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Glossary of Rhyme Schemes

Poetry is formed by a group of lines called a *stanza*, or scheme.

Many songwriters fall into a rut with regard to rhyme schemes—that is, using the same patterns over and over again. It's important to avoid this by learning and experimenting with as many rhyme schemes as possible to add variety and interest to your songs.

The Basics

Here are a few of the most common rhyme schemes found in poetry and songs all over the world. Letters (**A**, **B**, **C**, etc.) are used to notate the scheme (the recurrence of the rhyme).

A B C B

A

Roses are red

B

Violets are **blue**

C

Sugar is sweet

B

And so are **you**

10 Tips to Better Lyric Writing

1. **Save Everything.** Don't throw away any lyrics you write. Keep them in a box, a folder, a file, your sock drawer, wherever—save them even if you immediately dislike them. Later, when you're having a bout of writer's block or just want other ideas, looking through the proverbial junkyard of songs-gone-wrong can be helpful. Even if most of the lyrics are bad, later you may look back and spot one line that was really good—and then want to lift it for your new song. Or you may say, “this is all so bad, but I like the idea of the second verse...” and be able to make it into the chorus of a song that has at this point been chorusless. Or, you may just want to see how far your lyrics have come.
2. **See the Big Picture.** In those moments when you are inspired and can't write the words you hear in your head fast enough, don't get bogged down with the details—always look at the big picture. For example, if you get an idea for the first verse but get stuck halfway through the second verse, don't let yourself lose the feeling by staring at a blank line. Leave it blank and go on to the chorus. Only have one line for the chorus? Fine. Go on to the third verse. Write as much as you can, even if it means leaving holes in your work. When you go to look at it later, maybe finishing the second verse and a chorus will come to you easily...and, meanwhile, you'll have a skeleton frame of a great song to work with.

Ate *one syllable:*

bait crate date eight hate late mate plate rate skate slate
state straight strait trait wait weight

two syllable:

await berate debate dictate donate equate estate
frustrate irate locate narrate ornate placate relate rotate
sedate translate vacate

three syllable:

abdicate advocate aggravate agitate amputate animate
annotate arbitrate assimilate calculate candidate captivate
celebrate circulate compensate complicate concentrate
confiscate congratulate consecrate consolidate constipate
consummate contaminate contemplate cooperate
coordinate correlate culminate cultivate decimate
decorate dedicate demonstrate desecrate designate
detonate devastate dislocate dissipate dominate duplicate
educate elevate estimate excavate fabricate fascinate
fluctuate formulate generate graduate gravitate habituate
heavyweight hesitate hibernate illustrate imitate implicate
incubate innovate inordinate insulate isolate lacerate
legislate levitate liberate liquidate lubricate magistrate
marinate mediate moderate modulate motivate nominate
operate orchestrate oscillate overate overstate
overweight penetrate perpetrate populate punctuate
radiate regulate reinstate renovate ruminare saturate
second-rate separate simulate situate speculate stimulate
stipulate suffocate tabulate terminate titillate tolerate
underrate understare underweight vacillate validate
vegetate ventilate vindicate violate

Young among clung dung flung high-strung hung lung rung
slung sprung strung stung sung swung tongue unstrung
unsung wrung

Your (see **Door**)

Your allure armature assure brochure caricature cocksure
cure demure endure ensure expenditure immature
impure insecure insure liqueur literature lure manicure
manure mature miniature obscure overture pedicure
premature pure reassure secure signature sure
tablature temperature

Yourself elf herself himself itself myself self shelf

Youth booth couth Duluth sleuth tooth truth uncouth

Yum album aquarium auditorium become bum burdensome
Christendom come cranium crematorium crumb
curriculum drum dump emporium fee-fi-fo-fum glum gum
gymnasium hum kettledrum kingdom martyrdom
maximum meddlesome medium millennium minimum
num museum numb opium overcome pendulum
petroleum platinum plum premium quarrelsome radium
random rum sanitarium scum slum some strum succumb
sum swum tedium thumb Tom Thumb Tweedledum
uranium worrisome yum

Yuppie guppy puppy

Z

Zany brainy grainy rainy

Zap cap chap clap flap gap handicap lap map mishap nap rap
sap scrap slap snap strap tap trap wrap

Zeal (see **Wheel**)

Zealous jealous sell us tell us (see us)