100 Poetry Prompts

A Poetry Prompt Journal
100 Poetry Prompts

A Poetry Prompt Journal

Local Gems Press
# Table of Contents

**Forms & Topics** .................................................................................................................. 1

Sonnet (Italian) ........................................................................................................................ 2
Sonnet (English) ........................................................................................................................ 4
Haiku ......................................................................................................................................... 6
Senryu ........................................................................................................................................ 7
Dodoitsu ...................................................................................................................................... 8
Tanka .......................................................................................................................................... 9
Sedoka ....................................................................................................................................... 10
Triolet ......................................................................................................................................... 11
Sestina ....................................................................................................................................... 12
Acrostic ..................................................................................................................................... 14
Limerick .................................................................................................................................... 15
Fibonacci .................................................................................................................................. 16
Ars Poetica ............................................................................................................................... 17
Ekphrastic ................................................................................................................................. 18
Epistolary ................................................................................................................................... 19
Found ....................................................................................................................................... 20
Dream ....................................................................................................................................... 21
List ........................................................................................................................................... 22
Dialogue ................................................................................................................................... 23
Metaphor .................................................................................................................................... 24
Overheard ................................................................................................................................. 25
History ..................................................................................................................................... 26
Meter & Structure

5 Line .................................................................................. 53
10 Line .................................................................................. 54
One Long Sentence ................................................................. 55
One Word Lines .................................................................... 56
Iambic Trimeter ..................................................................... 57
Trochaic Trimeter .................................................................. 58
Iambic Pentameter .................................................................. 59

Word Bank 1 .......................................................................... 60
Word Bank 2 .......................................................................... 61
Word Bank 3 .......................................................................... 62
Word Bank 4 .......................................................................... 63
Word Bank 5 .......................................................................... 64
Word Bank 6 .......................................................................... 65
Word Bank 7 .......................................................................... 66
Word Bank 8 .......................................................................... 67
Word Bank 9 .......................................................................... 68
Word Bank 10 ......................................................................... 69
Word Bank 11 ......................................................................... 70
Word Bank 12 ......................................................................... 71
Word Bank 13 ......................................................................... 72
Word Bank 14 ......................................................................... 73
Word Bank 15 ......................................................................... 74
Forms & Topics
Sonnet (Italian)

**Italian Sonnets**, also known as Petrarchan Sonnets after the Italian poet Petrarch feature one octave or two quatrains followed by a sestet and is traditionally written in Iambic Pentameter. The octave forms a proposition or presents a problem or question which is then solved in the following sestet. Generally, the ninth line of the ninth line of the poem contains a volta which leads to the resolution of the problem presented in the previous eight lines.

The Italian sonnet follows a rhyme scheme of

A-
B-
B-
A-
A-
A-
B-
B-
B-
A-
C-
D-
E-
C-
D-
E
Sonnet (English)

The English sonnet, is of course known by English majors everywhere as the Shakespearean, sonnet. Like the earlier Italian Sonnet, the English Sonnet is comprised of 14 lines, but has a different rhyme scheme set up. It contains 3 quatrains and a couplet.

A
B
A
B

C
D
C
D
E
F
E
F

G
G

It is expected to be written in iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter is defined as a unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

× / × / × / × / × /
Haiku

Haiku is a form of traditional Japanese poetry. Haiku is, a 17-syllable verse form consisting of three metrical units of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. In traditional Japanese, the Haiku typically had a theme about nature and included a seasonal word.

5
7
5
Senryu

Senryu is a form of traditional Japanese poetry similar to the Haiku. It is a 17-syllable verse form consisting of three metrical units of 5, 7, and 5 syllables. Unlike the Haiku which deals with nature, the Senryu deals with human nature.
Dodoitsu

The Dodoitsu is a Japanese poetry form. Often about love or work, and usually comical, Dodoitsu poems consist of four lines with the structure:

7
7
7
7
5

_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
_______________________________
Tanka

The Tanka, or "short poem," is one of the most well known and well-used forms of Japanese poetry. In the ninth and tenth centuries, this style of short poems dominated Japanese poetry styles and it was one of if not the most popular form of original Waka.

