

Literary Analysis

SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY: BLANK VERSE

Shakespearean drama is written in **blank verse**. Blank verse does not rhyme. It has a rhythmic pattern called **iambic pentameter**. Each line has five stressed syllables (ˈ), each preceded by an unstressed syllable (˘).

Directions: Mark the unstressed (˘) and stressed (ˈ) syllables in each of the blank verse passages below. Then answer the question that follows.

1. Scene 1, line 32

Is this a dagger which I see before me?

2. Scene 2, lines 58–60

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood

Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather

The multitudinous seas incarnadine

3. Scene 3, lines 83–85

Had I but died an hour before this chance,

I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant

There's nothing serious in mortality.

4. How does the rhythm of the lines convey the meaning of each passage?
