

The Poetics of Hip Hop

alliteration: use of repeated consonants or stressed syllables, especially at the beginning of words. An example is the following line by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in “Kubla Khan”: “Five miles meandering with a mazy motion.”

assonance: repetition of similar vowel sounds, often close together; the effect is usually one of euphony. An example is the following line from Langston Hughes’s “The Weary Blues”: “He did a lazy sway.”

diction: vocabulary used by a writer

end rhyme: occurs when two or more lines end in words that rhyme. An example is the following line from Shakespeare’s “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day”: “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see / So long lives this and this gives life to thee.”

iamb: a unit of rhythm in poetry, consisting of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable.

iambic pentameter: five-beat line consisting of five iambs in each line. The lines from Shakespeare’s “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” above are written in iambic pentameter.

internal rhyme: occurs when two or more words rhyme within a single line. An example is the following line from Nikki Giovanni’s “Ego Tripping”: “I am so perfect so divine so ethereal so surreal.”

poetic meter: a term used in poetic scansion, to determine the number and placement of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line, or to ascertain whether a line is written in iambic pentameter.

slant rhyme: occurs when rhymes are not true or exact, such as “other” and “ponder”, or “desert” and “feather”.

Source:

Cuddon, J.A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms: Literary Theory*. Revised by C.E. Preston. 4th Edition. London: Penguin Books, 1998.