

The Shakespearean Sonnet: Worksheet

Now old desire doth in his deathbed lie,
And young affection gapes to be his heir;
That fair for which love groaned for and would die,
With tender Juliet matched, is now not fair.
Now Romeo is beloved and loves again,
Alike bewitchèd by the charm of looks;
But to his foe supposed he must complain,
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks.
Being held a foe, he may not have access
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear,
And she as much in love, her means much less
To meet her new belovèd anywhere;
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,
Temp'ring extremities with extreme sweet.

You will be assigned to do one part at a time. Do not work ahead. With your partner:

Part One:

1. Number each line, then break the sonnet up by placing a small line under each quatrain.
2. Look at the last words in each line and identify the rhyme scheme using the letters: a, b, c, d, e, f, g (meaning that you will assign a letter to each line, in chronological order).
3. Count the number of syllables in the first and second line of this sonnet.

Part Two:

4. Break the first two lines into five sets of syllable pairs: ex. And she | as much | in love |...
5. Put a U over the unstressed syllable and a / over the stressed syllable in each pair.
6. Read the line out loud, putting slightly more emphasis on the stressed syllables.
7. Count up the total syllables for each line in the remainder of the sonnet and put a star or a dot next to any irregular lines (not ten syllables?). We will discuss them as a class.