A Tanka's form is five lines.

5
7
5
7
7

31 syllables in total in the original Japanese.
Sedoka

From the Zen practice of rapid question-answer between a master and a student or, between two lovers. The 2 stanzas are often parallels, sometimes taking the form of an internal dialogue or contemplative dilemma.

The Sedoka is:

- 2 stanzas of 3 lines each
- 19 syllables or less
- often 5-7-7, sometimes 5-7-5 is used for each stanza.
- the stanzas should be parallel to each other, or in some ways opposites without being directly contradictory.
Triolet

A Triolet is a French poetic stanza form of 8 lines, traditionally in iambic pentameter.

A
B
a - Rhymes with 1st line.
A  - Identical to 1st line.
a - Rhymes with 1st line.
b - Rhymes with 2nd line.
A  - Identical to 1st line.
B  - Identical to 2nd line.
Sestina

A complex French verse form, typically unrhymed, with six stanzas of six lines each and a three-line envoy. The end words of the first stanza are repeated in a different order as end words in each of the subsequent five stanzas; the closing envoy contains all six words, two per line, placed in the middle and at the end of the three lines. The patterns of word repetition are as follows, with each number representing the final word of a line, and each row of numbers representing a stanza:

1 2 3 4 5 6
6 1 5 2 4 3
3 6 4 1 2 5
5 3 2 6 1 4
4 5 1 3 6 2
2 4 6 5 3 1
(6 2) (1 4) (5 3)
Acrostic

An acrostic poem is a simple form poem in which the first letter of each line spells out a word.

Acrostic poems
Contain within each first letter
Representing a word arranged
On purpose for poetic value
Specifically to show
The value a word can possess
In using each fist letter
Consciously
Limerick

Sometimes poetry has a reputation for being sad and depressing--and then there are funny poems like Limericks. The structure of a Limerick is relatively simple:

A
A

B

B

A

Traditionally most Limericks have 9 syllables per line, but the rules on this vary. Write a Limerick.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
Fibonacci

A Fibonacci poem is a newer poetic form that bases itself off of the mathematical Fibonacci sequence where each number equals the previous two numbers before it. In poetry, the sequence translates to syllable count. The typical fib is a six line, 20 syllable poem with a syllable count by line of

1
1
2
3
5
8 -

with as many syllables per line as the line's corresponding place in the Fibonacci sequence. However, some Fibonacci poets try to challenge themselves to make the poems go longer than 6 lines.
Ars Poetica

Write a poem about poetry or being a poet.
Ekphrastic

Ekphrastic poetry is poetry inspired by a work of art. Find a piece of art that moves you and write a poem inspired by it.
Epistolary

Write a poem that takes the form of a letter.
Found

Pick a random book off of your shelf, and go to a random page. Pick out a random sentence, or 10 random words, and write a poem using these words that you found on the page.
We all have dreams. Dreams sometimes don't make any sense---sometimes they confuse us, other times they intrigue us. Sometimes both. Sometimes the imagery stays with us even after we've woken. Write a poem describing the imagery in a dream.
List

Sometimes a list can tell us a lot. Write a poem that takes the form of a list, it can be a shopping list, a list of items, a to-do list, or any kind of list.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Dialogue

Write a poem that takes the form of a dialogue between two people. They can be real people, imagined people, or even historical figures.
Metaphor

Write a poem that compares something to something else, make heavy use of metaphor in the poem.

