

RHYMING SYNONYMS 1

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Other than “eye rhymes” and in poems, rhyme has featured only once in Word Ways, re the -ASH ending (84-69, 148). I present, in three articles, the results of a search for rhyming synonyms in Merriam Webster’s 2002 *Essential Rhyming Dictionary* (RD). To my surprise and consternation I found over 3000 pairs, mostly in clusters of three or more synonyms. The surprise of this large number is tempered by realising that in longer words rhyme is usually based on common suffixes, which are far less numerous and hence easier to match than core word parts. Monosyllabic rhymes are the most ‘honest’: they can’t hide their difference behind an added common ending.

The list would have been even longer had I not limited it to these strict criteria of rhyme:

- 1) The words must sound the same from the vowel sound of the last accented syllable onwards but with a different sound preceding it: abate rhymes with deflate but not with debate.
- 2) They must have the same rhythm, stress-wise: *deflate* doesn’t rhyme with *rebate*.
- 3) Two words with a different number of syllables rhyme only if the longer has the same rhythm in its terminal syllable/s as that of all the syllables of the shorter. If the primary stress of the longer word precedes these common syllables, the rhyme (in verse) is contingent upon a strong word preceding the shorter word to match the overall rhythms, like *hot date* and *rebate*.
- 4) For longer words to rhyme the sound must be the same from the primary stress syllable onward. Most synonyms ending in -ate, eg, don’t rhyme as the stress is usually penultimate or earlier: *abdicate* and *abnegate* don’t rhyme. But *abdication* and *abnegation* do. Indeed the -ATION ending, by far the most abundant in RD, provides about 1/3 of the words used and well over 2/3 of all the pairs, mostly to be presented in part 2 in large clusters of multiple synonyms.
- 5) Some rhyme not with their usual pronunciations but only with a (listed) alternative one, eg, naught: *diddley-squat*, *quare*: *bizarre*, and *wary*: *chary* can all rhyme and are used here.

I list only two-way or reciprocal synonyms or the list would have been much longer. Had the reciprocals been listed under both words it would be more than twice as long. Nor do I count alternative suffixes (plurals, tenses, etc) or the numbers would have more than doubled again.

The criterion for synonymy is more debatable, but synonyms must be the same part of speech. It’s based, as often as possible and wherever given, but not necessarily, on mutual thesaurus listings. Many pairs that don’t seem to mean the same are included if less common meanings of one or the other is meant, or if they are only synonyms in a particular usage or context, or if they mean the same in general or in some sense but are mostly used in different contexts.

Etymologically related words are excluded, except of course suffixes. But up to 5%, of imitative (onomatopoeic) origin, are included despite the possibility, or in very few cases the probability, that one is influenced by the other if this is not known for sure. Sometimes pairs within clusters may be related—or may not rhyme—but are included to pair with the other(s) in it.

The long, perhaps off-putting, list is given for poetic reference, not necessarily for recreational reading, so I give here a selection of some of the more logologically interesting findings:

- > adulation laudation (the only *anagram* encountered)
- > affray melee / entrée passageway (no letters in common or only one, not key to the common rhyme)
- > attain obtain (surprisingly not related; they don't rhyme but both rhyme with gain)
- > clip nip / clod sod / get net / knuckle buckle / mug jug / swell well (synonyms twice, with two different meanings of both, some not even etymologically related; detailed in Nov.'16 Kickshaws)
- > crap claptrap / rucksack backpack (Three rhymes for the price of two! *Four* in the second one with the nonce "racksack", which is a reasonable coinage for a type of backpack, a sack on a rack.)
- > stroll troll roll (serial beheadment synonyms, unrelated)
- > words with multiple (3-5) meanings, each meaning having different rhyming synonyms:
clip = 1. grip, nip (pinch) / 2. gyp, nip, rip (steal) / 3. nip, skip, whip, zip (dash) / 4. nip, snip (cut)
light = 1. bright / 2. excite, ignite / 3. insight (contingent rhyme) / 4. slight
mug = 1. jug (beer containers) / 2. pug, thug (toughs) / 3. slug (hit)
nip = 1-4. see clip above / 5. sip (small drink) (Note four different mutual meanings of nip and clip.)

Part 1 (this article) covers short to medium-sized pairs and clusters, part 2 longer pairs and clusters, part 3 some rhyming antonyms, plus definitions created by combining two or more rhymes.

