



Sonnet Unscrambler

Student Name _____ Date _____

Try your knowledge and luck to unscramble the following sonnet. Then determine its meaning and message:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;

Hints for Unscrambling the Sonnet

Sonnets are often organized in much the same way as a paragraph.

1. Locate the 2 lines that provide an introduction and generalization about the sonnet's subject. These will begin the sonnet.
2. Find the two rhyming lines that explain what the overall point of the sonnet is. These will be sonnet's concluding lines.
3. Group the lines by rhyme, then group them by subject. See if the end punctuation to each line provides some clues to grouping.
4. Look at the beginning word in each line. If the line begins with a conjunction, such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *yet*, or *so*, try to find the line before it that links with it in content. Look for conjunctions that show a contrast to the previous thoughts, such as *but* or *yet*. These introduce an important shift in thought or a different angle on the subject and can help with grouping the lines by meaning. Based on the number of lines that take the same angle on the topic, determine where the shift in the sonnet occurs.