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

24
Overheard

Write a poem about a conversation you overheard, or about someone overhearing a conversation you were having.
History

Write a poem about something significant that happened on this day in history.
Nostalgia

Write a poem about a memory or about something that makes you feel nostalgic.
Concrete

A concrete poem, sometimes referred to as a visual or image poem, is a poem that takes the form of an image. Write a concrete poem.
Sequel

Write a poem that serves as a sequel to a poem you have already written.
Minimalist

Write a poem using as few words as you possibly can.
Thank You Note

Write a poem that takes the form of a thank you note.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Archaic Word

Write a poem that is dedicated to or makes good use of an archaic word that is rarely used in regular contemporary conversation.
Time

Write a poem about time. Never enough, more than enough…never stopping? Wish it would stop? Wish it would speed up? Time conquers all? Or something else.
Hometown

Write a poem that celebrates your home town. What is unique or interesting about it?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Alliteration

Write a poem that makes heavy use of alliteration.

“Peter piper picked a patch of perfect poems proliferating proper punctuation!”
Indecision

Write a poem about a time either you or someone you know felt extreme indecision. It could be about a purchase, a relationship, a specific situation---a time it was nearly impossible to make a decision between multiple choices.
Faith

We all have faith in something. Normally we associate faith with religion, and while this is true, we also need faith to wake up in the morning, believe the sun will come back, leave our houses during the day. Write a poem about something you have faith in.
Chance

Write a poem about something that happened by chance. A chance encounter, a random decision, etc.
Praise

There is a lot of negative poetry out there complaining about something, from family, to relationships to politics. Let's break the pattern! Write a poem that praises something or someone.

________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

39
On Your Tombstone

We don't always get to choose the words on our tombstones, but what if you did? Write a poem about what you want to be left behind when you die.
Reminder

Write a poem that takes the form of a reminder. It can be to yourself, or someone else. It can take the form of a formal reminder, or an informal one.
Street

There's such a thing as street poetry, but this is something different. Write a poem about the street you grew up on.
Prophecy

Some would say the only difference between a prediction and a prophecy is that prophecies come true. Others would say the only difference is that a prediction is spoken, a prophecy is written down. Write a poem that prophesizes something.
Repetition

Write a poem that uses the same word 10 times or the same line at least 3 times. Heavy repetition.
Alchemy

They say alchemy is a dead art, yet the process of turning something of little value into something of great value happens every day. It is the basis of human civilization. Write a poem that has to do with alchemy.
Harvests

When we plant seeds, the hope is that we will one day see the fruits of our labor. Write a poem about a harvest, whether a literal harvest of crops, or a metaphorical harvest of results for hard work.

____________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
Firsts

There is a first time for everything. Write a poem that has to do with the first time you ever did some-thing.
Lasts

Everything must come to an end. Write a poem about the last time you did something.
Gratitude

Gratitude is the healthiest emotion. Write a poem about something you are grateful for.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Addiction can come in many forms. Write a poem about an addiction. Is it a serious vice, or a harmless obsession?
Death Poem

Some cultures celebrated the tradition of the "Death Poem" or, a final poem recited by a poet before they passed away. Write a poem as if it were your last poem.

________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
Meter & Structure
5 Line

Write a poem that is only 5 lines long. The lines can be any length you want as long as they are all consistent.
10 Line

Write a poem that is 10 lines long. The lines can be any length as long as they are all consistent.
One Long Sentence

Write a poem that is one long run-on sentence.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

55
One Word Lines

Write a poem that consists of lines that are only one word each.
Iambic Trimeter

Write a poem in Iambic Trimeter. That is a poem with lines of un-stressed and stressed syllables stretching three feet each.

- / - / - /
Trochaic Trimeter

Write a poem in Trochaic Trimeter. That is a poem with lines of stressed and unstressed syllables stretching three feet each.

/ - / - / -

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
Iambic Pentameter

Write a poem in Iambic Pentameter. That is a poem with lines of unstressed and stressed syllables stretching five feet each.