Abate deflate	abhor deplore	abide reside	ability facility
abolish demolish	abstain refrain	abysmal dismal	acquisition addition
actual factual	adjuration exhortation	advance enhance	affinity consanguinity
agility mobility	agnation filiation (kin)	air declare	anesthesia analgesia
append extend	array display	astray agley	atomistic reductionistic
awed drop-jawed	awry agley		
Bad sad	bang clang	beam gleam	beat defeat
beauty cutie	becloud enshroud	beep bleep	behest request
bemuse confuse	bicker dicker	bin tin	bisection disconnection
3 bit dit whit (a jot)	3 blabber jabber yabber	blink wink	blip pip (radar)
block gridlock	blokes menfolks	blow snow (cocaine)	blown thrown (away)
blush flush	boggle goggle	boob rube (fool)	bottleneck check
breast chest	buccaneer privateer	3 bump thump whump	bunk junk
bursar purser	bustle hustle		
Catholicity ecumenicity	cheep peep	chink clink	chock block
3 chuck shuck pluck	3 chug glug slug	chunk hunk	churn turn
5 clap flap rap slap tap	clasp grasp	clean pristine	click tick (tock)
clinch cinch	3 clink chink plink	3 clip grip nip (pinch)	4 clip gyp nip rip (steal)
3 clip nip snip (cut)	clod sod (a jerk)	3 clod sod wad (tump)	3 clomp stomp tromp
clonk plonk (sound)	club drub (hit)	clunk plunk	cod scrod
collaborator traitor	collate conflate	compose prose (verbs)	conniver contriver
console condole	consort escort	convey relay	copulation fornication
coruscation scintillation	crap claptrap	create fabricate	crenulation serration
crick rick (pain, strain)	3 crude rude lewd	crumple rumple	curve swerve
Dance prance	dash splash	dastard bastard	daze amaze
decollation decapitation	defecation evacuation	defray pay	delay stay
desiccation dehydration	determination conation	dhow prau (sailboats)	3 dick prick stick
dicker bicker	diffuse loose	dilate inflate	dilution diminution
dint imprint	disparity dissimilarity	disqualify deny	distinct unlinked
dite write (compose)	dither swither	3 dot blot spot	dour sour
drink sink	drizzle mizzle	drop plop	drones lazybones
ductility malleability	duff muff (blow it)	3 dump flump plump	

3 Edge hedge ledge	egotistic narcissistic	ego-trip oneupmanship	eke squeak
elision excision	elixir fixer	empyrean ethereal	entity identity
entrée passageway	exact extract	excite delight	3 excite light ignite (initiate)
exist subsist	expect project	expose disclose	extensity immensity
extreme supreme	eye espy		
Faction fraction	falcation incurvation	fatuity vacuity	feckless reckless
3 fiddle diddle twiddle	figuration illustration	filial familial	filiation relation
filariasis elephantiasis	fink gink (a heel)	3 fission scission division	flag sag
flaky shaky	flavour savour	fleck speck	flick click (a switch)
fling sling	flip tip (over)	flitter twitter	5 flop clop drop plopop
flown shown (flags)	3 flush plush lush	foil spoil	follicular vesicular
forego no (verbs)	freckle speckle	frock smock	frolic rollick
fuddled muddled	fug snug (fuck)	fuggy muggy	3 fumble bumble stumble
3 fume brume plume	fusilier musketeer	fuzzy muzzy	
Gabble babble	3 gain attain obtain	gainsay nay	get net
glare stare	glide slide	glimmer shimmer	glitch hitch
glout pout	glower lower (scowl)	gnaw chew	goon buffoon
goop gloop	grate irritate	great first-rate	groan moan
groin loin	grumpish mumpish	guffaw hee-haw	guile wile
Ha! ah!	hachure contour (lines)	hair-raiser amazer	hash mishmash
haze daze	heal reseal	hinge impinge (on)	hit smit
hitch glitch	ho pro	hoar froze (frosty)	hoarse coarse
hook crook	hoop loop	hop bop	huff puff
humdrum ho-hum	hurry flurry		
Icky sticky	ignite light	immunity impunity	impinge infringe
imply signify	3 impound bound ground	incite ignite	indisputable irrefutable
initiate novitiate	insane inane	intense dense	invite incite
Jab stab	jagged ragged	jeer sneer	5 jam cram dam ram slam
jingostic chauvinistic	jitter twitter	John Doe Joe Blow	
Keek peek	kibosh quash	kif leaf (cannabis)	knock mock
knuckle buckle	kowtow bow		
Lam scam	lam slam	latch catch	laud applaud
libation oblation	libation potation	light bright	3 lighten brighten whiten
light insight	light slight	limp gimp	limpidity lucidity
liquidity fluidity	litre cubic decimetre	little tittle	5 lo! ho! oh! yo! hallo!
location situation	3 loony goony spoony	3 lop chop crop	lubrication facilitation
lug tug	lumber encumber		
Mandator dictator	mate conjugate (bacteria)	mate copulate	ma'under wander
meet discreet	melee affray	mewl pule (whimper)	miss sis
monstrosity hideosity	moody broody	muck guck	mug jug
3 mug pug thug	mug slug (hit)	munch crunch	musty fusty
Nail impale	nan/ny gran/ny	natter chatter	naught diddley-squat
navigation negotiation	nay noway	nick snick	nigh by
nincompoop stupe	nip sip	nitwit twit	nob nabob
nub hub			
Obsession possession	obtuse abstruse	olio portfolio	oodles boodles
ooh! coo!	opposition competition	out rout	outrace outpace
Parade cavalcade	patent blatant	pence cents	pension subvention
perimeter delimiter	phew! whew!	phonic sonic	physicality materiality
physician diagnostician	pic flick (movie)	pip nip	play portray
pleaser appeaser	plumpish dumpish	plunge lunge	poke provoke

