

Linguistics 103: Language Structure and Verbal Art Shakespeare Practice Problem

1. His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
2. Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
3. And shining morning face, creeping like snail

Recommended procedure:

1. Identify stress maxima and underline them.
2. Match line to template.
3. If the correspondence between template and line gives an unmetrical result, look for where elision, syncope, or phrase break exceptions may be required.
4. Mark elisions and syncopes with \emptyset
5. Mark phrase breaks with |
6. Add extra syllables line- or phrase-finally with x in the template as needed.
7. Double-underline stressed syllables of polysyllabic words which are not treated as stress maxima (either because they begin a line or a phrase, or because they occur in non-content words such as prepositions).
8. Comment on any remaining unusual features or requirements.

I W S W S W S x I W S W S x I
| | | | | | | | | | | |

His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,

I W S W S W S W S I
| | | | | | | | |

Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.

I W S W S W S I W S W S I
| | | | | | | | | |

And shining morning face, creeping like snail

4. Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
5. Jealous in honor, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
6. Seeking the bubble reputation

IW S W S W S W S W S x I
| | | | | | | | | |
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad

IW S W S W S x I W S W S x I
| | | | | | | | | | | |
Jealous in honor, sudden, and quick in quarrel,

I W S W S W S W S WS I
| | | | | | | | | |
Seeking the bubble reputation

reputation must have five syllables; this is an archaic pronunciation of the suffix *-ation*; sometimes the suffix is spelled *-acioun* as an indication of this pronunciation.

7. Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
8. Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,
9. Never, never, never, never, never.

I W S W S W S W S W S x I
 | | | | | | | | | | |

Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,

IW SW SW S W S W S W S x I
 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,

IW S | W S | W S | W S | W S |
 | | | | | | | | | |

Never, never, never, never, never.

Every word's stress is discounted since each word is either line-
 or phrase-initial

- 10. Not Caesar's valor hath o'erthrown Antony,
- 11. I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
- 12. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:

I W S W S W S W S W S I
 | | | | | | | | | |
 Not Caesar's va_lor hath o'erthrown Antony,

Rhythm Rule retraction is *o'erthrown Antony*

I W S W S W S W S W S x I
 | | | | | | | | | |
 I am dying, Egypt, dying; only

'Headless' line missing a syllable in the initial W position.
 Uncommon in Shakespeare.

I W S W S W S W S W S I
 | | | | | | | | | |
 Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:

Even though *Stay* is strongly stressed, it is monosyllabic and so
 may be associated with the W position.

13. By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis,
14. But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives
15. A prosperous gentleman; and to be kind

IW S W S W S W S W S x I
 | | | | | | | | | |
 By Sinel's death I know I_{am} Thane of Glamis,

IW S W S x I W S W S W S I
 | | | | | | | | | |
 But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives

IW S W S W S W S W S I
 | | | | | | | | | |
 A prosperous gentleman; and to be kind

- 16. Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted,
- 17. Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
- 18. That if I then had wak'd after long sleep,

I W S W S W S W S x I
| | | | | | | | | |
Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted,

I W S W S W S W S x I
| | | | | | | | | |
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.

I W S W S W S W S I
| | | | | | | | | |
That if I then had wak'd after long sleep,

19. Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd
20. Burnt on the water. The poop was beaten gold,
21. Purple the sails, and so perfumed that

I W S W S W S x I W S W S I
| | | | | | | | | | |

Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd

I W S W S x I W S W S W S I
| | | | | | | | | | |

Burnt on the water. The poop was beaten gold,

I W S W S W S W S W S I
| | | | | | | | | |

Purple the sails, and so perfumèd that

22. The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
23. As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,

24. To [glow] the delicate cheeks which they did cool

I W S W S W S x | W S W S x |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,

or

I W S W S W S W S W S x |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,

I W S W S W S W S W S x |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,

I W S W S W S W S W S |
| | | | | | | | | | |

To [glow] the delicate cheeks which they did cool

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow. Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laertes. Drown'd! O where?

Queen. There is a willow grows askaunt the brook,
That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream,
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cull-cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
There on the pendant boughs her crownet weeds
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,

Which time she chaunted snatches of old lauds,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element. But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Laertes

Alas, then she is drown'd?

I W S W S x I W S W S WS x I
| | | | | | | | | | |

So fast they follow. Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

I W S W S W S W S W S I
| | | | | | | | | | |

That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream,

The words *in the* have to be syncopated. This option is sometimes written explicitly as *i'th*.

I W S W S W S W S W S x I
| | | | | | | | | | |

But our cull-cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.

Requires an extra line-initial syllable. This is *extremely* uncommon in Shakespeare.

I W S W S W S W S I
| | | | | | | | |
As one incapable of her own distress,