Scansion
process of determining the metrical rhythm of poetry

1. Focus on the multi-syllable words first. Ascertain the stressed and unstressed syllables of those words by **consulting a dictionary**. Mark the syllables: ′ above stressed syllables, ˇ above unstressed syllables.

2. Turn your attention to the single-syllable <u>nouns</u> and <u>verbs</u>. They are usually stressed due to their significance to meaning. However, helping verbs, because of their status as assistants, usually are not.

3. Notice the single-syllable <u>pronouns</u>, <u>adjectives</u>, and <u>adverbs</u>. Consider their importance based on what nouns and/or verbs they replace or modify and mark as stressed or unstressed accordingly.

4. <u>Prepositions</u>, <u>articles</u>, and <u>conjunctions</u> are usually unstressed. The article *the* can be stressed if the poem is emphasizing the singularity or uniqueness of an entity. Conjunctions, especially *and* as well as *but*, may be stressed if the <u>turn</u> they create is emphasized.

5. If all else fails, look for a pattern and follow it.