Sonnets
A fourteen line poem written in iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme scheme.

The poem is written in an octave and ends with a sestet.

The rhyme scheme is *abbaabba (abbaacca) *cdcdcd/cddcde/cde/cdeced/cdcdec.

◦ The **octave** usually raises an issue or expresses a doubt.
◦ The **sestet** resolves the issue or doubt.

> Usually, *a change from one rhyme group to another signifies a change in subject matter.*

> In Italian sonnets, this is called the **volta**, or "turn"; the turn is an essential element of the sonnet form, perhaps *the* essential element. It is at the volta that the second idea is introduced, as in this sonnet by Wordsworth:
"London, 1802"
Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

*Here, the octave develops the idea of the decline and corruption of the English race, while the sestet opposes to that loss the qualities Milton possessed which the race now desperately needs.*
And on the porch, across the upturned chair,
The boy would spread a dingy counterpane
Against the length and majesty of the rain,
And on all fours crawl under it like a bear
To lick his wounds in secret, in his lair;
And afterwards, in the windy yard again,
One hand cocked back, release his paper plane
Frail as a mayfly to the faithless air.
And summer evenings he would whirl around
Faster and faster till the drunken ground
Rose up to meet him; sometimes he would squat
Among the bent weeds of the vacant lot,
Waiting for dusk and someone dear to come
And whip him down the street, but gently home.

Notice the turn at line 9, "And summer evenings . . ." and how it develops and closes the poem by the last line.
How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. 
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height 
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight 
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace. 
I love thee to the level of everyday’s 
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light. 
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right; 
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise. 
I love thee with a passion put to use 
In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith. 
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose 
With my lost saints, — I love thee with the breath, 
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose, 
I shall but love thee better after death.
A fourteen line poem in iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme scheme.

The poem is written in three quatrains and ends with a couplet.

The rhyme scheme is abab cdcd efef gg

The volta or “turn” often comes in the third stanza, but it can also come in the final couplet.

Shakespeare – “Sonnet 18”
Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date.
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,
By chance or nature’s changing course untrimmed.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
Pity me not because the light of day  
At the close of day no longer walks the sky;  
Pity me not for beauties passed away  
From field to thicket as the year goes by;  
Pity me not the waning moon,  
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,  
Nor that a man’s desire is hushed so soon,  
And you no longer look with love on me.  
This I have known always: Love is no more  
Than the wide blossom which with the wind assails,  
Than the great tide that tread the shifting shore,  
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales:  
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn  
When the swift mind beholds at every turn.
At fourteen, she loves being critical
And tells me, Shakespeare uses language well,
But could have been, like, more original...
I sputter, but rebuttals fail to jell.
All those recycled plots make it appear
To her this playwright was a plagiarist—
No better than that girl expelled last year—
So “they” should take him off her reading list.
Come, Caitlin, let it go; great writers borrow
Like gamblers low on cash. A shopworn source
In Shakespeare’s hands becomes Verona’s sorrow
Miranda’s tenderness or Lear’s remorse,
But we can mark him down a point or two
Because he tamed a Kate as fierce as you.
A fourteen line poem in iambic pentameter with a specific rhyme scheme. The poem is written in three quatrains and ends with a couplet. The rhyme scheme is *abab bcbc cdcd ee*. The *volta* or “turn” resembles that of the English sonnet (at the last two lines).
One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
Vain man, said she, that dost in vain assay
A mortal thing so to immortalize!
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eek my name be wiped out likewise.
Not so (quoth I), let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name;
Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.