**Writing Assignment: Shakespearean Sonnet**

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**Directions:** Write your own original Shakespearean sonnet. You may use Shakespeare’s sonnets as a guide, but your poem must be wholly original. It may be on any topic you choose, as long as it meets the requirements listed below.

**Organization of words and ideas:**   
  
In the English sonnet form known as the **Shakespearean sonnet,** the fixed requirements are fourteen iambic pentameter lines divided into three **quatrains** and a **couplet**, with the rhyme scheme **abab cdcd efef gg**.

The poem also contains a logical organization of **ideas**. This organization, of course, varies from sonnet to sonnet. In Sonnet 18, the first line’s question is followed by negative answers: The speaker’s beloved does bear some resemblance to a summer’s day, but only superficial ones. The first two quatrains concentrate on the summer day’s imperfections rather than on the loved one. Then in line 9 comes the **turn—**a shift in focus or thought. The speaker turns from the faulty summer’s day to the beloved, and by the end of the third quatrain, the speaker has entirely abandoned the opening comparison. Like most literary terms, the word *turn* is a metaphor; the speaker, figuratively speaking, is turning from one thing to another.

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| **LOGICAL ORGANIZATION** | **SONNET 18  WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE** | **FORMAL ORGANIZATION** | |
| A question and tentative answers | Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? | ***a*** | First quatrain |
| Thou art more lovely and more temperate. | ***b*** |  |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, | ***a*** |  |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | And summer’s lease hath all too short a date. | ***b*** |  |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, | ***c*** | Second quatrain |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | And often is his gold complexion dimmed; | ***d*** |  |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | And every fair from fair sometime declines, | ***c*** |  |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | By chance, or nature’s changing course untrimmed. | ***d*** |  |
| The turn | But thy eternal summer shall not fade, | ***e*** | Third quatrain |
| Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest, | ***f*** |  |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | Nor shall Death brag thou wander’st in his shade | ***e*** |  |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st. | ***f*** |  |
| A final answer | So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see, | ***g*** | Couplet |
| http://my.hrw.com/images/points/1.gif | So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. | ***g*** |  |

**Your sonnet must include:**

***Formal* organization**

-14 lines of iambic pentameter  
  
-3 quatrains and one rhyming couplet

-Shakespearean rhyme scheme

***Logical* organization**

-A question or problem introduced in the first line.

-Possible answers or effects of the question/problem in the first two quatrains.

-A *turn* or focal shift occurring at or near the ninth line.

-A final punctuating statement in the couplet that sums up the ideas or offers a final answer to the problem/question.

**-**An extended metaphor (a comparison that appears in throughout the poem).