

# DSA Newscast

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## TWELVE IN POETRY

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*The Dozenal Society of America is a voluntary, nonprofit educational corporation, organized for the conduct of research and education of the public in the use of dozenal (also called duodecimal or base twelve) in calculations, mathematics, weights and measures, and other branches of pure and applied science.*

**R**EADERS WILL, of course, recall the Poetical Diversions we've been sharing these last several years, and will note that dozens can certainly be the *subject* of poetry, even if it's (at best) merely entertaining doggerel. However, we rarely consider the influence of dozenal on the humanities, so let's do so in a small way here. However, how does twelve influence the craft of poetry itself?

Ultimately, of course, poetry takes a great many forms in all languages, but let's focus on one particular subset of English poetry in particular: English metric poetry, or as it is often called, "lyric" poetry.

This poetry is typically built upon lines which are made up of *feet*, each foot being (at least typically) a pattern of syllabic stress. So, for example, a *trochee* is a foot with the pattern "stressed unstressed"; a *spondee* is two stressed syllables; an *anapest* is two unstressed syllables followed a stressed one; and the most "natural" English foot is the *iamb*, which is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one.

These iambs are, as the sentence above implies, often considered the most natural foot for English poetry. Iambs are used extensively in English, as the archetypal English-language poet demonstrates:

But sōft! What līght through  
yōnder wīndow brēaks?

Notice that every other syllable,

starting with the second, is stressed; this is the iamb. Notice also that this line has five feet; five iambs per line, for a total of ten syllables, is the famous *iambic pentameter*, which has been used for the vast bulk of English-language lyric poetry.

But why *pentameter*? Well, the simple answer is "because the Greeks and Romans wrote in pentameter." (Though theirs was dactylic, rather than iambic.) This led to Italian and French pentameter (with some variations, often allowing an unstressed syllable to close a line or half-line), and Chaucer picked it up from them; hence we have used it since. However, French poets later began using the *alexandrine*, a twelve-syllable line. This line has rarely been used in English poetry; but does it offer any advantages over the ten-syllable line of pentameter?

For one thing, iambic hexameter (twelve syllables, six iambic feet) provides us the ability to divide our line into equal parts much more easily than pentameter does. The archetypal alexandrine line is divided into halves of six syllables (three feet) each. See below, using the solidus (slash) to show the division:

we cut it where we wish; / we  
use the parts we need;

Even such a simple division, however, is difficult in pentameter; we'd have to divide our central foot, which can certainly be done, but seems ex-

treme for such a common need.

As we see so often, though, the advantages go well beyond mere halves. Let's say we have three ideas we want to express and one line in which to express them, to match the overall style of the poem. Hexameter makes this easy:

then we have thirds, / a longer space, / for this great deed.

Quarters are similarly easy, supposing you can fit the necessary

words into three syllables each:

First, quarters; / we have fourths; / they're short but / do the work;

We need to divide some of our feet here ("–ters; we" is a foot, for example), but for a line of this type, unlikely to be common and designed to be used for a specific purpose, such division is unobjectionable.

So using twelve syllables to the line provides some additional possibili-

ties even in such a non-mathematical field as poetry. (Though the presence of so much dividing and counting should tell us something about how non-mathematical this field really is.) Ultimately, of course, pentameter is a perfectly respectable choice, with an unchallenged pedigree in English-language verse. But twelve offers us something to consider in literature, as well as in mathematics and science. Let's give it a shot, and see what art we can create.

## DOZENAL *DIGITS* RECEIVES ACCOLADES

James Simenc's (#561) *Digits* podcast has been plugged in these pages twice now, and we'd like to give it another plug now. His episode 4, "The Dozenalist Manifesto, or Twelve is the New Ten" has been named by IndieWire one of the fifty best podcast episodes of the year!

<http://www.indiewire.com/gallery/best-podcast-2017-episodes-so-far/#!8/digits-3/>

(Note that, due to some strange redirection issues, you might get #50 rather than the dozenal episode, which is #43; you may have to click back to find it.)

## DOZENAL NEWS

Apparently, something about the dozenal system is catching people's attention. If you don't listen to *Digits* already, you should; at the very least, listen to this episode, and mention it to any friends who listen to podcasts. You'll learn something about math, and you'll be helping spread our love of dozens to others.

