

**Cinquains**  
**Creative Writing**  
**Everson**

Most cinquain poems consist of a single, 22 syllable stanza, but they can be combined into longer works. A cinquain consists of five lines. The first line has two syllables, the second line has four syllables, the third line has six syllables and the fourth line has eight syllables, the final line has two syllables: 2      4      6      8      2

The line length is the only firm rule, but there are other guidelines that people have tried to impose from time to time:

- Write in iambs (Two syllable groupings in which the first syllable is unstressed and the second syllable stressed. For Example: work STOPS and PEOPle START talkING) For the last line of the cinquain, however, both syllables should be stressed, RAIN CAME.
- Write about a noun. Cinquains generally fail if you try to make them about emotions, philosophies or other complex subjects. They should be about something concrete.
- Don't try to make each line complete or express a single thought. Each line should flow into the next or the poem will sound static.
- Cinquains work best if you avoid adjectives and adverbs. This doesn't mean you can't have any, but focus on the nouns and the verbs. This almost always works best in a cinquain.
- The poem should build toward a climax. The last line should serve as some sort of conclusion to the earlier thoughts. Often, the conclusion has some sort of surprise built into it.

One possible, but not required, format is as follows

Line 1: Title Noun  
Line 2: Description  
Line 3: Action  
Line 4: Feeling or Effect  
Line 5: Synonym of the initial noun.

**Sample Cinquains**

Tucson Rain

The smell  
Everyone moves  
To the window to look  
Work stops and people start talking  
Rain came

Opening Game

Game time  
Season looked good  
National champions  
We told ourselves as we sat down  
Not now