

Lecture Ten: Rhyme and Rhythm

*Lesson Plan

- 1-Introduction
- 2-Rhyme and Rhyme Scheme
- 3-Rhythm in Poetry
- 4-Evaluation

*Lesson Objectives:

- To identify different types of rhyme in given poems
- To find out the correct pattern of the rhyme scheme in any given example
- To mark stressed and unstressed syllables in short lines to find the meter
- To explore the rhythmic structure of various poems

*Keywords

Rhyme, Rhyme Scheme, Rhythm, Scansion, Prosody

1-Introduction

When we read rhyming poetry, one of the things we might notice is how the words often have a rhythmical quality; that is, there is a pattern to the rhythm of the words that makes them pleasant to say and easy to remember. Sometimes the rhythm is a simple one, and sometimes it's more complex, but it's not there by accident. Poets arrange their words in such a way as to create those rhythmical patterns.

This is different from rhyme, which is created when similar sounding words are paired (cat/bat, funnel/ tunnel). When rhyming poems also have a rhythm in the words, they are much more enjoyable to read. By contrast, rhyming poems that do not have a rhythm are usually not as enjoyable to read.

2-Rhyme & Rhyme Scheme

Here is an example of a poem that uses rhyming:

Fire and Ice

By Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,

Some say in ice.

From what I've tasted of desire

I hold with those who favour fire.

But if it had to perish twice,

*I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice*

The words **fire** and **desire** rhyme, as well as the words **ice**, **twice**, and **suffice**. Also, **hate** and **great** rhyme too.

The **rhyme** consists generally of identity of sounds at the end of lines of verse. It has many **types**, for example:

*Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
The things we must believe are few or plain*

The words ‘vain’ and ‘plain’ rhyme together, both are stressed monosyllabic words. Such a rhyme is called **masculine rhyme**.

When the stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable, the rhyme is called **feminine rhyme**.

*Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow.*

The words ‘sorrow’ and ‘morrow’ are bisyllabic words and the stress falls on the first syllables; there is also what is known as the **doubled rhyme** (the last two syllables rhyme together). In English poetry, **triple rhyme** is also a rhyming type that is used for comic or satiric purposes. Sometimes syllables within the same line may rhyme as in the last stanza of Browning’s ‘Confessions’:

*Alas,
We loved, sir – used to meet;
How **sad** and **bad** and **mad** it was –
But then how it was sweet!*

The words ‘sad’, ‘bad’ and ‘mad’ in the passage above rhyme though within the same line. This is an example of **internal rhyme**.

When rhymes are only rhymes in appearance and not in sound as in the case of ‘alone’ and ‘done’ or ‘remove’ and ‘love’ we have eye rhyme.

-Rhyme Scheme is the pattern in which rhyming happens. It refers to the pattern of sounds that repeats at the end of a line or stanza. Rhyme schemes can change line by line, stanza by stanza, or can continue throughout a poem. Poems with rhyme schemes are generally written in formal verse, which has a strict meter: a repeating pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Rhyme scheme patterns are formed in different ways using letters of the alphabet. Lines designated with the same letter rhyme with each other. For example, the rhyme scheme ABAB means the 1st and 3rd lines of a stanza, or the “A”s, rhyme with each other, and the 2nd line rhymes with the 4th line, or the “B”s rhyme together.

Example:

There once was a big fat cat, a

That liked to eat cute little mice. b

All day he watched while he sat, a

For those mice that tasted so nice. b

So, **cat** and **sat** rhyme, as well as **mice** and **nice**. So, the rhyme scheme is a, b, a, b.

3-Rhythm in poetry

Rhythm is to borrow Plato’s words, ‘an order of movement’ in time. Rhythm is usually maintained in connection with poetry or music. However, readers must have heard people talking of the rhythms of nature or even biological rhythm. Perhaps periodic repetition of a certain pattern is the *sine qua non* of rhythm. All the arts painting, sculpture, and architecture – have their rhythm. Additionally, metre, rhyme, and alliteration contribute to the rhythm of a poem.

Rhyme and rhythm usually work together to shape a poem. Rhythm prepares the reader for the rhyme, and rhyme supports the rhythm. When they are used well, they make the poem

sound smooth and organized. In some poems, poets may also break these patterns to create special effects.

Poets do not always follow strict rhythm rules. Sometimes, they change the pattern to make a line more expressive. These changes can show strong feelings, tension, or important ideas. By breaking the regular rhythm, poets can draw the reader's attention to certain parts of the poem.

Rhyme and rhythm are not only about sound; they also help create meaning. A regular rhythm can suggest calmness or order, while an irregular rhythm may suggest confusion or emotion. Pleasant rhymes can show harmony, while unusual rhymes may show conflict. In this way, sound and meaning are closely connected in poetry.

Prosody which takes into account the historical period to which poem belongs, the poetic genre and the specificities of a poet's style goes closer to the rhythmic aspect of a poem.

For instance, quantity (or vowel length) is a rhythmic but not a metrical feature of English poetry. This is because English does not impose any strict regularity in quantity as it does with respect to stress. For example in 'sweet rose' the vowel sounds can be lengthened or shortened at will. However, the lengthening and shortening of the vowel sound does affect the rhythm of the poem. Similarly, the rise and fall in the human voice, especially in reading poetry which is called **cadence** is a rhythmic not a metrical feature. Many other factors contribute to the rhythm of a piece of verse.

Finally, rhyme and rhythm are essential parts of poetry. They shape how poems sound, feel, and mean. By understanding these elements, one can appreciate poetry as a careful and creative use of language. Learning about rhyme and rhythm is therefore an important step in studying literature.

4-Evaluation

Task One: Match the rhyming words below.

1. squeak	Shuttle
2. pray	stray
3. sharpen	hour
4. phone	boat
5. empower	peak
6. helpful	stone
7. strange	open
8. motion	range
9. puddle	cupful
10. note	lotion

Task Two:

a-Explain how do rhyme and rhythm work together to create meaning.

b-Clarify the difference between the internal rhyme and the eye rhyme

c-Scan the famous lines to William Shakespeare (Hamlet) and find out the rhyme scheme:

To be, or not to be,

That is the question.