

Flow with Form: Poetry That Breathes

A Semi-Free Verse Writing Practice in Quintains



1. What is Semi-Free Verse?

Semi-free verse allows freedom of expression while gently following some structure - like:

- A consistent number of lines per stanza (e.g., quintains: 5-line stanzas)
- Recurring themes or imagery
- Use of soft/slant rhyme or repetition
- A flowing natural rhythm without strict meter

2. Practice Exercise: Writing in Quintains

Write a 5-line stanza (quintain) that:

- Evokes a sensory experience in nature
- Uses gentle rhythm (aim for ~8-12 syllables per line)
- Ends with a thought that feels complete or reflective

Prompt Example: Imagine a moment of peace by water. It could be a lake, stream, or sea.

Template Starter:

Line 1 - Describe the setting

Line 2 - Introduce a sound or movement

Line 3 - Connect to a feeling or thought

Line 4 - Deepen the emotional or visual image

Line 5 - Offer a closing insight or reflection





3. Try It Yourself!

Prompt: "A lesson from the wind"

Write two quintains inspired by the wind and what it teaches.

Use these questions to guide your lines:

- What does it sound like?
- What does it move or stir?
- How does it feel on your skin?
- What might it symbolize?
- What message could it carry?

4. Reflection Questions

- What structure choices helped your ideas flow?
- Did limiting your stanza length push your creativity?
- Would you like to expand your poem or keep it concise?



Mentor Poem Practice: Inspired by 'The Ocean's Teaching'



Explore poetic structure, tone, and rhythm by using a mentor poem as inspiration. In this guided activity, you'll read and reflect on a sample poem, then try writing your own piece using a similar structure.

Mentor Poem (Excerpt): 'The Ocean's Teaching'

Published by: Seaside Serenity
Scripts Publishing ©

Here, where azure meets infinity,
Where thought dissolves in rhythmic tide,
The sea becomes philosophy -
A truth too vast to step aside.
Each wave arrives to whisper clear:
Be present, child, just breathe, just be.

Beneath the surface, time transforms,
As sunlight dances, cool and deep,
While schools of silver flash in swarms,
Ancient wisdom here to keep.
The ocean holds no yesterday,
No tomorrow's plans to reap.





1. What do you notice?

- What emotions or images did this poem evoke?
- How many lines are in each stanza?
- Does the poem use rhyme? What kind of rhythm do you feel?
- What themes or messages does the poem express?

2. Create Your Own Ocean-Inspired Poem

Now it's your turn. Using the structure of the poem as your guide, write your own piece. You can use the ocean as your setting - or choose another natural element with a lesson to share.

Try writing two stanzas (5-6 lines each).

Optional Structure Prompt:

Line 1 - Establish the setting

Line 2 - Describe a movement or action

Line 3 - Introduce a deeper thought or question

Line 4 - Continue the idea using poetic language

Line 5 - Reflect with an insight or gentle rhyme

Line 6 (optional) - Add a peaceful or mindful closure

3. Reflection

- How did modeling your poem after a mentor piece help shape your writing?
- What changes did you make to reflect your personal voice?
- Would you like to try this technique again with a different poem?

