

Euphony

Definition of Euphony

The literary device euphony is derived from the Greek word *euphonos*, which means “sweet-voiced.” It can be defined as the use of words and phrases that are distinguished as having a wide range of noteworthy melody or loveliness in the sounds they create. It gives pleasing and soothing effects to the ear due to repeated vowels and smooth consonants. It can be used with other [literary devices](#) like [alliteration](#), [assonance](#) and [rhyme](#) to create more melodic effects. Examples of euphony are commonly found in poetry and literary [prose](#).

Features of Euphony

All euphony examples share the following features:

Euphony involves the use of long vowel sounds, which are more melodious than consonants.

Euphony involves the use of harmonious consonants, such as l, m, n, r, and soft f and v sounds.

Euphony uses soft consonants or semi-vowels, including w, s, y, and th or wh, extensively to create more pleasant sounds.

Examples of Euphony in Literature

Example #1: *Ode to Autumn* (By John Keats)

“Season of **mists** and **mellow** fruitfulness,
Close bosom-**friend** of the **maturing** sun;
Conspiring with him how to **load** and bless
With **fruit** the **vines** that round the **thatch** –eaves run;
To bend with apples the **moss’d** cottage-trees,
And **fill** all **fruit** with **ripeness** to the core;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees...”

There are many different words and phrases that can create euphony. However, in the given piece, Keats has used euphony in the whole poem, which gives soothing and pleasing effects. Long vowel sounds like mellow, maturing, load, ripeness, and semi-vowel sounds, like s and w, are exquisitely used.

Example #2: *Success* (By Emily Dickinson)

“**Success** is counted **sweetest**
By **those** who ne’er **succeed**.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need. Not one of all the purple host
Who took the flag to-day
Can tell the definition,
So clear, of **victory**,

As he, defeated, dying,
On **whose** forbidden ear
The distant strains of triumph
Break, agonized and clear!”

In this poem, Emily Dickinson has used soft and harmonious consonants to create euphony. For example, s, v, and f sounds run throughout the poem. Such words are melodic in nature, hence they produce pleasing sounds.

Example #3: *The Lotos-Eaters* (By Alfred Lord Tennyson)

“‘Courage!’ he said, and pointed toward the **land**,
‘This **mounting** wave will roll us shoreward **soon**.’
In the afternoon they came unto a **land**
In which it **seemed** always afternoon.

Breathing like one that hath a **weary** dream.
Full-faced above the valley **stood** the **moon**;
And like a downward **smoke**, the **slender stream**
Along the cliff to **fall** and pause and fall did **seem**.”

Tennyson is famous for using euphony in most of his poems. He uses long vowels and semi-vowels of soft consonants. The long vowels, such as mounting, soon, languid and slender whereas soft vowels include l, s, f and w sounds that are giving sense of pleasantness.

Example #4: *Macbeth* (By William Shakespeare)

“...Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the **last** syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have **lighted fools**
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a **walking** shadow, a poor player
That struts and **frets** his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, **full** of **sound** and **fury**,
Signifying nothing.”

The language of Shakespeare is a great example of euphony. He has used pleasant, harmonious, and musical sounds in the above excerpt from *Macbeth*. Here, the euphonic words are shown in bold.

Function of Euphony

The purpose of using euphony is to bring about peaceful and pleasant feelings in a piece of literary work. The readers enjoy reading such pieces of literature or poems. The long vowels create more melodious effect than short vowels and consonants, making the sounds harmonious and soothing. In addition, pronunciation and enunciation become agreeable and easy. Furthermore, euphony is used in poetry and speeches to convey messages effectively to the [audience](#) and the readers.