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**CONSONANCE**

questionable definition

**Consonance** is the repetition of the final consonant sound without the repetition of the vowel sound preceding it. The words *book* and *lack*, for example, have consonance. Compound words such as *mishmash* and *crisscross* illustrate the concept, too, since each half of these compounds ends with the same consonant sound, but the vowel sounds vary. Emily Dickinson used this device a great deal in her poetry in place of rhyme. In the lines below, *before* and *year* both end with the sound of *r* but have different vowel sounds.

A thought went up my mind to-day  
That I have had before,  
But did not finish—some way back,  
I could not fix the year.

To better understand consonance, do the following exercises:

1. Complete the phrases below, all of which involve consonance:

a. good as \_ \_ \_ r

c. short and \_ \_ \_ \_ t

b. odds and \_ \_ d s

d. a stroke of \_ \_ \_ k

e. as white as a \_ \_ \_ \_ t

2. The names of some people are good examples of consonance. Two such names are given below. Add others. (Think of the names of your classmates.)

a. Alvin Johnson

f.

b. Alice Moss

g.

c.

h.

d.

i.

e.

j.

3. Look through the poems by Emily Dickinson that are in your literature book. Find one in which consonance is used in place of rhyme (as in the example above). Write it below.

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## ALLITERATION

**Alliteration** is the repetition of the same consonant sound in several words in the same line or sentence. Generally the repeated consonant sounds are the initial sounds in the words, as in a tongue twister such as "Betty bought a box of butter." However, the sounds may also be repeated within the words, as in the two examples below.

The silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain. —*Edgar Allan Poe*

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees. —*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Alliteration may involve any consonant sound. Its main purpose is to create a pleasing combination of sounds that delight the ear. Do the two activities below involving alliteration.

1. Many names in fact and fiction contain alliteration. Several examples are given here. Add others.

- |                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| a. Simple Simon            | f. |
| b. Wee Willie Winkie       | g. |
| c. Hubert Horatio Humphrey | h. |
| d. Woodrow Wilson          | i. |
| e.                         | j. |

2. Many of our common expressions—such as "do or die," "might and main," "rough and ready," and "drunk and disorderly"—employ alliteration. In each expression below, supply the missing alliterative item. The circled letters will form another four-word alliterative expression.

- first and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- spic and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- kith and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- mind over      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- neither fish, flesh, nor      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- blind as a      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- through thick and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- baubles, bangles, and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- lean and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- safe and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- footloose and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- dead as a      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- cool as a      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- last but not      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- wild and      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



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## RHYMING PAIRS

Find two rhyming words which match each of the following definitions:

Example: unhappy father = sad dad

- |                                     |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. a squished insect                | _____ | _____ |
| 2. the expensive frame of a Ferrari | _____ | _____ |
| 3. a cumbersome feline              | _____ | _____ |
| 4. intelligent insects              | _____ | _____ |
| 5. stupid <sup>n</sup> medicant     | _____ | _____ |
| 6. royal bird                       | _____ | _____ |
| 7. library thief                    | _____ | _____ |
| 8. artificial confection            | _____ | _____ |
| 9. intelligent medieval warrior     | _____ | _____ |
| 10. a great country                 | _____ | _____ |
| 11. lazy burrowing mammal           | _____ | _____ |
| 12. runaway train car               | _____ | _____ |
| 13. campus clown                    | _____ | _____ |
| 14. crimson bunk                    | _____ | _____ |
| 15. skinny Egyptian ruler           | _____ | _____ |
| 16. country wall painting           | _____ | _____ |
| 17. phony reptile                   | _____ | _____ |
| 18. cowardly black bird             | _____ | _____ |
| 19. intelligent beginning           | _____ | _____ |
| 20. smart peepers                   | _____ | _____ |



## 47. Metaphors

Metaphors are excellent figures of speech that create comparison without the benefit of using the words *like* or *as*. Although more difficult to construct than similes, metaphors are sometimes even more effective in bringing concrete pictures to mind.

