

Another form of syllabic poetry is the nonet with a count that is very easy to remember:

Line 1 -- 9 syllables
Line 2 -- 8 syllables
Line 3 -- 7 syllables
Line 4 -- 6 syllables
Line 5 -- 5 syllables
Line 6 -- 4 syllables
Line 7 -- 3 syllables
Line 8 -- 2 syllables
Line 9 -- 1 syllable



The thing to remember about the nonet is that the most important line is the shortest. Line 9 is only one word long and it is the culmination of every comment and image that proceeds it. What you don't want is to end on an anti-climax. With this in mind, here is one example...

Sunlight through my window makes patterns--
Blocks of warmth slanting on the floor.
In winter when I was small
I'd put a beach towel down
And pretend-sunbathe
Near pretend seas
Longing for
Summer
Sun.



Here the first and last syllables of the poem are the same, bringing the idea around full-circle and keeping the writing tight. The last word is also the most significant word of the poem. The whole verse would have been drastically weakened if the last three lines had read:

It's the sun
I long
For.

One other tip: try to make each line count -- so that each has something significant to add. "Filler lines" (or lines that add nothing to the image you are constructing) tend to weigh the poem down with extra fat and dilute the overall effect. And remember: out of all the lines, the last is the most important. It stands entirely on its own and yet must bring the whole poem to its conclusion. That, and the need to stick to the syllable count, is all you need to know about the nonet form. Here are a few more examples...

Saturday night comes quickly. We rush
To put the dinner things away
And swish the kids through their baths
In time to snuggle down
With cushions ready
To peak over
While we watch
Doctor
Who.



Should you walk through a tangled woodland
You'll look down so that you don't trip.
But interlaced above you
The leaves form a backdrop
For a life and death
Drama staged by
A cast of
Nesting
Birds.

There is nothing more serene than bees
Humming in the sun-bathed flowers,
Or a child who's fast asleep
Or the pale-rose hours
Of dawn when you see
The world becalmed
And breathing
Low and
Deep.



But hang on a minute: that last nonet rhymed -- is that allowed?
Of course, it is. Nonets can rhyme or not -- however the mood takes you.
So play with the form for awhile and see how you get on. Good luck!