

Rhyme Definition

What is rhyme? Here's a quick and simple definition:

A rhyme is a repetition of similar sounds in two or more words. Rhyming is particularly common in many types of poetry, especially at the ends of lines, and is a requirement in [formal verse](#). The most familiar and widely-used form of rhyming is perfect rhyme, in which the stressed syllables of the words, along with all subsequent syllables, share identical sounds, as in "pencil" and "stencil." Perfect rhyme is so common, in fact, that the word "rhyme" is often used simply to refer to perfect rhymes. However, there are actually a variety of other types of rhymes, such as imperfect rhyme or [slant rhyme](#), which also involve the repetition of similar sounds but in ways that are not quite as precise as perfect rhyme.

Classifying Rhymes by Sound

Another way of classifying types of rhymes focuses more on sound than it does on stressed syllables:

- **Assonance**, while also sometimes defined as its own [figure of speech](#), assonance can also be described as a type of rhyme involving the repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds, as in "roof" and "tooth," or "wow" and "sound."
- **Consonance**, like assonance, is often described as a figure of speech in its own right. But it can also be described as a type of rhyme involving the repetition of the same or similar consonant sounds, as in "cut" and "mate," or "half" and "file."
- **Alliteration** is often treated as a figure of speech, but can also be categorized as a type of rhyme. It is a specialized form of consonance or assonance involving the repetition of the same sounds (consonant or vowel) either at the beginning of words or in the stressed syllable of words, as in "Peter Piper picked a pint of pickled peppers."
- **Slant Rhyme** is similar to consonance and assonance in that it involves the repetition of similar consonants or vowel sounds, but slant rhyme requires the repeated sounds to occur in the final syllables of words, as in "poncho" and "crunchy," or "crate" and "braid." This type of rhyme is a bit more technical in its definition than this short description, so for a more in-depth understanding it might be worthwhile to take a look at the [entry](#) on slant rhyme.
- **Pararhyme** is defined as "perfect consonance," meaning that all the consonants in two or more words are the same, as in "leaves" and "loves."

- **Forced rhyme** is a type of "near-rhyme" that include words with a close but imperfect match in sound in the final syllables, especially when a word is spelled abnormally in order to make the rhyme work, as in "truth" and "endu'th" (a contraction of "endureth"). Forced rhyme tends to make use of other rhyming devices like assonance and consonance, so it overlaps in many cases with the definition slant rhyme, but forced rhyme is a much broader and loosely-defined term that can be used to apply to any type of near-rhyme in the final syllables of a word.
 - The term "forced rhyme" is also sometimes used to refer to rhymes that use an awkward or unnatural syntax in order to "force" a rhyme at the end of a line. An example of this is "I gave my love to you my dear, / Cruel words from me you'll never hear" because the second line has so obviously been rearranged in order to make the rhyme work (the syntax we would expect to hear is "You'll never hear cruel words from me").
- **Semirhyme** is a rhyme in which two words share an identical sound but one of the words has an extra syllable at the end, as in "time" and "climbing."
- **Eye Rhymes** don't actually share any of the same sounds, but they *look* as though they should because they have the same spelling. Examples of eye rhyme include any words that look the same but sound different, as in "rough" and "cough," or "Christ" and "wrist."
- **Identical Rhymes** are just the opposite of eye rhymes: they include words that sound exactly the same but look different, as in "two" and "too," or "ball" and "bawl."
- **Monorhyme** is the term used for a poem that uses a single rhyme throughout. In other words, the **rhyme scheme** for a monorhyming poem would just be AAAA, etc

Classifying Rhymes by Their Placement Within Lines

In addition to the categories above, which describe rhymes based on the *types* of sounds they have in common, rhymes can also be described by their location within a line of poetry.

- **End rhyme** is any rhyme that occurs at the end of a line of verse, in the final word or syllables. This is by far the most common type of rhyme used in poetry. An example would be, "Roses are red, violets are **blue**, / Sugar is sweet, and so are **you**."
- **Internal rhymes** are rhyming words that *do not* occur at the ends of lines. An example would be "I **drove** myself to the lake / and **dove** into the water."

- **Broken rhymes** are rhymes in which one word is divided across lines (usually with a hyphen) in order to make it rhyme with another word. This is pretty uncommon, but it's not unheard of.
- **Cross rhyme** is a rhyme where a word at the end of a line rhymes with another word in the middle of a different line.

These categories are generally used *in conjunction with* the categories we've already covered, not *instead of* them. So, for instance, a certain rhyme might be described as "internal pararhyme," or "identical end rhyme."

Classifying Rhymes by Emphasis

Rhymes aren't only classified by whether their stressed syllables rhyme. They can also be classified according to location of the stressed syllables *within* the rhymed words:

- **Single:** a perfect or slant rhyme in which the **emphasis** falls on the last syllable, as in "**stop**" and "**mop**," or "**compare**" and "**despair**."
- **Double:** a perfect or slant rhyme in which the **emphasis** falls on the penultimate (second-to-last) syllable, as in "**plunder**" and "**thunder**."
- **Dactylic:** a perfect or slant rhyme in which the **emphasis** falls on the third-to-last syllable, as in "**i**ndicate" and "**v**indicate."