

Epizeuxis

Definition of Epizeuxis

Epizeuxis is derived from the Greek word *epizeugnumi*, which means “fastening together.” It is defined as a rhetorical device in which the words or phrases are repeated in quick succession, one after another, for emphasis. It is also called “[diacope](#).”

Difference Between Epistrophe, Anaphora and Epizeuxis

These three [literary devices](#) have a major difference, in that [epistrophe](#) is the [repetition](#) of the words at the end of successive sentences, such as “Where now? Who now? When now...” (*The Unnamable*, by Samuel Beckett). Whereas, [anaphora](#) is the reverse of epistrophe; it is a repetition of the words and phrases at the beginning of successive sentences. The following is an example of anaphora:

“This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,

(*Richard II*, by William Shakespeare)

The third term **epizeuxis** is less refined than epistrophe and anaphora. But, it makes a very strong impact. Epizeuxis is the repetition of words in succession within a same sentence, such as “The horror, the horror,” in *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad.

Examples of Epizeuxis in Literature

Example #1: *Cymbeline* (By William Shakespeare)

“**Hark, hark!** the lark at heaven’s gate sings,
And Phoebus gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To open their golden eyes:
With everything that pretty is,
My lady sweet, **arise:**
Arise, arise!”

This is considered a perfect example of epizeuxis. Shakespeare has used words, like “hark” and “arise,” intentionally in order to emphasize his point.

Example #2: *King Lear* (By William Shakespeare)

“And my poor fool is hanged! **No, no, no** life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou’lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never!”

Shakespeare has beautifully used this device in this paragraph. In the first line, he has emphasized “no,” repeating it three times. Similarly, he has repeated “never” four times in quick succession without using any other word.

Example #3: *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (By Tom Wolfe)

“Phil Spector tamps his frontal lobes and closes his eyes and holds his breath. As long as he holds his breath, it will not rain, there will be no raindrops, no schizoid water wobbling, sideways, straight back, it will be an **even, even, even, even, even, even, even** world...”

In the above extract, the word “even” is repeated at the end. This repetition makes this text notable for the readers. Also, it brings an emotional effect within the text.

Example #4: *The Spam* (By Monty Python)

“Waitress: **Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!** Bloody Vikings. You can’t have egg, bacon, Spam and sausage without the Spam.

Mrs. Bun: I don’t like Spam!

Mr. Bun: Shh dear, don’t cause a fuss. I’ll have your Spam. I love it. I’m having **Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam,** baked beans, **Spam, Spam, Spam and Spam ...”**

The author has repeatedly used the words “shut up” and “Spam.” Although, the repeated words are used here to emphasize a point, they are giving a comic effect too.

Example #5: *Coda* (By Dorothy Parker)

“There’s little in taking or giving,
There’s little in water or wine;
This living, this living, this living
Was never a project of mine.”

In this excerpt, the poet uses “this living” repeatedly for emphasis. These words provide melody and emphasis on a specific way of living. Also, it creates an artistic effect in the poem.

Example #6: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (By Samuel Coleridge)

“Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea.”

Here, the repetition of words “alone,” “all,” and “wide” is creating a rhythmic effect. These words draw the attention of the readers toward the supernatural incident, which has killed crew members of the ship, and has left the mariner all alone.

Function of Epizeuxis

The major function of epizeuxis is to create an appeal to the emotions of readers — to hit them with a bang. It is employed to inspire, encourage, and motivate the [audience](#). Epizeuxis examples are found in literary writings as well as political speeches. As a literary device, it furnishes freshness to the texts, and gives artistic effect to a piece. Apart from adding [rhythm](#) to the texts, epizeuxis makes the reading of the literary text pleasurable and memorable. Also, it helps in drawing the focus to a particular thought, idea, or emotion through repetition.