

## 4 Literary Analysis: Blank Verse

**Blank verse** is unrhymed poetry written in a meter called iambic pentameter. A line of iambic pentameter has five stressed syllables, each preceded by an unstressed syllable, as in the following example:

- Bŭt sóft! Wĥat líght thrŭgh yŏndĕr wíndŏw brĕaks?
- Ít ís thĕ eást, aŋd Júliĕt ís thĕ sŭn!

Much of *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* is written in blank verse. Shakespeare uses its formal meter to reinforce **character rank**. Important characters often do not speak in blank verse. Minor or comic characters often do not speak in verse. This deliberate change in style has an impact on the tone and mood of the character's interactions.

## 5 Reading Skill: Summarize

**Summarizing** is briefly stating the main ideas in a piece of writing. Stopping periodically to summarize what you have read helps you to check your comprehension before you read further.

Summarizing is especially useful when reading a play that has long passages of blank verse. When you encounter one of these passages, **read in sentences**—just as if you were reading a poem. Pause according to the punctuation instead of at the end of each line. As you become more accustomed to the form, you will be able to increase your speed.

Once you have grasped the meanings of individual sentences in blank verse, you can more easily and accurately summarize long passages.

## 6 Using the Strategy: Summarizing Chart

Use a chart like this one to summarize passages in this act of the drama.

Passage	Sentences	Summary
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, / Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part / Belonging to a man. O, be some other name! / What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet.	<p>1 What's Montague? 2 It is nor hand, nor foot, Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part Belonging to a man. 3 O, be some other name!</p> <p>4 What's in a name? 5 That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet.</p>	Montague is just a name; it's not who Romeo physically is, but Juliet wishes he had another name because of what she knows it represents.

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