**Metaphor as adjective:** He addressed the court in a **rusty** voice.

**Metaphor as noun:** The last car I bought was a **lemon**.

**Metaphor as a verb:** Tom's comment **needed** me into taking action.

Underline each of the metaphors found in the following sentences.

1. Pat took the hand-off, leaped over one tackler, burst through the line, scissored his way through a crowd, and raced into the end zone.
2. In the angry scene that followed, Susan tried to keep her hatred anchored, but she was not entirely successful.
3. The nurse touched the old woman's papery skin, feeling for even the faintest indication of a pulse.
4. Nothing about Bert can surprise me since I have no idea what crops are growing in the fields of his imagination.
5. Suddenly my fears stampeded out of control, leaving me confused and frightened in the darkness of the courtroom.
6. If I learned one thing from this experience, I found out that indecision is a blood-sucking leech that steals my energy.
7. When I fell from the balcony, I plunged through a sea of swirling colors.
8. The scorching summer turned the once-lush pond into a Sahara of desolation.
9. Slowly but surely the ghosts of Christmas forced Scrooge's Arctic heart to thaw.
10. My eyes were riveted on the single doorway, hoping that Joyce would suddenly appear with the letter.
11. The angry words echoed throughout the auditorium, burning the truth into the hearts of the tearful actresses.
12. I could see the white flag of surrender in Reggie's eyes as he confronted the guards for the last time.
13. Rodney could only parrot the answers he knew the teacher wanted to hear.
14. The flames of jealousy grew higher and higher as Rosalyn watched in silence while Franklin wooed the beautiful Charlotte.
15. Mrs. Sullivan kneaded the soft dough of Jessica's mind.
16. The mooing, neighing, meowing, barking, cackling, and cooing sounds blended into an early morning symphony.
17. The expensive lotion could not erase the course sandpaper roughness of his large hands.
18. Anger is a double-edged sword that should be avoided.
19. The inky blackness of the sky alarmed us before the tornado struck.
20. I have often wondered how our pharmacist interprets the chicken scratches Dr. Jones scribbles on his prescriptions.



**Exercise 4 METAPHOR****STEAM SHOVEL**

The dinosaurs are not all dead.  
 I saw one raise its iron head  
 To watch me walking down the road  
 Beyond our house today.  
 Its jaws were dripping with a load  
 Of earth and grass that it had cropped.  
 It must have heard me where I stopped,  
 Snorted white steam my way,  
 And stretched its long neck out to see  
 And chewed, and grinned quite amiably.

Charles Malam

1. What is the metaphor in this poem?
2. What two things are being compared?
3. What do the two things have in common?
4. Would Charles Malam's poem be as effective if he had titled it Dinosaurs instead?  
 How would the meaning of the poem change? Explain.

**Exercise 5 METAPHOR**

Assignment - Open-ended poem with a metaphor

1. From the original metaphors you have written, choose your favorite metaphor.
2. Use the primary word for your title.
3. Then write three lines. Each line should say something different about the subject, or give an idea of what it is like. Each line can be either a phrase or a sentence.
4. The last line is a metaphor that begins with the title. It might sum up what you wrote in the other three lines.

EXAMPLE:

LOVE

Two hands held tightly  
 Two faces laughing  
 Two dreams in one  
 Love is a circle.

Now write two open-ended poems of your own.

## Exercise 6 METAPHOR

Sometimes an entire poem is used to develop a single metaphor. This is called an extended or sustained metaphor.

### Mother to Son

Well son, I'll tell you;  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
and places with no carpet on the floor -  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I've been a climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, boy, don't you turn back;  
Don't you set down on the steps  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now -  
For I've still goin', honey,  
I've still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes

1. Identify the extended metaphor in this poem.
2. What effect do you think the words of the mother in this poem have on her son?

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### METONYMY AND SYNECDOCHE

In metonymy, a term closely associated with another is used in its place. For example, in the following sentence the word *cross* is substituted for *Christianity*: He took up the cross (he accepted Christianity). A synecdoche uses a word referring to a part of something or to the material from which it is made as a substitute for the word representing the whole. Good examples are the terms *private eye* (*detective*) and *flatfoot* (*patrolman*) and the term *marble* (used in place of *statue*).

