

Why you need to know these facts



- As children develop their critical appreciation of poetry, they will begin to recognise not only that some poems rhyme but also the ways in which rhyme works within poetry. In the early years, this can take the form of children creating rhymes of their own – this activity often accompanies their developing awareness of the sounds in words.

- Hearing rhymes between words is an essential strand of phonics teaching that supports the development of spelling. Learning that similar sounding words sometimes look similar can support children's development as readers and writers. Children who hear the similarities between *jill* and *hill* can also identify the similar spellings in such words. If they then confront an unfamiliar word like *fill* their previous understanding of this spelling sequence will help them to decode the new word.

- An awareness of phonetics can enhance a reader's enjoyment of poetry and is an important element of a child's ability to read poetry aloud effectively.

- Children should be encouraged to produce rhyming poetry for themselves. While the use of rhyme can be restrictive and ought not to be imposed on all poetry activities, it is nevertheless a tool the poet can use for effect.

Vocabulary



Alliteration – the repetition of a consonant sound.

Assonance – the repetition of a vowel sound.

Clerihew – a humorous verse referring to a famous person made up of two rhyming couplets.

Couplets – two rhyming lines next to each other.

Phonetics – the study of speech sounds.

Rhyme – the effect created when the endings of words sound alike, for example *cat/hat*.

Amazing facts

Edmund Clerihew Bentley is said to have invented the 'clerihew' during a boring chemistry lesson.



Common misconceptions

Many children – and many adults – use rhyme as the defining factor in deciding whether a piece of language is a poem or not. While rhyme can create a special quality within a poem, it isn't an essential feature – many great poets, for example Dylan Thomas and TS Eliot, rarely if ever used rhyme.



Teaching ideas

- Create a rhyming dictionary as a class. This can be produced as a book or chart on the classroom wall, with various words organised according to their rhyming chunk. For example, the '-all' page will include *call*, *fall* and *tall*. Encourage the children to use the rhyming dictionary when writing rhyming verse or song lyrics.



- Rhyming games provide a good foundation for this area of poetry. Younger children can try to think of words that rhyme with an initial one-word stimulus suggested by the teacher.

- Get the children to produce their own versions of shorter published poems. For example the children could create their own versions of Michael Rosen's 'Down behind the dustbin' poems:

*Down behind the dustbin
I met a dog called Jim
He didn't know me
and I didn't know him*