

Grade 7 English Language Arts

Week of January 18 – January 22

Lesson 3: Poetry Sound Devices

Two important elements of many poems are rhyme and rhythm. To understand these elements think of music. Rhyme is like the lyrics (words of a song) and rhythm is like the beat.

Rhyme Time

Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. - William Wordsworth

Did you notice that the last word in each line of this poem (*trees* and *breeze*) sounds the same? Like many poems, this one contains words that rhyme. **Rhyme** is the repetition of the same sound in two or more words.

No doubt you can tell when two words rhyme—for example, *bear* and *care*; *silly* and *chili*; *wheel* and *feel*. The end sound in each word is the same, but the beginning is different.

Rhyme can occur at the end of lines of poetry, like in the Wordsworth example above. Rhyme can also occur in the middle of a line, like in this poem:

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud.- Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Many poems also have rhymes that follow a pattern. This is called a **rhyme scheme**. You will learn more about rhyme scheme shortly. It is helpful if you understand rhythm first.

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Rhythm

We've all done it. Our favourite song comes on the radio and we start tapping our foot or drumming the tabletop. We are moved by the **rhythm**, or beat, of the music.

Poems have rhythm too. And like songs, the rhythm of a poem is often predictable. We can guess what the "beat" of one line of a poem will be after hearing or reading the previous lines. This predictable rhythm is called **metre**.

Rhyme schemes are always identified with letters of the alphabet:

I wandered lonely as a cloud	a
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,	b
When all at once I saw a crowd,	a
A host, of golden daffodils;	b
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,	c
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.	c

Many poets use special devices or elements to help the reader understand and enjoy their poems. In this lesson you will learn about three poetic devices that emphasize sounds in poems: **alliteration**, **onomatopoeia**, and **repetition**.

Alliteration

Have you ever tried saying this, five times in a row, and really fast?

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

Sentences like this are called tongue twisters. They have lots of letters at the beginning of words that “twist” your tongue when you try to say them.

Poems often have repeating letters, too, but not as many as tongue twisters. They are intended to create a rhythmic and interesting sound pattern in a poem.

The use of repeating letters at the beginning of words in a poem is called **alliteration**. Here is an example of alliteration from the second line of the well-known children’s rhyme, “Twinkle, twinkle, little star”:

how I wonder what you are. . .

Did you notice the repeating **w** sound—**how**, **wonder**, **what**? That’s the alliteration.

Alliteration is one of the easiest literary devices to spot because the words usually start with the same letter. Be careful, though, because there are exceptions to this rule: **phone** and **funny**, **know** and **news**, even **silly** and **cereal**! So don’t just read the poem—listen to how the words sound.

Onomatopoeia



Wham, *Bang*, and *Boom* are all examples of another common sound device called **onomatopoeia**. It is a long word with a weird spelling but it’s easy to figure out. Onomatopoeia describes a word whose sound is similar to its meaning. *Wham* means just what it sounds like—something has been hit hard. *Bang* is a loud noise. *Boom* is a noisy explosion. *Squishy* is another example. Doesn’t it sound like wet mud? How about *gargle*? It sounds a lot like the noise you make when you rinse your mouth with mouthwash. Look at this poem for more examples. Notice how several of the words sound like a clock.

Slowly ticks the big clock; Tick-tock, tick-tock!

But Cuckoo clock ticks double-quick; Tick-a-tock-a, tick-a-tock-a, tick-a-tock-a, tick!

Can you think of other words that sound like their meaning? There are lots of them!

Repetition

Have you ever had someone - maybe a little brother or sister - follow you around and repeat everything you say? Isn't it annoying?

Unlike your little brother or sister, poets can use repetition without driving you crazy. In fact, repetition can make a poem very interesting and give it a nice rhythm. Repetition can also tell us that some words are extra important to the poem and need to be said more than once.

Repetition, then, is the repeating of certain words in a poem for a pleasing effect or to emphasize an important idea.

Here is an example of repetition from "The Highwayman," a famous poem by Albert Noyes.

PART ONE The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees, The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas, The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor, And the highwayman came riding-- Riding--riding-- The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

In this passage, the word *riding* is repeated several times. This makes us wonder where the highwayman is riding to. It creates suspense.

Repetition in poetry or songs also can enhance the rhythm. Do you notice a rhythm in the poem with the word *riding* repeated? You might also feel the rhythm of the galloping horse when you read the repeating word.