

## HOW TO WRITE a CINQUAIN

A **cinquain** poem has five lines. The word comes from the French *cinq*, which means five.

The best-known form of cinquain poetry was created in the early 1900s by a poet named Adelaide Crapsey. These cinquains are similar to haiku in that the rules for writing them are based on syllables.

Cinquain poems have the following pattern:

Line 1	2 syllables
Line 2	4 syllables
Line 3	6 syllables
Line 4	8 syllables
Line 5	2 syllables

An alternate version of the cinquain poem, often called a “word cinquain” is based on words, instead of syllables. “Word cinquains” have the following pattern:

Line 1	1 word
Line 2	2 words
Line 3	3 words
Line 4	4 words
Line 5	1 word

There are no specific rules about writing a cinquain other than that it must have five lines and the correct syllable count (or, if writing a word cinquain, the correct word count).

However, as with haiku, there are many suggestions for writing a good cinquain. Most poets feel that it is better to stick with concrete objects than with abstract ideas (“My Dog” rather than “Happiness”). It is also true that mixing the emphasis of the syllables (or words) will create a stronger effect than writing a string of words with similar lengths and emphasis. Other poetic devices such as assonance and alliteration can be used to help make your cinquain poem memorable. Organizing the ideas in your cinquain to follow the order below is another suggestion:

- Title
- Description of the title
- Some action about the title
- Feeling about the title
- Synonym (similar word) for title

## Plan a Cinquain

What is your topic? \_\_\_\_\_

What does your topic look like? Smell like? Taste like? Sound like? Feel like?

---

---

---

---

What can this (your topic) do (what action)?

---

---

---

---

How do you feel about your topic?

---

---

---

What are some other words that have the same meaning as your topic (synonyms)?

---

---

---

---