

Plackets – Rhyming into Poetry

[Instructors may use our script or improvise. we've had some good responses to starting with an introductory video sequence that presents a capsule history of the progression from Anglo-Saxon through Romance-influenced Middle English to Modern English using [this read-along text](#) with linked video samples.]

Usually a poet starts with an idea and then finds lines and rhymes for it. In this exercise, we reverse that approach to see how rhymes can lead to ideas.

Rhyme uses sound rather than meaning to make connections between words. Results can be astonishing, even to the writer!

Most of the time, for a poem that rhymes, the poet writes a line or two or three and then tries to write more lines that end with the same sound as those first lines. In this exercise, we'll go a different way: we'll start from rhymes and write poems around them.

Some words that rhyme connect naturally: “love” and “above” and “moon” and “June” almost jump together because “The moon above in June means love.” “Bone” and “stone” are close together because stone is the earth's bones and bones are hard as stone. These words get rhymed so much that they're called “trite rhymes.” Creative rhymes bring out connections and ideas that are completely new. HipHop and rap lyrics are full of surprising new rhymes that energize what the artists are saying. Also, rhyme works in memory: rhyming poems like the lyrics of songs are easy to recall: we can remember lots of songs without even trying!

Plackets use rhyme to lead to new connections. We'll explore rhyme here by writing some plackets starting from rhymes. We're going to start now, and you can go right ahead and write now or read more about rhyme below.

Let's get started!

Instructions are provided on each of the forms. The forms are in increasing order of complexity and should be done in order: 2x3 > 3x3 > 5x5

[Forms can be distributed as paper handouts or accessed at the links below. To collect them electronically, provide a request folder link on OneDrive or DropBox, share an online document where participants can paste them, or designate them a Brightspace or other LMS assignment.]

Download links

[2x3 Placket](#)

[3x3 Placket](#)

[5x5 Placket](#)

More about rhymes.

There are lots of ways to rhyme, not just the “perfect” trite ones above. You can find a discussion of many types of rhyme at [this link](#) What’s most important is that rhymes don’t have to be exact; in fact, the more you stretch rhyme and invent your own kinds, the better!

Here is a list of words someone who believes trite rhyme is rhyme says can’t be rhymed in English. Each is followed by words or phrases, that *rhyme* with it.

Silver

liver, guilder, filter, clever, chiller

Month

plinth, grunt, tenth, stint, hunt

Orange

door hinge, syringe, lunge, grunge, strange

Purple

gerbil, warble, treble, marble, garble

Radio

fadeout, ratio, spatial, patio, daddio

The point of rhyme is not to repeat a sound but to connect words by some eye or ear cue that makes a connection, even a subtle one in our wonderfully complex brains. It's not a limitation: it's an opportunity!