

Scansion



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Aids in Scansion

- ▶ Terasawa's Appendix B
- ▶ “Electronic Beowulf”

Step 1: Locate the Four Lifts in the Long Line

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 - ▶ Prepositions, demonstratives, etc. take stress if they appear *after* their stress word
 - ▶ Finite verbs, adverbs, etc. take stress if they appear anywhere except *clustered in the first or second dip of the first halfline of the clause*
 - ▶ Finite verbs furthermore take stress if they alliterate
 - ▶ The second element in a compound may count as a full lift where needed

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Light Verse (Type A₃)

If you can only identify one lift in the a-verse, you may be looking at a light verse. To make sure, verify that the sole lift alliterates with the b-verse and that it is preceded by several unstressed syllables.

Step 2: Identify any Half-Lifts

Secondary Stress

- ▶ The second element in a general compound
 - ▶ *heofonrice, wuldorfæder*

Tertiary Stress

- ▶ Long derivational suffixes
 - ▶ *heofonlic, aldorleas, befignes*
- ▶ The medial syllable in a class 2 weak verb form
 - ▶ *sceawode, hogodon, wuldrige, herian*
- ▶ The second element in a compound proper noun
 - ▶ *Bēowulf, Hrōþgār*, etc.
- ▶ The second element in a compound no longer transparently recognizable as such
 - ▶ *gārsecg, hlāford*.
- ▶ Prefixed words in which the prefix bears full stress
 - ▶ *unriht, inwit*

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Do not resolve when:

- ▶ The resulting verse would have fewer than four syllables
- ▶ The first syllable in the sequence and the preceding syllable are both full lifts
- ▶ (The first syllable is under secondary stress and the second is historically long)

Step 4: Identify Verse Type

1. Start at the end
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Table 1: The Sievers types

Type	Basic Pattern	Maximum Pattern	Minimal Example
A ₁	/x/x	xx/xxxxx/x	wordum secge
A ₂	/\ /x	xx/\ /x	inwitþancum
A ₂	/x/\	xx/xxxxx/\	hord ond hlēoburh
A ₂	/\ /\	/\ /\	siġerōf kyning
A ₃	xx/x	xxxxxx/x	ðe wē ealle
B	x/x/	xxxxxx/xx/	þurh hāestne hād
C	x//x	xxxxxxx//x	geþyld hafa
D ₁	//\x	xx//\x	þēodcyninga
D ₂	//x\	xx//x\	flēat fāmigheals
D* ₁	/x/\x	xx/xxx/\x	eorles andwlitan
D* ₂	/x/x\	xx/xxx/x\	wearp ða wundenmæl
E	/\x/	/\xx/	dēaðfāġe dēog

Verifying Your Identification

- ▶ (CLASP)
- ▶ Bliss, *The Metre of “Beowulf”*
- ▶ “Electronic Beowulf”

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