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 / entree 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 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
abolish demolish
actual factual
agility mobility
append extend
awed drop-jawed
Bad sad
beauty cutie
bemuse confuse
3 bit dit whit (a jot)
block gridlock
blush flush
breast chest
bursar purser
Catholicity ecumenicity
3 chuck shook pluck
5 clap flap rap slap tap
clinch cinch
3 clip nip snip (cut)
clonk plonk (sound)
collaborator traitor
console condole
coruscation scintillation
crick rick (pain, strain)
Dance prance
decollation decapitation
desiccation dehydration
dicker bicker
dint imprint
dite write (compose)
drink sink
ductility malleability
abhor deplore
abstain refrain
adjuration exhortation
agnation filiation (kin)
array display
awry agley
bang clang
becloud enshroud
bicker dicker
3 blabber jabber yabber
blokes menfolks
boggle goggle
buccaneer privateer
bustle hustle
cheep peep
3 chug glut slug
clasp grasp
3 clink chink plink
clod sod (a jerk)
club drub (hit)
collate conflate
consort escort
crap claptrap
3 crude rude lewd
dash splash
defecation evacuation
determination conation
diffuse loose
disparity dissimilarity
dither swither
drizzle mizzle
duff muff (blow it)
abide reside
abysmal dismal
advance enhance
air declare
astray agley
beam gleam
beep bleep
bin tin
blink wink
blow snow (cocaine)
boob rube (fool)
3 bump thump whump
chink clink
chunk hunk
clean pristine
3 clip grip nip (pinch)
3 clod sod wad (tump)
clunk plunk
compose prose (verbs)
convey relay
create fabricate
crumple rumple
dastard bastard
defray pay
dhow prau (sailboats)
dilate inflate
disqualify deny
3 dot blot spot
drop plop
3 dump flump plump
ability facility
acquisition addition
affinity consanguinity
anesthesia analgesia
atomistic reductionistic
beat defeat
behest request
bisection disconnection
blip pip (radar)
blown thrown (away)
bottleneck check
bunk junk
chock block
churn turn
click tick (tock)
4 clip gyp nip rip (steal)
3 clomp stomp tromp
cod scrod
conniver contriver
copulation fornication
crenulation serration
curve swerve
daize swerve
delay stay
3 dick amaze
3 dick amaze
3 dick prick stick
dilution diminution
distinct unlinked
dour sour
drones lazybones
3 Edge hedge ledge
elision excision
entree passageway
exist subsist
extreme supreme
Faction fraction
3 fiddleiddle twiddle
filariosis elephantiasis
flaky shaky
fling sling
flown shown (flags)
forego no (verbs)
fuddled muddled
3 fume brume plume
Gabble babble
glare stare
glout pout
goop gloop
groin loin
Ha! ah!
haze daze
hitch glitch
hook crook
hundrum ho-hum
Icky sticky
imply signify
initiate novitiate
Jab stab
jingoistic chauvinistic
Keek peek
knuckle buckle
Lam scram
libation oblation
light insight
liquidity fluidity
location situation
lug tug
Mandator dictator
meet discreet
monstrosity hideosity
3 mug pug thug
Nail impale
navigation negotiation
nincompoop stupe
nub hub
Obsession possession
ooh! coo!
Parade cavalcade
perimeter delimiter
physician diagnostician
pleaser appeaser
etologic narcissistic
elixir fixer
exact extract
expect project
eye espy
falciation incuration
figuration illustration
fink gink (a heel)
flavour savour
flip tip (over)
3 flush plush lush
freckle speckle
fug snug (tuck)
fusilier musketeer
3 gain attain obtain
glide slide
glower lower (scowl)
grate irritate
grumpish mumpish
hachure contour (lines)
heal reseal
ho pro
hoop loop
hurry flurry
ignite light
3 impound bound ground
insane inane
jagged ragged
jitter twitter
kibosh quash
kowtow bow
lam slam
libation potation
light slight
litre cubic decimetre
3 loony groovy spoozy
lumber encumber
mate conjugate (bacteria)
mate copulate
meelee affray
moody broody
mug slug (hit)
nan/ny gran/ny
nay noway
nip sip
ego-trip oneupmanship
empyreal ethereal
excite delight
expose disclose
fatuity vacuity
filial familial
3 fissian scission division
fleck speck
flitter twitter
foil spoil
frock smock
fuggy muggy
fuzzy muzzy
gainsay nay
glimmer shimmer
gnaw chaw
great first-rate
guffaw hee-haw
hair-raiser amazer
hinge impinge (on)
hoar frore (frosty)
hop hop
immunity impunity
incite ignite
intense dense
jeer sneer
John Doe Joe Blow
kif leaf (cannabis)
latch catch
light bright
limp gimp
little tittle
3 lop chop crop
maund wander
miss sis
mug jug
musty dusty
naught diddle-squat
nigh by
nab nabob
oodles boodles
outtrace outpace
pension subvention
physicality materiality
play portray
poke provoke
3 excite light ignite (initiate)
extenty immensity
feckless reckles
filiation relation
flag sag
flick click (a switch)
5 flop clop drop plop pop
follicular vesicular
frolic rollick
3 fumble bumble stumble
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