

Rhyme & "I'm Over the Moon"

Poem by Brenda Shaughnessy / motionpoem by Jessica Hundley

Lesson plan by Athena Kildegaard

Time: 50 minutes

TEACHERS, NOTE: The poem includes swear words, and the film includes smoking and nudity.

One sure-fire way to heighten the music of a poem is to use rhyme. Remember that rhyming words have the same sound group in the last syllable, for example: pain, feign, arcane, campaign, Charlemagne. Sometimes there are a variety of ways to spell the same sounds. This means that while the words may not appear to rhyme on the page, when we say them, they clearly rhyme.

In formal poetry, rhymes appear at the end of lines in a particular pattern; for example, in a limerick the first, second and last lines rhyme together, and the third and fourth lines rhyme together. But rhyme can be used anywhere in a poem. Rhymes that don't appear at the end of lines are called internal rhymes.

Poets also use words that don't quite rhyme to build music into the poem. These near-rhymes are sometimes called slant rhymes. Words that sound very close to *pain*, but that don't rhyme perfectly are: paint, bean, mean, pan, pine.

Here are lines from Theodore Roethke's poem "Frau Bauman, Frau Schmidt, and Frau Schwartz":
 They sprinkled and shook;
 They stood astride pipes,
 Their skirts billowing out wide into tents,
 Their hands twinkling with wet.

Notice the rhyming words: *astride* and *wide*. And notice the near rhymes: *shook* and *stood*; *sprinkled* and *twinkling*.

OBJECTIVES

In this lesson, students will:

1. Identify rhymes and slant rhymes in the poem "I'm Over the Moon"
2. Analyze the effect of the rhymes on the content of the poem
3. Use rhyme and/or slant rhyme in a poem

MATERIALS

- "I'm Over the Moon" the poem and the motionpoem
- Markers
- Pen/paper or other writing implement

ACTIVITIES

1. The Poem (20-25 mins): Hand out a copy of the poem to every student, and have them read the poem either alone or as a class. Give them three different colors of markers.

a. As a class, begin by finding words that rhyme with *moon*. Students should underline those rhyming words with one color.

- b. Have students work in pairs to do the same using a different color with words that rhyme with *night*.
- c. With the third color, students can identify slant rhymes for both *moon* and *night*.
- d. Discuss the effect of these similar sounds in the poem. How do the sounds reflect the content?

2. The Film (20-25 mins): Watch the motion poem. As a whole class, or in small groups or pairs, consider the following questions:

- a. What liberties does the filmmaker take with the poem? How do these added or changed elements influence the poem?
- b. What sort of atmosphere does the poem create? Is there a connection between the atmosphere of the film and the use of rhymes and slant rhymes in the poem?
- c. Do you think the filmmaker made a good choice in the voice reading the poem? Why or why not? Does this voice add to or detract from the rhymes and near rhymes?

3. Depending on class time, have students complete this exercise in class or at home:

WRITING PROMPT

Choose an object that is a familiar and regular part of your life. For example, a clock, a knife, a sink, a floor. Make lists of words that rhyme with the object and words that are near rhymes. Begin the draft of a poem by using Brenda Shaughnessy's first line: "I don't like what the ____" and finish the line in a way that makes sense to you. Write 6-8 lines; try to use some of the words from your lists. Look over what you've written and identify one key word, in the way that *night* is key to Shaughnessy's poem. Make a list of words that rhyme or are near rhymes to that second word. Continue writing at least 24 lines, using the words from your lists to build your poem. When you begin the process of revising the poem, go back to your lists of words. Are there any you could use now that you didn't use before?