

Craft Lesson #1: Repetition



All examples are from Kiese Laymon's (2015) "Da Art of Storytelling' (A Prequel)."

One of the best ways to bring out your voice as a writer is to use purposeful repetition, as the act of repeating things can draw attention to the moments that best reflect you. There are lots of ways to purposefully repeat yourself, but three of the most impactful tools are parallel structure, alliteration, and anaphora.

PARALLEL STRUCTURE

Parallel structure happens when you repeat the same words, phrases, or sentence structure for dramatic effect.

Example: "*The vocal tones were familiar, but the rhyme patterns, the composition, the production were equal parts red clay, thick buttery grits, and Mars.*" —para. 12

ALLITERATION

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds.

Example: "*This was the stank from whence black Southern life, love, and labor came.*" —para. 4

ANAPHORA

Anaphora is the repetition of the start of sentences or phrases.

Example: "*This weekend, I'm going to drive down to Grandmama's house in central Mississippi. I'm going to bring my computer. I'm going to ask her to sit next to me while I finish this essay about her artistic rituals of labor vis-à-vis OutKast. I'm going to play ATLiens and Aquemini on her couch while finishing the piece, and think of every conceivable way to thank her for her stank, and for her freshness.*" —para. 30

YOU TRY

Kiese Laymon's (2015) "Da Art of Storytelling' (A Prequel)" is an homage to his grandmother. Please write an homage to someone or something in your life. Include at least two examples of parallel structure, alliteration, and anaphora, and *please annotate each using the comment feature* so I can see that you understand each tool. The homage should be at least one good, solid paragraph, at a minimum.