

● POETIC FORM: LINE AND STANZA

The **line** is the main unit of a poem. Lines can be organized into **stanzas**, groups of two or more lines that form longer units within a poem. Sometimes, as in this example from “The World Is Not a Pleasant Place to Be,” you have to read the whole stanza to learn the speaker’s complete thought:

*the world is not a pleasant place
to be without
someone to hold and be held by*

● LITERARY ANALYSIS: RHYME SCHEME

Poets use **sound devices** to convey meaning and create emphasis. One sound device is **rhyme**, the repetition of sounds at the end of words. The **rhyme scheme** is the pattern of rhyme at the ends of lines in a poem. You can track the rhyme by assigning a letter to each line. The first line gets the letter *a*. Each following line that rhymes with it also gets an *a*. The first line that doesn’t rhyme gets the letter *b*, as do the other lines that rhyme with that line. Each new rhyme gets a new letter.

<i>And this was the reason that, long <u>ago</u>,</i>	<i>a</i>
<i> In this kingdom by the <u>sea</u>,</i>	<i>b</i>
<i>A wind blew out of a cloud by <u>night</u></i>	<i>c</i>
<i> Chilling my Annabel <u>Lee</u>;</i>	<i>b</i>

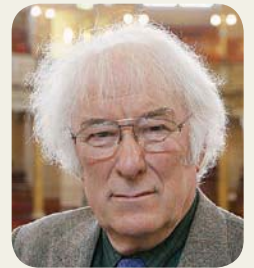
As you read “Scaffolding” and “Annabel Lee,” use letters to identify each poem’s rhyme scheme.

● READING SKILL: UNDERSTAND SPEAKER

In poetry, the **speaker** is the voice that “talks” to the reader. To understand a poem, you have to decide who the speaker is and how he or she feels about the subject of the poem. Complete a chart like the one shown as you read each of the selections.

	Poem 1	Poem 2	Poem 3
Who is the speaker?			
How do I know?			
How does he/she feel?			

Seamus Heaney:
Celebrated Irishman
Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney’s poetry is celebrated throughout the world. Describing how he felt when he wrote his first successful poem, Heaney said, “I felt that I had let down a shaft into real life.”



Seamus Heaney
born 1939

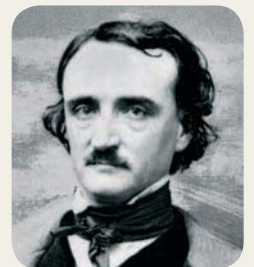
Nikki Giovanni:
Storyteller Poet
Nikki Giovanni gained popularity as a poet after the release of an album of her readings, *Truth Is on Its Way*. She says that in her poetry, “I use a very natural rhythm; I want my writing to sound like I talk.”



Nikki Giovanni
born 1943

Edgar Allan Poe:
Literary Giant

Edgar Allan Poe has fascinated generations of readers with his haunting poetry and tales of horror. He and his adored young wife, Virginia, were poor and often sick. “Annabel Lee” is believed to be Poe’s tribute to Virginia.



Edgar Allan Poe
1809–1849



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