

Assonance, Alliteration, and Consonance

Assonance, alliteration, and consonance are common poetic sound devices that are used to enhance the aural appeal of a piece of poetry.

Assonance

Assonance is a form of poetic structure in which there is a focus on the repetition of similar vowel sounds. This can come in the form of an assonant rhyme, in which case the vowel sounds not only repeat, but rhyme. Or, the repetition of the vowel sounds may be more subtle.

Examples would include assonant rhymes, such as: kite and bike; cake and bake

Or, assonance with the repetition of vowel sounds, such as: sad and rattle; play and plate

Alliteration

Alliteration refers to the repetition of stressed initial sounds within a group of words that are closely connected to each other.

For an example, see the following line from the epic poem *Beowulf*: “From a friendless foundling, feeble and wretched.” The repetition of the F consonant at the beginning of each word in the example represents alliteration occurring in the line.

Consonance

Consonance is a form of poetic structure in which the same consonant is repeated at least twice in short succession.

Examples would include: love and prove; death and breath.

