllables in a foot may be of different types. There can be types of feet with two syllables. There can also be types of feet with three syllables. There can also be found two types of feet in English meter with only one syllables. These two types of feet with one syllable occur at the end of lines.

For example the following line from the poem Elegy Written in Country Churchyard contains five Feet:

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way.

Each of the feet contains the combination of a Unstressed syllable followed by a Stressed

syllable. This type of a foot is called an Iambic foot. This foot is repeated Five times in the above line. When a line contains Five feet, its meter is known as pentameter.

### *Meter*

The term meter refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Repetition of a certain kind of stress pattern forms the meter of a line. For example, a pattern of unstressed-stressed syllables is repeated in the following line:

The ploughman homeward plods his weary way

In this line, each of the five stressed syllables follows five unstressed syllables. It can be said that five units or feet is repeated in this line. If a line has five patterns of stressed-unstressed syllables repeated, it is said that the line is written in pentameter. Lines having one foot is written in monometer. Likewise lines can be written in trimester (three feet), tetrameter (four feet), hexameter (six feet).

Meter is defined not only by the number of feet a line contains. It is also defined by the nature of the feet. If most number of feet in the line is iambic, then the line is said to have iambic meter. A line with trochaic meter will have more trochaic feet. Thus the meter of the above line can be defined as Iambic Pentameter.

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