

Alliteration

A definition

The repetition in adjacent or closely connected words with the same consonant sound, normally in stressed syllables

Purposes

- 1 to call attention to specific words

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." —Martin Luther King, Jr.

- 2 to create a pleasant, rhythmic effect

"We saw the sea sound sing, we heard the salt sheet tell." —Dylan Thomas

- 3 to add to a mood by repeating, among others,

- soft, melodious sounds to help create a calm, peaceful, or dignified mood

"A moist young moon hung above the mist of a neighboring meadow." —Vladimir Nabokov

- harsh, hard sound for an excited or tense mood

"Step forward, Tin Man. You dare to come to me for a heart, do you? You clinking, clanking, clattering collection of caliginous junk...And you, Scarecrow, have the effrontery to ask for a brain! You billowing bale of bovine fodder!" —The Wizard of Oz

- 4 to make a phrase more easily memorable, often for marketing:

PayPal, Krispy Kreme, Chuckee Cheese's, Best Buy, Pittsburgh Pirates, Pittsburgh Penguins

Practice

- 1 Write an alliterative phrase about a snake. Include three or four words beginning with the /s/ sound so that the phrase simulates the sound of a hissing snake. The words themselves need not have any relation to snakes. Shakespeare creates that sound in the opening of his Sonnet 146, a poem about his soul:

Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,

- 2 Write an alliterative phrase each for two of the following. You do not need to use the word here in your phrase.

rain

a noisy car

wind

a musical instrument

shoes or footsteps

bells in a tower
