

Alliteration

Alliteration Definition

Alliteration is derived from Latin's "*Latira*". It means "letters of alphabet". It is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series.

Consider the following examples:

But a better butter makes a batter better.
A big bully beats a baby boy.

Both sentences are alliterative because the same first letter of words (B) occurs close together and produces alliteration in the sentence. An important point to remember here is that alliteration does not depend on letters but on sounds. So the phrase *not knotty* is alliterative, but *cigarette chase* is not.

Common Examples of Alliteration

In our daily life, we notice alliteration in the names of different companies. It makes the name of a company catchy and easy to memorize. Here are several common alliteration examples.

Dunkin' Donuts
PayPal
Best Buy
Coca-Cola
Life Lock
Park Place
American Apparel
American Airlines
Chuckee Cheese's
Bed Bath & Beyond
Krispy Kreme
The Scotch and Sirloin

We also find alliterations in names of people, making such names prominent and easy to be remembered. For instance, both fictional characters and real people may stand out prominently in your mind due to the alliterative effects of their names. Examples are:

Ronald Reagan
Sammy Sosa
Jesse Jackson
Michael Moore
William Wordsworth
Mickey Mouse
Porky Pig
Lois Lane
Marilyn Monroe
Fred Flintstone
Donald Duck
Spongebob Squarepants
Seattle Seahawks

Alliteration Examples in Literature

Example #1

From Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

In the above lines we see alliteration ("b", "f" and "s") in the phrases "breeze blew", "foam flew", "furrow followed", and "silent sea".

Example #2

From James Joyce's "The Dead"

"His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly

last end, upon all the living and the dead.”

We notice several instances of alliteration in the above mentioned [prose](#) work of James Joyce. Alliterations are with “s” and “f” in the phrases “swooned slowly” and “falling faintly”.

Example #3

From Maya Angelou’s “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”

“Up the aisle, the moans and screams merged with the sickening smell of woolen black clothes worn in summer weather and green leaves wilting over yellow flowers.”

Maya gives us a striking example of alliteration in the above extract with the letters “s” and “w”. We notice that alliterative words are interrupted by other non-alliterative words among them but the effect of alliteration remains the same. We immediately notice alliteration in the words “screams”, “sickening smell”, “summer”, “weather” and “wilting”.

Example #4

From William Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” ([prologue](#) to Act 1)

“From forth the fatal loins of these two foes;
A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life.”

This is an example of alliteration with the “f” and “l.” in words “forth, fatal, foes” and “loins, lovers, and life”.

Example #5

Percy Bysshe Shelley’s (English Romantic poet) “The Witch of Atlas” is a famous poem that is full of examples of alliterations. Just a few of them are “wings of winds” (line 175), “sick soul to happy sleep” (line 178), “cells of crystal silence” (line 156), “Wisdom’s wizard. . . wind. . . will” (lines 195–

197), “drained and dried” (line 227), “lines of light” (line 245), “green and glowing” (line 356), and crudded. . . cape of cloud” (lines 482-3).

Function of Alliteration

Alliteration has a very vital role in poetry and prose. It creates a musical effect in the text that enhances the pleasure of reading a literary piece. It makes reading and recitation of the poems attractive and appealing; thus, making them easier to learn by heart. Furthermore, it renders flow and beauty to a piece of writing.

In the marketing industry, as what we have already discussed, alliteration makes the brand names interesting and easier to remember. This literary device is helpful in attracting customers and enhancing sales.

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