

# Rhyme

## Rhyme Definition

A rhyme is a [repetition](#) of similar sounding words, occurring at the end of lines in poems or songs. A rhyme is a tool utilizing repeating patterns that bring [rhythm](#) or musicality to poems. This differentiates them from [prose](#), which is plain. A rhyme is employed for the specific purpose of rendering a pleasing effect to a poem, which makes its recital an enjoyable experience. Moreover, it offers itself as a mnemonic device, smoothing the progress of memorization.

For instance, all nursery rhymes contain rhyming words in order to facilitate learning for children, as they enjoy reading them, and the presence of repetitive patterns enables them to memorize them effortlessly. We do not seem to forget the nursery rhymes we learned as children. Below are a few nursery rhyme examples with rhyming words in bold and italics:

“Baa baa black sheep, have you any *wool*?  
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags *full*!  
One for the master, one for the *dame*,  
And one for the little boy who lives down the *lane*.”

“Humpty Dumpty sat on a *wall*,  
Humpty Dumpty had a great *fall*.  
All the King’s horses, And all the King’s *men*  
Couldn’t put Humpty together *again*!”

“Mary had a little lamb its fleece was white as *snow*,  
And everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to *go*.  
It followed her to school one day, which was against the *rule*;  
It made the children laugh and play, to see a lamb at *school*.

And so the teacher turned it out, but still it lingered *near*,  
And waited patiently about till Mary did *appear*.”

## Various Types of Rhyme

Poems written in English employ the following types of rhyme:

---

### Perfect Rhyme

---

A perfect rhyme is a case in which two words rhyme in such a way that their final stressed vowel, and all subsequent sounds, are identical. For instance, sight and light, right and might, and rose and dose.

---

### General Rhyme

---

The term general rhyme refers to a variety of phonetic likenesses between words.

***Syllabic Rhyme***– Bottle and fiddle, cleaver and silver, patter and pitter are examples of syllabic rhyme: words having a similar sounding last syllable, but without a stressed vowel.

***Imperfect Rhyme*** – Wing and caring, sit and perfect, and reflect and subject are examples of imperfect rhyme. This is a rhyme between a stressed and an unstressed syllable.

***Assonance or Slant Rhyme*** exists in words having the same vowel sound. For instance, *kill* and *bill*, *wall* and *hall*, and *shake* and *ha*

***Consonance*** exists in words having the same consonant sound, such as *rabbit* and *robber*, *ship* and *sheep*

***Alliteration or Head Rhyme*** refers to matching initial consonant sounds, such as *sea* and *seal*, and *ship* and *sh*

---

### Eye Rhyme

---

Eye rhymes, also called “sight rhymes,” or “spelling rhymes,” refers to words having the same spelling but different sounds. In such case, the final syllables have the same spellings, but are pronounced differently, such as cough and bough, and love and move.

## Types of Rhyme According to Position

Classification of rhymes may be based on their positions, such as the following examples of rhyme.

---

**Example #1: *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* (By Jane Taylor)**

---

“Twinkle, twinkle little star  
How I wonder what you are”

Classification: **Tail Rhyme**

This is the most common type of rhyme. It occurs in the final syllable of a [verse](#) or line.

---

**Example #2: *Don't Fence Me In* (By Cole Porter and Robert Fletcher)**

---

“Just turn me loose let me straddle my old saddle,  
Underneath the western skies,  
On my cayuse let me wander over yonder,  
‘Til I see the mountains rise.”

Classification: [Internal Rhyme](#)

This is a type of rhyme in which a word at the end of a verse rhymes with another word in the same line.

---

**Example #3: *A Scottish Lowlands Holiday Ends in Enjoyable Inactivity* (By Miles Kington)**

---

“In Ayrshire hill areas, a cruise,  
eh, lass?  
Inertia, hilarious, accrues,  
hélas!”

Classification: **Holo-rhyme**

This is a type of rhyme in which all the words of two entire lines rhyme.

---

**Example #4: *At Lulworth Cove a Century Back* (By Thomas Hardy)**

“Had I but lived a hundred years ago  
I might have gone, as I have gone this year,  
By Warmwell Cross on to a Cove I know,  
And Time have placed his finger on me there...”

Classification: **Cross rhyme**

This refers to matching sounds at the ends of intervening lines.

## **Function of Rhyme**

As discussed above, a rhyme serves two distinct functions in the art of writing poetry:

It gives poetry a typical symmetry that differentiates poetry from prose.

It makes recital of poetry a pleasurable experience for the readers, as the repetitive patterns render musicality and rhythm to it.

H. Auden gives his views on the function of rhyme and other tools of [prosody](#), saying that these are like servants that a master uses in the ways he wants.