

Rhyme

Words that sound the same, or almost the same, are likely to make us notice them. There is something about words that echo one another in a poem that makes us pay attention and helps us to 'hear' the poem. Many poets use rhyme, which is the repetition of sounds.

Why use rhyme?

It can make your poem easier to remember.

Rhyme

The trouble with rhymes that you find sometimes is that once they are found you find you are bound just because of the sound to use them and then you do not know when to stop.

Pie Corbett

- 1 Choose one of the above poems and write out the words that rhyme.
- 2 With a partner, read the poem 'Rhyme' aloud.
 - a Discuss how the rhyming pattern gives the poem pace.
 - b What is the effect of the short last line?
- 3 Make up a short rhyming poem about something you like, such as food, sport, TV, animals or music. Share your poem with others in the class.

Activity 2.39

Lambing time

I was travelling alone on a train one day
And I heard a white woman to another one say,
'Oh! Look at the newborn lambs by the tree;
They always bring back such memories to me.

'When I was a child we had a young lamb
And used to bottle-feed it by hand.'
Well, I smiled to myself at what I had heard
But went on with my reading, not saying a word.

My mind raced back to when I was a kid,
And what the sight of new lambs did.
It meant that night when we had tea,
There'd be lambs' tails for the family and me.

Thrown on the coals and cooked to a turn,
Poked now and then so they didn't all burn.
All wishing aloud as the last were gone,
That lambs had two tails instead of one.

She smiled at me as she left the train
And I laughed out aloud as I saw it again,
Her with bottle-fed lamb by the tree
And me with sweet little lamb feeding me.

Margaret Brusnahan

Activity 2.40

- 1 Read the poem 'Lambing time' aloud to a partner.
- 2 Describe the effect that reading it aloud has on the poem.
- 3 Summarise the message in the poem.
- 4 Do you think the poem is humorous or serious? Explain your answer.

Notice how the rhyming pattern in the next poem forces you to pause at the end of each second line. The poet's anger comes through passionately this way.



Colour bar

When vile men jeer because my skin is brown,
This I live down.

But when a taunted child comes home in tears,
Fierce anger sears.

The colour bar! It shows the meaner mind
Of moron kind.

Men are but medieval yet, as long
As lives this wrong.

Could he but see, the colour-baiting clod
is blaming God

Who made us all, and all His children He
Loves equally

As long as brothers banned from brotherhood
You will exclude,

The Christianity you hold so high
is but a lie,

Justice a cant of hypocrites, content
With precedent

© Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal (formerly Kath Walker)

- 1 Describe the rhyming pattern in the poem 'Colour bar'.
- 2 Explain why Oodgeroo becomes so angry when 'a taunted child comes home in tears'.
- 3 Describe your feelings when you read this poem.
- 4 This poem carries a powerful message about racism and prejudice in society. Explain the feelings of the poet and the reasons for these feelings.

Activity 2.41