

5.03 Do You Hear What I Hear?

 [Read the next section of your Module 5 Novel!](#)

How will I identify various sound devices in poetry?

The basic building blocks of poetry come down to its _____. It's what gives a poem _____ and _____. Think of form as the _____ of a house—just flooring, windows, and walls. So, what do poets use to _____? Sound devices and _____ play a big role in providing interesting touches that make _____ for the reader. Sound devices affect the way a reader _____ through a poem as well as the _____ of a poem. Explore each sound device below. You'll see a definition and an example of the device from Edgar Allan Poe's ballad "The Raven."

Sound Device	Definition (Fill In Yourself)	Example	Analysis
Alliteration		"Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before"	Think about the effect the repetition of the beginning d sound has on your reading. Does it make you stop and pay attention? Does it break up your reading? What emotion does it introduce?
Onomatopoeia		While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping , As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door. "Tis some visitor," I muttered, " tapping at my chamber door— Only this and nothing more."	Why might Poe have used onomatopoeia here? He could have easily said he heard a knocking at the door but chose the words "tapping" and "rapping." What effect do these words have on the mood, or emotion, of the stanza?
Repetition		It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore —	In "The Raven," the words <i>raven</i> , <i>Lenore</i> , and <i>nevermore</i> are repeated around a

		<p>Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.</p> <p>Quoth the Raven "Nevermore."</p>	<p>dozen times. Why? Poe wrote this poem about the death of his wife and the mysterious appearance of a talking raven that symbolizes his grief. Repetition reflects Poe's inner thoughts and the unraveling of his mind.</p>
Meter		<p>This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core; This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er, But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er, She shall press, ah, nevermore!</p>	<p>When you read this excerpt from "The Raven" out loud, emphasizing the syllables in bold, what do you notice? The rhythm is quite pronounced!</p>
Rhyme		<p>End rhyme: Rhyming words at the ends of lines of poetry</p> <p>Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore; explore;—</p> <p>'Tis the wind and nothing more!</p> <p>Internal rhyme: Rhyming words within a line of poetry</p> <p>Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,</p> <p>Slant rhyme: Rhyming words with similar, not identical, sounds</p> <p>But the Raven still</p>	

		<p>beguiling all my fancy into smiling,</p> <p>Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;</p> <p>Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking</p>	
Assonance	The repetition of vowel sounds within words in a line of poetry	<p>And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;</p> <p>And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor</p>	<p>Throughout "The Raven," Poe uses assonance to emphasize long vowel sounds. Not only does this technique create rhythm and meter, but it also affects the mood. This is a spooky poem, so it's only fitting that the drawn-out "o" sound appears repeatedly, like something supernatural.</p>
Consonance	The repetition of consonant sounds within words in a line of poetry	<p>From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—</p> <p>Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary ...</p>	<p>With consonance, the repetition of the sounds does not have to occur at the beginning of the word and doesn't have to use the same letter. Like assonance and alliteration, consonance helps to provide a meter as well as set the mood.</p>

Sounding It Out

_____ are full of sound devices. Why? Because they were usually _____, like songs, and told aloud. The use of sound devices makes these types of poems more _____ and provide a better _____ experience. Let's revisit "The Cremation of Sam McGee" by Robert Service. Remember—this is a poem that takes place during the Klondike Gold Rush, which presented plenty of problems for prospectors.

Revisit the poem, "The Cremation of Sam McGee" and answer the multiple choice questions that follow about its use of sound devices.

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold;
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge
I cremated Sam McGee.

Now Sam McGee was from Tennessee, where the cotton blooms and blows.
Why he left his home in the South to roam 'round the Pole, God only knows.
He was always cold, but the land of gold seemed to hold him like a spell;
Though he'd often say in his homely way that "he'd sooner live in hell."

On a Christmas Day we were mushing our way over the Dawson trail.
Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold it stabbed like a driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze till sometimes we couldn't see;
It wasn't much fun, but the only one to whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night, as we lay packed tight in our robes beneath the snow,
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead were dancing heel and toe,
He turned to me, and "Cap," says he, "I'll cash in this trip, I guess;
And if I do, I'm asking that you won't refuse my last request."

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no; then he says with a sort of moan:
"It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.
Yet 'tain't being dead—it's my awful dread of the icy grave that pains;
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair, you'll cremate my last remains.

