

Alliteration and **rhyme** are two ways of patterning language for effect. Both are common in poetry.

What is alliteration?

Alliteration is when words within the same expression, phrase or clause start with the same sound, for example:

Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billetdoux

in Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, where the first three words and the last two form alliterative groups.

What is rhyme?

Rhyme is probably best explained by looking at the examples in these lines from Thomas Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*:

**The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lee,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.**

In these lines, the words 'day' and 'way', 'lee' and 'me' form pairs of rhymes. Rhymes are when the last part of syllables (the vowel and any final consonant) sound the same in two or more words brought together. 'Bin', 'sin', 'tin' and 'pin' all rhyme, but the pairs 'tin' and 'ten', 'pin' and 'pit' do not rhyme.