

NAME _____ DATE _____

ONOMATOPOEIA

When you want to use a word to imitate a sound, you use **onomatopoeia**. What does a person scream when he or she sees a mouse? "EEK!" Comic books make excellent use of onomatopoeia with words such as *zap*, *blam*, *zoom*. Onomatopoeia is a sound device that is used not only for humor and fun but also for special effects. For example, Tennyson's line:

Clang battleaxe, and *clash* brand! Let the king reign.

Another example is found in "Dirge" by Shelly:

Rough wind, that *moanest* loud . . .

Pick a familiar place and tune your ear into sounds heard there. Then write a poem using onomatopoeia. Put it in the following form:

Classroom

I hear
 the screech of chalk on the board.
 the grinding of a pencil in the sharpener.
 the tapping of fingers on the desk.
 the hush of students taking a test.

Now write an onomatopoetic poem about your place.

I hear



Onomatopoeia is the imitation in words of the natural sounds of things.

In poetry this device uses words to make us hear how the object sounds and usually are action verbs or adjectives. Onomatopoeia can add to the visual images of a poem, too.

Here are some examples.

1. Underline the onomatopoeia in the rest of these sentences.

The old engine chugged down the rickety track.

The hard-hit tennis ball whistled by my ear.

The truck's brakes screeched in the distance.

The old floor creaked as we walked slowly across it.

The rain beat on the metal barn roof.

The fire crackled and popped on a cold night.

His guitar strings twanged the sad melody.

The snake hissed when I startled it.

2. Using onomatopoeia, complete the following sentences. Use adjectives and adverbs to make the sentence more interesting.

The wind

The radio

His anger

The bells

The frightened cat

3. List three onomatopoeia words that fit these categories.

Hit with a hand. Talk loudly. Talk softly. nonstop talking

walking sounds eye movements Move slowly. loud noises

rain sounds thunder sounds

4. Write a poem which utilizes at least three examples of Onomatopoeia. You can use examples from this page or make up others.