

7. Alliteration

- Alliteration is the repetition of a speech sound in a sequence of nearby words. (Assamese example: Bogakoi bogoli bohilai bohise...)
- Usually the term is applied only to consonants.
- In Old English Alliterative meter or Alliteration was the principal organizing device of the verse lines.
- A number of Middle English poems also used this.

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examples (both in 14th century)

William Langland's

"Piers Plowman"

The Romance

"Sir Gowaine and Greene Knight"

In a sómer sésón, when sóft was the sórne...
(opening line)

x Related terms (with alliteration)

(i) Consonance

is a repetition of a sequence of two or more consonants, but with a change in the intervening vowel.

Example : live-love, lean-alone, pitter-patter

In the poem "O where are you going?" by 20th century poet W.H. Auden we could notice lines like —

— said reader to rider

— said rider to reader

— said furer to furer

— said hearer to horror

— granite to grass.

} which are also examples
of consonance.

(ii) Assonance

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Repetition of identical or similar vowels — especially in stressed syllables — in a sequence of nearby words.

Examples:

(a) Repetition of "long i" in the opening line of John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820):

{ Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time...

(b) Beginning of "Ode to Evening" (1747) by William Collins:

{ If aught of autumn stop or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy pensive ear...