

Spenserian stanza

The **Spenserian stanza** is a fixed verse form invented by [Edmund Spenser](#) for his [epic poem](#) *The Faerie Queene* (1590–96). Each [stanza](#) contains nine lines in total: eight lines in [iambic pentameter](#) followed by a single 'alexandrine' line in iambic [hexameter](#). The [rhyme scheme](#) of these lines is ABABBCBCC.

Spenserian stanza, verse form that consists of eight iambic [pentameter](#) lines followed by a ninth line of six iambic feet (an alexandrine); the [rhyme scheme](#) is *ababbcbcc*. The first eight lines produce an effect of formal unity, while the [hexameter](#) completes the thought of the [stanza](#). Invented by [Edmund Spenser](#) for his poem *The Faerie Queene* (1590–1609), the Spenserian stanza has origins in the Old French [ballade](#) (eight-line stanzas, rhyming *ababbcbc*), the Italian [ottava rima](#) (eight iambic pentameter lines with a rhyme scheme of *abababcc*), and the stanza form used by Chaucer in his “Monk’s Tale” (eight lines rhyming *ababbcbc*). A revolutionary [innovation](#) in its day, the Spenserian stanza fell into general disuse during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was revived in the 19th century by the [Romantic](#) poets—*e.g.*, Byron in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Keats in “The Eve of St. Agnes,” and Shelley in “Adonais.”

Edmund Spenser devised the Spenserian stanza for his great work *The Faerie Queene* (1590). The stanza consists of eight lines of iambic pentameter followed by a single alexandrine, a twelve-syllable iambic line. The final line typically has a caesura, or break, after the first three feet. The rhyme scheme of these lines is "ababbcbcc." A perfect example of the form is--as one might expect--the first stanza of Book I of *The Faerie Queene*:

A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many a bloody felde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his foaming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemed, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fitt.

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The unit of Edmund Spenser's long poem *The Faerie Queene*, consisting of eight iambic-pentameter lines and a final alexandrine, with a rhyme scheme of ABABBCBCC. Later uses of this stanza form include John Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes," Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Adonais," and Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Lotos-Eaters."

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/spenserian-stanza>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spenserian_stanza#:~:text=The%20Spenserian%20stanza%20is%20a,of%20these%20lines%20is%20ABABBCBCC.

<https://www.britannica.com/art/Spenserian-stanza>