

Handout # 6 Rhyme Scheme

Definition: The way in which a poet arranges rhymes throughout a poem is called a rhyme scheme. It is customary to show the pattern of a rhyme scheme by using the letters of the alphabet, attaching the same letter to words that rhyme together.

The rhyme scheme for Tennyson's "The Eagle" would be indicated this way: aaa / bbb.

He clasps the crag with crooked *hands*; (a)
Close to the sun in lonely *lands*, (a)
Ringed with the azure world, he *stands*. (a)

The wrinkled sea beneath him *crawls*; (b)
He watches from his mountain *walls*, (b)
And like a thunderbolt he *falls*. (b)

Assignment: Complete the rhyme scheme for Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Whose woods these are I think I know, _____
His house is in the village though _____
He will not see me stopping here _____
To watch his woods fill up with snow _____

My little horse must think it queer _____
To stop without a farmhouse near _____
Between the woods and frozen lake _____
The darkest evening of the year. _____

He gives his harness bells a shake _____
To ask if there is some mistake. _____
The only other sound's the sweep _____
Of easy wind and downy flake _____

The woods are lovely, dark and deep, _____
But I have promises to keep, _____
And miles to go before I sleep, _____
And miles to go before I sleep. _____

1. What do you notice about the rhyme scheme? _____

2. Why does Frost choose to repeat the final rhyme in the last stanza? _____

3. On a separate sheet of paper, analyze the poem using the TP-CASTT method.

Rhyme

Poetry appeals to the senses. Chief among them? Sound. Good poetry pleases the ear. Remember, poetry was for many years an oral tradition. No -- not all poetry rhymes. Rhyming poetry did not even appear regularly in the English language until sometime after the Norman conquest (1066). And, yes, poetry is decorative. However, used skillfully, rhyme can contribute significantly to the following:

1. rhythm
2. mood
3. meaning

Definition: Rhyme usually means end rhyme -- that is, words at the end of one line having the same vowel (or consonant) sound as words at the end of one or more other lines. However, other forms of rhyme include **internal rhyme**, **sight rhyme**, and **half rhymes**.

“A Psalm of Life” by Longfellow illustrates **end rhyme**.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Poe’s “The Raven” is an example of **internal rhyme**.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore --
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door --
Only this and nothing more.”

This excerpt from a poem by John Milton shows **sight rhyme**.

Had not his weekly course of carriage failed.
But lately finding him so long at home,
And thinking how his journey’s end was come,
And that he had tane up his latest inn . . .

Half rhyme is used by George Herbert in “The Collar.”

While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
 Away! Take heed;
 I will abroad.
Call in thy death’s head there; tie up thy fears.
 He that forbears