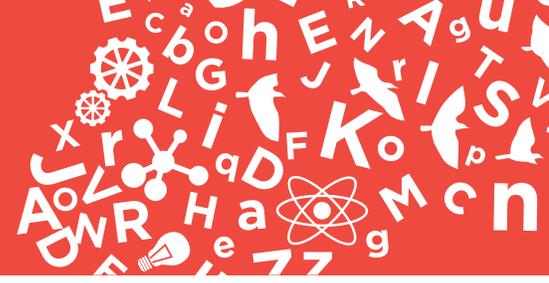


LESSON 5: RHYTHM, SOUND, AND WORD CHOICE



Do you think of how your work sounds when you write? It can be an important part of style, flow, and readability. In this lesson we take a look at how rhythm and sound can be used to enhance your writing.

SENTENCE LEVEL

Meter: The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables.

- » stressed (/) and unstressed (x) syllables.

Each unit of rhythm is called a “foot” of poetry. Stressed syllables appear in bold below.

Meters with Two-syllable Feet

Iambic (x /)

That **time** of **year** thou **mayst** in **me** behold

Trochaic (/ x):

Tell me **not** in **mournful** **numbers**

Spondaic (/ /):

Break, break, break/ On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!

Meters with Three-Syllable Feet

Anapestic (x x /):

And the **sound** of a **voice** that is **still**

Dactylic (/ x x):

This is the **forest** **primeval**, the **murmuring** **pine** and the **hemlocks**
(a trochee replaces the final dactyl)

Examples, and Most Common Meters

Here is another way to look at the various meters. (1 foot of iamb, throche, etc, is a monometer, 2 feet is a dimeter, 3 feet is a tetrameter, and so on)

- Iambic pentameter (5 iambs, 10 syllables)
 - » That **time** | of **year** | thou **mayst** | in **me** | behold
- Trochaic tetrameter (4 trochees, 8 syllables)
 - » **Tell** me | **not** in | **mournful** | **numbers**
- Anapestic trimeter (3 anapests, 9 syllables)
 - » And the **sound** | of a **voice** | that is **still**
- Dactylic hexameter (6 dactyls, 17 syllables; a trochee replaces the last dactyl)
 - » **This** is the | **forest** pri | **meval**, the | **murmuring** | **pine** and the | **hemlocks**

RHYTHM IN PARAGRAPHS

Vary sentence structures between

- Simple
- Compound
- Complex
- Compound-complex

RHYTHM ON WORD LEVEL

Poetic Devices

- *Alliteration*: Repetition of the initial sound in adjacent words
- *Consonance*: Repetition of consonants
- *Assonance*: Repetition of vowels

Word Choice

Certain words will have slightly different sounds, which will affect the meaning, tone, and sound within your sentence and overall piece.

Use a thesaurus to find the perfect word.

Say the words out loud and notice the difference in sound. How does their sound relate to the connotation of the word?

Quiet vs. Hushed

Sad vs. Languid

Happy vs. Ecstatic

Tips:

- *Use poetic elements sparingly in prose*
- *Read your work out loud*
- *Consult your thesaurus*



CHALLENGE

Take a piece of your writing and turn it into a poem in verse. Use meter and poetic devices (alliteration, consonance, etc.) You can use a small portion or your entire piece.

Email your challenge to laurelnakai@gmail.com by Nov 7.