- / - / - / - / - /
Word Bank 1

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Reputation  Luck  Elder
Addiction  Interact  Tree
Happen  Incomplete  Chapter
Word Bank 2

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Gratitude</th>
<th>Globe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectation</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming</td>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
Word Bank 3

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Moustache  Guilt  Erase
Entice  Overt  Entrench
Assume  Ignite  Inundate
Word Bank 4

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Letter  Revenge  Cobbler

Autumn  Technology  Infuse

Leverage  Intricate  Biological
Word Bank 5

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Indentured  Allowing  Empower
Trust       Latitude   Cautious
Alarm       Structure  Difference
Word Bank 6

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
<th>Mastermind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Word Bank 7

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hook</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realize</td>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>Chronicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Baffle</td>
<td>Consume</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Bank 8

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share</th>
<th>Happen</th>
<th>Advertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Exclusive</td>
<td>Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>Interact</td>
<td>Mandate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Word Bank 9

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Elder</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trench</td>
<td>Becoming</td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word Bank 10

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Dream  Mirage  Path
Tug     Ironic  Endear
Transform  Elevate  Ghost
Word Bank 11

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Leadership  Encompass  Lesson
Diameter    Wrath     Mimic
Alleviate   Betrayal  Worship
Word Bank 12

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Sibling  Eternal  Compass
Leadership  Paternal  Renegade
Confusion  Internal  External

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Word Bank 13

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

- Rain
- Guess
- Prophecy
- Alchemy
- Wrath
- Greed
- Argue
- Taint
- Expel

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
Word Bank 14

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

- Implode
- Cross
- Calibrate
- Pollinate
- Plant
- Harvest
- Decide
- Promise
- Promote

________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
Word Bank 15

Write a poem that uses 5 or more of the following words:

Forget  
Throw  
Eliminate

Condense  
Page  
Incomplete

Sedentary  
Blend  
Totality

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________


First or Last Line 1

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*It all begins with a thought*...
First or Last Line 2

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*Be grateful for your enemies*
First or Last Line 3

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

A penny saved is a penny earned
First or Last Line 4

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*No good deed goes unpunished...*
First or Last Line 5

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*Even a cup of coffee has feelings...*

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
First or Last Line 6

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*Ask and you shall receive...*
First or Last Line 7

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*If only the walls could speak...*
First or Last Line 8

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

_There was a time..._
First or Last Line 9

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*There was a place...*
First or Last Line 10

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*If I am reincarnated...*
First or Last Line 11

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

*It was the craziest thing I ever saw...*
First or Last Line 12

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

And then the skies opened...
First or Last Line 13

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

_I saw ghosts everywhere..._
First or Last Line 14

Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

_It was something I will never forget..._
Write a poem that begins or ends with the following line:

_Sometimes I wish I could go back there..._
Quote 1

"Worrying takes away not tomorrow’s trouble but today’s peace. "

90
Quote 2

"A beautiful person sees the beauty in others."
"A mistake is only proof you are trying."
Quote 4

"Holding a grudge is letting someone live rent free in your head."

________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
Quote 5

"There are no ordinary moments."
Quote 6

"God's delays are not God's denials."
Quote 7

"A small act of kindness is worth more than the biggest and best intentions."

---

96
Quote 8

"How people treat you is their karma, how you react is yours."
~ Wayne Dyer
Quote 9

"Have no fear of perfection, you'll never reach it." ~ Salvador Dali
Quote 10

"Some people feel the rain, others just get wet." ~ Bob Marley
Quote 11

"Well Done Is Better Than Well Said" ~ Ben Franklin
Quote 12

"The future depends on what we do in the present" ~ Ghandi
"The greatest wealth is to live content with little." ~ Plato
Quote 14

"Don’t count the days, make the days count." ~ Muhammad Ali
Quote 15

"The unexamined life is not worth living." ~ Socrates
Local Gems Poetry Press is a small Long Island, NY based poetry press dedicated to spreading poetry through performance and the written word. Local Gems believes in building local poetry communities through publications and events.

Local Gems has published over 250 titles.

www.localgemspoetrypress.com