Steven Jacks, whose dozenal website we plugged in our last issue, has made this app available for free. If you use an Apple device, check it out!

## STEPHEN ALARIC ON DOZENAL

In January, Stephen Alaric published another brief primer on dozenalism that could be worthwhile as a reference for interested neophytes:

<http://www.alaricstephen.com/main-featured/2017/1/9/dozenal>

He does a nice job explaining the concept of dozenal, and demonstrates how to "cast out elevens" the way that, in decimal, we can cast out nines. Worth perusal.

## DOZENAL CALCULATOR FOR APPLE DEVICES!

There are several options for dozenal calculators on Android devices; now there is a good option for Apple iOS devices, as well!

<http://www.stevenjacks.com/apps/dozenal-calculator/>

## SOCIETY BUSINESS

### ANNUAL MEETING DATE AND LOCATION

Your annual meeting of the Dozenal Society of America has been set. It will be on October 11 (13), 2017, in Atlanta, GA, from 10:00–15:00 in the afternoon. Its location is the Atlanta AMA Conference Center in downtown

Atlanta.

We're already looking forward to some very interesting presentations; we hope you'll be able to join us!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As mentioned earlier, the DSA is an all-volunteer organization, and we pay

no salaries. As a result, everything that we do comes out of the spare time of our members, time that they have to take away from their families, jobs, or other obligations.

We all love dozenals and enjoy assisting the Society in educating people about them; however, as the Society expands and does more, we find ourselves in need of more help.

Fortunately, the Society has a large membership with a very broad range of professions and experience. If you think you can spare any time or

effort for the cause of educating the world about dozenals, please let us know:

[contact@dozenal.org](mailto:contact@dozenal.org)

You can help as much or as little as you'd like. Thank you.

## POETICAL DIVERSION

### THE TWELVE

A number so divisible, we have the po'er;  
we cut it where we wish; we use the parts we need;  
First, quarters; we have fourths; they're short but do the work;  
then we have thirds, a longer space, for this great deed.

A sixth, so choppy and so short, will get it done;  
a half is full of joy; we've room to write it all;  
How can we e'er compare such wealth to two and five?  
Before such riches hateful Ten will ever fall!

## DONATIONS

Members, please remember that while dues are no longer required for membership, we still rely on the generosity of members to keep the DSA going. Donations of any amount, large or small, are welcome and needed.

A donation of \$16; (\$18.) will procure Subscription membership, and entitles the payer to receive both a digital and a paper copy of the *Bulletin* if requested. Other members will receive only a digital copy. To invoke this privilege, please notify the Editor of the Bulletin, John Volan, at

[editor@dozenal.org](mailto:editor@dozenal.org)

As members know, we are a volunteer organization which pays no salaries. As such, every penny you donate goes toward furthering the DSA's goals.

It may be worth considering a monthly donation; say, \$3, or \$6, or whatever seems reasonable to you. This can be set up quite easily with PayPal, which is available at our web site.

Of course, if you prefer to donate by check, you may send them to our worthy Treasurer, Jay Schiffman, payable to the Dozenal Society of America, at:

Jay Schiffman  
604-36 South Washington  
Square, #815  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-4115

Remember, too, that the DSA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; as such, your contributions may be tax deductible under applicable law.

Thanks again for your assistance; it's your donations that keep the DSA going. We can't keep doing it without you.

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## FOR SALE

The DSA is pleased to offer the following for sale. These are all either at cost, or the proceeds go to the Society.

Item	Price (\$)
Dozenal Wall Calendar, 1201	10.05
Dozenal Planning Calendar, 1201	8.32
TGM: A Coherent Dozenal Metrology	8.00
Manual of the Dozenal System	3.46
A Dozenal Primer	4.50

Prices are, unfortunately but by necessity, in decimal. To find these works, simply go to: <http://www.lulu.com/shop.ep> and enter the appropriate terms. E.g., searching for “TGM dozenal” will turn up the TGM book.

We hope to offer other titles, and even some other items (such as dozenal clocks and the like), in the future.

**EACH ONE, TEACH ONE**