Rhyme scheme

A rhyme scheme is the pattern of rhyme between lines of a poem or song. It is usually referred to by using letters to indicate which lines rhyme. In other words, it is the pattern of end rhymes or lines. A rhyme scheme gives the scheme of the rhyme; a regular pattern of rhyming words in a poem (the end words).

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
While I have eyes to see;
And having none, and yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee.

A rhyme scheme gives the scheme of the rhyme; a regular pattern of end rhymes in a poem (the end words).

There are many different such forms, each with its own associations and resonances to cause a particular effect on the reader. A basic distinction is between rhyme schemes that apply to a single stanza, and those that continue their pattern throughout an entire poem (see chain rhyme). There are also more elaborate related forms, like the sestina - which requires repetition of exact words in a complex pattern.

In English, highly repetitive rhyme schemes are unusual. English has more vowel sounds than Italian, for example, meaning that such a scheme would be far more restrictive for an English writer than an Italian one - there are fewer suitable words to match a given pattern. Even such schemes as the terza rima ("aba,bc,c dcd..."), used by Dante Alighieri in The Divine Comedy, have been considered too difficult for English.

Example rhyme schemes

- Alternating rhyme: abab cdcd efef ghgh ijij...
- Chant royal: Five stanzas of "ababcdcdE" followed by either "ddedE" or "ccddedE". (The capital letters indicate a line repeated verbatim.)
- Cinquain: "A,B,A,B,B"
- Clerihew: "A,A,B,B"
- Couplet: "A,A", but usually occurs as "A, A, B, B C, C D, D ...
- Enclosed rhyme (or enclosing rhyme): "ABBA"
- "Fire and Ice" stanza: "ABAABCBCB" as used in Robert Frost's poem "Fire and Ice"
- Keatsian Ode: "ABABCDECDE" used in Keat's Ode on Indolence, Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode to a Nightingale and Ode to Psyche.
- Limerick: "AABBA"
- Monorhyme: "A,A,A,A,A...", an identical rhyme on every line, common in Latin and Arabic
- Ottava rima: "A,B,A,B,A,B,C,C"
- Rhyme royal: "ABABBCC"
- Scottish stanza: "AABAB", as used by Robert Burns in works such as "To a Mouse"
- The Raven stanza: "ABCBBB", or "AA,B,CC,CB,B,B" when accounting for internal rhyme, as used by Edgar Allan Poe in "The Raven"
- Rondelet: "AbAabbA"
- Rubaiyat: "AABA"
- Simple 4-line: "ABCB"
- Sonnet
  - Petrarchan sonnet: "ABBA ABBA CDE CDE" or "ABBA ABBA CDC DCD"
  - Shakespearean sonnet: "ABABCDCDCD EFED GG"
  - Spenserian sonnet: "ABAB BCBC CDCD EE"
• Onegin stanza: "aBaBccDeFFeGG" with the lowercase letters representing feminine rhymes and the uppercase representing masculine rhymes, written in iambic tetrameter

• Spenserian stanza: "ABABBCCC"

• *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* form: "AABA BBCB CCDC DDDD" a modified Ruba’i stanza used by Robert Frost for the eponymous poem.

• Tanaga: traditional Tagalog *tanaga* is "AAAA"

• Terza rima: "ABA BCB CDC ...", ending on "YZY Z", "YZY ZZ", or "YZY ZYZ".

• The Road Not Taken stanza: "ABAAB" as used in Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken*.

• Villanelle: A1bA2 abA1 abA2 abA1 abA2 abA1A2, where A1 and A2 are lines repeated exactly which rhyme with the a lines.

• Sestina: ABCDEF FAEBDC CFDABE ECBFAD BDFECA , the seventh stanza is a tercet where line 1 has A in it but ends with D, line 2 has B in it but ends with E, line 3 has C in it but ends with F

**Rhyme schemes in hip-hop music**

Hip-hop music and rapping’s rhyme schemes include traditional schemes such as couplets, as well as forms specific to the genre, which are broken down extensively in the books *How to Rap* and *Book of Rhymes*. Rhyme schemes used in hip-hop music include –

• Couplets
• Single-liners
• Multi-liners
• Combinations of schemes
• Whole verse

Couplets are the most common type of rhyme scheme in old school rap and are still regularly used, though complex rhyme schemes have progressively become more frequent. Rather than relying on end rhymes, rap’s rhyme schemes can have rhymes placed anywhere in the bars of music to create a structure. There can also be numerous rhyming elements which all work together in the same scheme - this is called internal rhyme in traditional poetry, though as rap's rhymes schemes can be anywhere in the bar, they could all be internal, so the term is not always used. Rap verses can also employ 'extra rhymes', which do not structure the verse like the main rhyme schemes, but which add to the overall sound of the verse.

**References**

External links

- [http://words-that-rhyme.com](http://words-that-rhyme.com) - A useful tool to find a rhyme easily.
- [Lingua::Rhyme::FindScheme](http://search.cpan.org/~lgoddard/Lingua-Rhyme-FindScheme-0.02/FindScheme.pm) — Perl module to find the rhyme scheme of a given text.
- [Rhyming dictionary](http://rhymes.lexemic.com/) - Rhyming dictionary and community for finding assonant, consonant, eye, feminine, identical, light line, macaronic, masculine, near, perfect, rich, scarce, and wrenched rhymes.
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