

**The Tragedy of Macbeth, Act II**, by William Shakespeare**Literary Analysis: Comparing Lines of Blank Verse**

As you know, Shakespeare wrote in prose and in verse. He frequently used **blank verse**, unrhymed poetry in iambic pentameter.

**DIRECTIONS:** Scan the following passage from Act II, Scene ii of *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Mark unstressed syllables with ~ and stressed syllables with ´. Then answer the questions on the lines provided.

LADY MACBETH. My hands are of your color, but I shame  
To wear a heart so white. [Knock.] I hear a knocking  
At the south entry. Retire we to our chamber.  
A little water clears us of this deed:  
How easy it is then! Your constancy  
Hath left you unattended. [Knock.] Hark! more knocking.  
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us  
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost  
So poorly in your thoughts.

1. Which lines in this passage are in strict iambic pentameter?

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2. How does Shakespeare vary the rhythm of the second line?

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3. What three metrical variations are found in the third line?

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4. How are lines two and six alike?

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