

Module 5: Poetry
Topic 6 Content: Sound Devices Notes



Alliteration **Assonance** **Consonance** **Onomatopoeia**

Sound Devices

Sound devices are so powerful that some poets use multiple types of them in one poem. Take a few moments to read “The Bells” by Edgar Allan Poe. The poem is linked in the Resources section in the upper right corner of the screen.

After you read the poem, click on each of the tabs to learn more about the sound devices that Poe uses in the poem.

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Alliteration

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Alliteration

the repetition of initial consonant sounds in stressed syllables

“What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!”

“How they clang, and clash and roar!”

CLOSE

Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in stressed syllables. In “The Bells” by Edgar Allan Poe, you can find alliteration in stanza three of the poem. In the third line of the poem, Poe writes “What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!” The sounds that the letter *t* makes in this line is alliteration. Later in this stanza, Poe notes “How they clang, and clash and roar!” The hard *c* with the *l* sound in this line is also alliteration.

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Assonance



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Assonance

the repetition of similar vowel sounds in stressed syllables that end with different consonant sounds

"Hear the mellow wedding bells-"

CLOSE

Assonance is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in stressed syllables that end with different consonant sounds. In the second stanza of "The Bells" by Edgar Allan Poe, the first line is "Hear the mellow wedding bells-." The repeating vowel sound of the *e* in these words is an example of assonance.

Module 5: Poetry
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Consonance



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Consonance

the repetition of final consonant sounds in stressed syllables with different vowel sounds

tolls, ghouls, swells, and bells

CLOSE

Consonance is the repetition of final consonant sounds in stressed syllables with different vowel sounds. Throughout “The Bells,” Poe uses words ending in a ls round to create a rolling sound with consonance. For example, the words tolls, ghouls, swells, and bells are repeated throughout stanza four.

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Onomatopoeia

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Onomatopoeia

a word whose sound imitates its meaning

jangle, twanging, and clanging

CLOSE

While onomatopoeia is a difficult word to pronounce, it is not a difficult concept to understand. Poets use this sound device when they include a word whose sound imitates its meaning. Poe’s “The Bells” is filled with onomatopoeia. Specifically, the words jangle, twanging, and clanging sound like the sounds that they actually describe.