pomposity grandiosity	porny horny	position condition	prang bang
predicate state	3 press duress stress	prick stick (poke)	printer minter
promenade parade	proud unbowed	pry spy	pshaw! faugh!
pub club	pubescent adolescent		
Quag bog	quake shake	quare bizarre	3 quasi shy well-nigh
3 quit split git	quite downright	quote note	
Ramble amble	rationality logicity	rats! drats!	reave thief
recreation relaxation	redound rebound	reel wheel	regime scheme
rein constrain	relish embellish	retardation deceleration	rim brim
3 ring ding ping	ritual habitual	roast toast	roil embroil
roisterous boisterous	roll scroll	rook crook	rough tough
roundly soundly	rout wipeout	rub scrub	rumble grumble
rush gush			
Scam flimflam	scheme dream	sectility cuttability	seller storyteller (pun!)
sheathe wreathe	shrewd clued	shudder judder	shush! hush!
singularity peculiarity	skimp scrimp	skitter flitter	slash gash
slim trim	slip trip	slit split	sloganeer pamphleteer
slug mug	smoother soother	snit fit	sociology anthropology
soil spoil	solidify rigidify	sop mop	sophistic casuistic
souse douse	space place	spatter splatter	spile pile
spliff kif (cannabis)	3 splutter sputter stutter	spur stir	3 spray bouquet nosegay
square fair	squirt spurt	squash crush	stack pack
stash cache	state articulate	state relate	sterility infertility
stoke poke	striation sulcation	3 stroll troll roll	strum thrum
supreme cream	surpass outclass	swear declare	swell well
Tactility palpability	tag flag	takings makings	teeny weeny
tend trend	terrible unbearable	throes woes	thwart abort (stop)
toke smoke	toot hoot	totalization summation	train ingrain
3 tramp ramp stamp	tranquilization sedation	troop group	trump stump
tumble stumble	tumidity turgidity	tweeze squeeze	twig sprig
twitter chitter	type stripe		
Ululation lamentation	unify tie	upfront blunt	upwell swell
utility employability			
Vaccination inoculation	vagility mobility	vale dale	vaunt flaunt
vent present	versatility flexibility	3 vie apply try	vilify decry
vocality orality	volatility changeability		
Waft draft	wary chary	wear bear	welter helter-skelter
wham bam	whiff sniff	whirry hurry	whirry scurry
whistleblower shower	whoosh swoosh	4 whop top 'mop' stop	whopping eye-popping
wight sprite	wipe swipe	witch bitch	wrinkle crinkle
wry dry			
X sex!	xyst piste (sport tracks)		
Yatter chatter	yay! hooray!	yerk jerk (verbs)	yowl howl
Zinger humdinger	5 zip clip nip rip whip	zonk conk	zoom vroom

Rhyme and synonymy are based on at least one if not the majority of these dictionaries: OED†, Websters 3rd, Oxford American + Thesaurus, Chambers + Crossword, Collins + Scrabble, Random House, Macquarie + Thesaurus, Cassell Slang; + online: Wiktionary, British and World English (Oxford), *Dictionary.com*.

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