
REPETITION

What Is Repetition in Writing?

Repetition is a literary device that involves using the same word or phrase over and over again in a piece of writing or speech. Writers of all kinds use repetition, but it is particularly popular in oration and spoken word, where a listener's attention might be more limited. In such circumstances, it can add emphasis and catchiness.

What Is the Function of Repetition?

Repetition is a favored tool among orators because it can help to emphasize a point and make a speech easier to follow. It also adds to the powers of persuasion—studies show that repetition of a phrase can convince people of its truth.

Writers and speakers also use repetition to give words rhythm. As with other devices such as rhyme, consonance, and assonance, repetition adds musicality to a piece of text and makes it more pleasing to listen to.

Example of Repetition in Literature and Poetry

The power of repetition becomes clear when looking at examples in poetry and literature.

Take this example of repetition from one of Edgar Allan Poe's most famous poems, "The Bells" (1849):

To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

Take this excerpt from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea.