Lines or Paragraphs

Use structure to tell poetry from prose.

9.RL.1.B "Examine and analyze the characteristics that distinguish literary forms (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, poetry, prose, novel, drama, essay..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

POETRY

Poetry arranges words in lines and often stanzas. Line breaks can control pace, emphasis, and sound.

Moonlight pools
beside the gate
while crickets sing.

PROSE

Prose arranges complete sentences into paragraphs. Paragraph structure helps develop ideas, events, or information.

Ava labeled the jars in the science lab. Her notes recorded each measurement.

1 SORT

8 items

Read each passage and circle POETRY or PROSE according to its structure.

1. Dawn opens
one pale window
in the eastern sky.

POETRY PROSE

2. Jordan tightened the loose strap on his backpack. Then he hurried toward the library before it closed.

POETRY PROSE

3. The article explains how wetlands filter water. It also describes animals that depend on marsh plants.

POETRY PROSE

4. Beneath the bridge
river stones hum
with cold current.

POETRY PROSE

5. A paper kite
climbs past chimneys
and disappears.

POETRY PROSE

6. At noon, the mechanic tested the repaired engine. Its steady sound told her the problem was solved.

POETRY PROSE

7. I keep one question
folded inside
my pocket.

POETRY PROSE

8. The speaker paused after the final point. The quiet audience considered the proposal.

POETRY PROSE

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new poetry example with at least three lines. Write one new prose example with two complete sentences in one paragraph. Put the three poetry lines on separate lines; continue on another sheet if needed.

POETRY

PROSE

CHALLENGE

Choose one example you wrote. In exactly two sentences, explain how its line breaks or paragraph structure affects its meaning or style.

ANSWER KEY

Lines or Paragraphs

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Dawn opens one pale window in the eastern sky.	**POETRY**	Words are arranged in separate lines.
2	Jordan tightened the loose strap on his backpack. Then he hurried toward the library before it closed.	**PROSE**	Complete sentences are grouped as a paragraph.
3	The article explains how wetlands filter water. It also describes animals that depend on marsh plants.	**PROSE**	Information is presented in complete sentences in paragraph form.
4	Beneath the bridge river stones hum with cold current.	**POETRY**	The passage uses purposeful line breaks.
5	A paper kite climbs past chimneys and disappears.	**POETRY**	The words are arranged in lines rather than a paragraph.
6	At noon, the mechanic tested the repaired engine. Its steady sound told her the problem was solved.	**PROSE**	The passage is written as complete sentences in a paragraph.
7	I keep one question folded inside my pocket.	**POETRY**	Line breaks create the structure.
8	The speaker paused after the final point. The quiet audience considered the proposal.	**PROSE**	The ideas are expressed through complete sentences in paragraph form.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **POETRY**: Fog drifts low
  across the empty field
  until the fence disappears.
- **PROSE**: Rina checked the map at the trail split. She chose the path that led to the lake.

Challenge: The line breaks in my poetry example make the fog seem to move slowly across the field. Ending the last line with “disappears” emphasizes how completely the fog hides the fence.

Sort by visible structure, not by whether the passage tells a story or shares information. Accept original examples that clearly use the required line or paragraph structure.