1. Which sound device is present in the line below?

*With a corpse half hid that I couldn't
get rid, because of a promise given;*

- A. Alliteration
- B. Assonance
- C. Onomatopoeia
- D. Consonance

2. Read the line below. Then, answer the question that follows.

*Howled out their woes to the
homeless snows—O God! how I
loathed the thing.*

Why might the poet have chosen to use assonance in this line about the howling dogs and his feelings towards cremating his friend?

- A. The sounds reflect the sadness of the dogs and the poet
- B. The sounds reflect the happiness of the dogs and the poet
- C. The sounds reflect the excitement of the journey through the snow
- D. The sounds reflect the barking of the dogs and the snow falling

3. Read the lines below. Then, answer the question that follows.

*I was sick with **dread**, but I
bravely said: "I'll just take a peep inside.
I guess he's cooked, and it's time
I looked"; ... then the **door** I
opened wide.*

Which sound device is present in these lines? Use the bolded letters as a clue.

- A. Slant rhyme
- B. Repetition
- C. Assonance
- D. Consonance

Read the following lines. Then, answer the question that follows.

*Then I made a hike, for I didn't like
to hear him **sizzle so**;
And the heavens **scowled**, and the
huskies howled, and the wind
began to blow.
It was icy cold, but the hot **sweat**
rolled down my cheeks, and I don't
know why;
And the greasy **smoke** in an inky
cloak went **streaking** down the
sky...*

Here, the poet uses consonance. Why might he have chosen to repeat "s" sounds in these lines?

- A. To create a mood of happiness

- B. To repeat the idea of smiling
- C. To reflect the sound of the fire sizzling
- D. To emphasize the silence around him

Come to Your Senses

What is Imagery?

When you think of sound devices, it's clear that the author is trying to appeal to your sense of ... you guessed it ... _____. But that's not the only sense that poetry calls out to. A poem that describes clouds as balloon animals appeals to your sense of _____. A poem that compares spring to the scent of fresh-cut grass appeals to your sense of _____. This is _____, another powerful poetic tool that adds some oomph to a poet's form and structure. Let's run down the list of types of imagery you'll often see in literature, including poetry. While you're used to the five senses, we're adding two more types of imagery that poets often include. Let's go back to Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven" for some examples of imagery in action.

Imagery	Explanation (Fill in yourself)	Example from "The Raven"	Analysis
Emotion		Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;	Here, Poe describes intense feelings that let us know he's scared. He's having "dreams," which are really nightmares, that no one's ever had before. This emotional imagery is intense!
Motion		Open here I flung the shutter , when, with many a flirt and flutter, In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;	Think about the imagery behind the word "flung." What mood does it convey? The speaker didn't just open the window. Why? Fear made them fling it open. This is a great example of why examining the imagery of movement is important in literature.
Sight		To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core; This and more I sat	Did you imagine what those "fiery eyes" looked like? What about the lamp-light?

		divining, with my head at ease reclining On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er, But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er,	What did you see in your mind's eye as the scenery of the room was described?
Smell		Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.	This excerpt makes the mood fearful. The narrator smells the air getting thicker, possibly from something supernatural.
Sound		But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token, And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?" This I whispered , and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"— Merely this and nothing more.	Have you ever heard of "the sound of silence"? Poe does a remarkable job of making the silence seem frightening. The echoes, whispers, and murmurs create a spooky atmosphere.
Taste		N/A	It is important to note that imagery has to fit the author's purpose. In a poem about a fearful encounter with an intimidating bird, references to taste don't really fit. If, instead, a novel was describing a huge banquet table overflowing with delicious food the protagonist wants to eat, gustatory imagery would fit well.
Touch		Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door; Then, upon the velvet	Think about the imagery used here. Poe's poem is meant to be unsettling, yet he mentions a

		sinking , I betook myself to linking Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—	comfortable, cushioned seat. The imagery of comfort is disrupted by the fact that he is "sinking" into the seat. This imagery has a negative connotation.
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1. Read the following line from "The Cremation of Sam McGee." Then, answer the question that follows.

*Talk of your cold! through the
parka's fold it stabbed like a
driven nail.*

To which type of imagery does this line appeal?

- A. Movement
- B. Taste
- C. Sight
- D. Touch

2. Why did the author include imagery describing just how cold the weather was in the Yukon?

- A. It reflected on an experience from the narrator's future
- B. It provided a reason for the positive way the narrator remembered the weather
- C. It emphasized the reason why someone from the South couldn't survive
- D. It explained why the author enjoyed being in the snow

Helpful Hints

Complete the Self Check on page 5 of the lesson.

Assessment

Complete the 5.03 Do You Hear What I Hear? quiz.