In each sentence below, try to supply a metonymy or synecdoche that will convey the meaning shown in parentheses. Then take, in order, the circled letters from all the words you supplied and place them in the following spaces to form another common statement that illustrates metonymy:

— — — — —

1. Since this is a special occasion, we will use the good china and ( ) . (forks, knives, etc.)
2. She sets a good ( ) . (She serves good meals.)
3. How many cattle do you have? Fifty ( ) . (fifty cattle)
4. On this bluff the ( ) and the redskins had a battle. (white men)
5. All these facilities are under one ( ) . (in one building)
6. The golfer got out of the sand trap by using a number two ( ) . (type of club made of metal)
7. The world's population is exploding. Every few seconds there is another ( ) to feed. (person)
8. The local residents demanded immediate action by ( ) . (the local government)
9. "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ( ) ." (Listen to me.)
10. He's the fastest ( ) in the West. (most skillful in using firearms)
11. Will you lend me a ( ) ? (assist me)
12. The old ( ) told many tales of his adventures at sea. (sailor)

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**ALLUSIONS**

Writers often allude (refer) to persons or things in the Bible, mythology, history, or literature, with the hope that readers will understand the significance of the allusions. Such allusions can reinforce the idea or emotion a writer wishes to convey. For example, to emphasize a person's rapid rise to success, a writer might refer to Horatio Alger. To describe a woman's beauty, a writer might compare her to Helen of Troy. Someone who goes out of his or her way to help a stranger might be compared to the Good Samaritan. A weak point in a person's character might be described as an Achilles' heel, and a cruel man might be labeled a Bluebeard. References can also be made to things and places—the Trojan horse, the goose that laid the golden egg, the Garden of Eden, for example.

In each item below, certain words, names, or phrases are in bold type. Explain briefly the significance of each allusion. (Look up those you do not know in some reference book, such as *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*.)

1. I don't approve of many of the decisions made in the Supreme Court today. We need a few **Solomons** in the judiciary branch of our government.
2. He may be fat and over forty, but he is still my **Adonis**.
3. "We're running out of **hors d'oeuvres**. What will we do?" "Let them eat **cake**."
4. What are you—another **Delilah**? Stop bugging me. I'll never tell.
5. Tonight Muhammed Ali met his **Waterloo** in the ring with Leon Spinks.
6. Why did you tell Mr. Pendleton, you **Benedict Arnold**?
7. I have tried everything, and I'm terribly discouraged. Maybe I should pray to **St. Jude**.
8. Man to fencing partner: "Look out or I'll turn you into another **John the Baptist**."
9. Man on way to work with his assistant: "Come on, **Sancho**, let's go fight the windmills."
10. Will you please stop practicing your lines for the play? You're driving me crazy. Besides, you don't want to give **Sarah Bernhardt** too much competition.
11. I hope my blind date won't be another **Medusa**.



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## IMAGERY

When a poet, through language, depicts sights, sounds, smells, feelings, and tastes so vividly that readers can almost experience these themselves, this is imagery. Most poetic images are visual—conveying shape, color, and motion, as when Robert Browning speaks of “the blue spurt of a lighted match” or when Richard Wilbur speaks of a “liver-spotted page” and “ruddy-skinned pears.” Auditory imagery is also common in poetry, as in John Keats’ poem “To Autumn,” in which the following lines appear:

Hedge-cricket sing: and now with treble soft  
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft.

An image may also involve the sense of smell, as in “sea-scented beach,” or the sense of taste, as in “sweet, sticky syrup.” Images of touch describe things hard or soft, rough or smooth, cold or hot.

Look through the poems in your literature book and find at least one example of each of the following types of images. Write the line containing the image, and place the name of the poet next to it.

1. appeal to the sense of sight— *visual*

2. appeal to the sense of hearing— *auditory*

3. appeal to the sense of smell— *olfactory*

4. appeal to the sense of taste— *gustatory*

5. appeal to the sense of touch— *sensory/tactile*

Question: Did you find any single poem that contained three or more different types of imagery? If so, name the poem below.