



We've talked about rhythm and rhyme, but there is another device that controls how a line is read -- Pause. Pause is generally denoted by punctuation within or at the end of a line: commas, full stops, hyphens, question marks, colons and semi-colons.

The most basic example of how pause is used within poetry is the **end-stop**. Happily, we again have something that does just what it says on the tin: when a pause or punctuation mark comes at the end of a line, it is called an end-stop.

If the thought spills over from one line into the next with no pause, this is called a **run-on line** or **enjambement** (French for "striding-over").

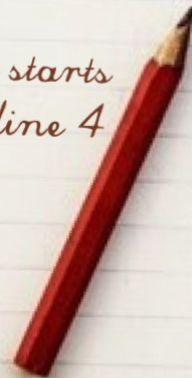
And finally, when a strong pause occurs somewhere within the line, this is called a **caesura**. To see all this in action, let's look at the last stanza of "From the Trenches":

He wishes to kill nothing now,  
Nor does he want to die.  
"Advance!" the Sergeant shouts. He does  
Beneath the clear blue sky.

Lines 1 and 2 are examples  
of end stops (where the  
pause falls at the end of the  
line).

The full stop in line 3 is a  
caesura (where the pause  
falls within the line).

And the sentence which starts  
on line 3 and ends on line 4  
is a run-on line.



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You get the idea. These different ways of using pause within your work are quite useful. Now, you don't have to hesitate at the end of each line, but can carry thoughts and sentences over. Ultimately, it gives you greater control over how your poetry flows.