Example 1a. Kurtis Blow, “Basketball” (1984), verse 1, 0:25–0:35 (borrowed from Adams 2009)

**Rhyme structure is 2+2; syntactical structure is 1 + 1 + 2:**

Basketball is my favorite sport.
I like the way they dribble up and down the court.
Just like I’m the king on the microphone,
so is Doctor J and Moses Malone.

Example 1b. Eric B. and Rakim, “Paid in Full” (1987), 0:46–1:10

*Syntactical groupings override rhyme groupings (rhymes are in bold):*

I used to roll up: this is a hold up, ain’t nothin’ funny, stop smilin’.
Be still, don’t nothin’ move but the money.
But now I learn to earn ‘cause I’m **righteous**.
I feel great, so maybe I **might just** search for a 9 to 5.
If I strive, then maybe I’ll stay alive.
So I walk up the street, whistlin’ this.
Feelin’ out of place, ‘cause man do I miss a pen and a paper, a stereo a tape or...
Example 4. Repetitive beat: De La Soul, “The Grind Date” (from *The Grind Date*, 2005), 0:28–0:49 (produced by Dave West)


Example 5b. Oscillating beat, alternating by third: Aesop Rock (Ian Bavitz), “None Shall Pass” (from *None Shall Pass*, 2007), 0:15–0:34 (produced by Blockhead [Tony Simon])
Example 5c. Oscillating beat, alternating by fourth: People under the Stairs, “Montego Slay” (from *O.S.T.*, 2002), 0:20–0:44 (produced by Thes One [Christopher Portugal])

Example 5d. Oscillating beat, sequential: Cunninlynguists, “Lynguistics” (from *Will Rap for Food*, 2001), 0:18–0:46 (produced by Kno [Ryan Wisler])

Example 5e. Oscillating beat, uneven: Migos, “Bad and Boujee,” (from *Culture*, 2017), 0:15–0:30 (produced by DY and Tre Pounds [Dwan Avery and Jeffrey LaCroix])

Example 6b. Expansional beat, i → v: The Pharcyde, “Passin’ Me By” (from *Bizarre Ride II the Pharcyde*, 1993), 0:23–0:39 (produced by J-Swift [Juan Martinez])
Example 6c. Expansional beat, complete progression (i → iv → II7 → V): Danger Doom, “Sofa King”

Example 7a. The Chicharones, “Blessing in Disguise” (from *Boss Hogs*, 2007), 1:30–1:43
(produced by Josh Martinez [Matthew Kimber])

Example 8. Jurassic 5, “Jurass Finish First” (from *Quality Control*, 2000), 0:18–0:39 (produced by DJ Nu-Mark [Mark Potsic])

![Drum Set example](image)

Example 9a. Change from open to closed expansional beat: Jemini, “Medieval” (from *Ghetto Pop Life*, 2003), 0:42–1:15

- First part of beat = open (i \(\rightarrow\) V)

- Second part of beat = closed (i \(\rightarrow\) i)
Example 9b. Expansional beat, closed (a a’ b a”): Noname, “Self” (from Room 25, 2018), 0:22–1:03 (produced by Phoelix)

Example 10. Syntactical alignment: N.W.A., “Express Yourself” (from Straight Outta Compton, 1988), 0:10–0:31 (rapper: Dr. Dre [Andre Young])

Example 12. Rhythmic/melodic motive aligned with rhyme: Cunninlynguists, “616 Rewind,” (From Will Rap for Food, 2000), 0:27–1:05 (rapper: Tone Deff [Pedro Rojas])

Motif: cseg <2 3 1 0>

Lyrics (motivic phrase italicized):

First I sprinkle the verse
By addin' words, rhymes
Flippin' em in a verse with lines
Then I'mma hit 'em disperse rhyme
Venom and then I'mma split 'em in half
Feelin' my wrath
Venturin' through parts of the South so dirty
You'll want to be given a bath
It's livin' a pathological lie to deny that I'm nice
And the truth hurts
Wearin' a blue shirt the Best Buy for the price
To get six guys this live and nice on the mic
So don't diss us because we're fly
It's a good try but it's like

I'm liable to slice at these emcee bastards
Leaving their knees fractured
Needlin' every piece of their teeth re-crafted
So don't front cause I see past it
You're harmless like Wolverine's adamantium claws
When they're retracted
If the scene's backlit
Or seems static / we'll wreak havoc /
We'll beat batter / to keep rappin' /
A leech battle / a dream shattered /
For three nano seconds [damn]
Count your paces, one step to Tone Deff
You're Gone in Sixty Seconds like Nicolas Cage is

I kill the show I get my dough I catch a flight I see a hat-er I'm run-nin' down it's on sight

I throw my hands I hit 'em left I hit 'em right they sleep-in on me just be-cause I used to strip but it's


I fuck and rap... I tote the strap, I smoke the lush, I beat the pass, I

read the books did the math don't need a preach-er preach-in on my be-half No

teacher can teach my arr-o-gant ass I'm blow-in on crip-py while read-in in-scrip-tions that's

writ by E gyp-tians and sipp-in on whis-key hey ha-b-y you with me?

R Slinkin' through the night on the brink of something great,
    I've given up everything for this one second
    and I'll never make a list where I state all my nevers,
    cause some things for me need to be forever.

E You can't kid a kidder, you can't yoke the joker,
    I'm an entertainer and a secondhand smoker.
    Been a center focus, my inner child opus rises
    Hope is eye to eye with truth, no surprises

E I'm a Yonna White letter turner | Better Ted Turner, letter |
    | writer book burner had a | matchbook ready
    Knight Rider sleeping bag with matching bed and I got
    Flowers on my pillow, pull the t-shirt on my head, and when I'm

R sleepin' (I'm thinkin') I'm dreamin' (no dreamin')
    On the brink some days, and goin' crazy in ways.
    Some succumb with age in the dumb day's mind
    I don't sleep 'cause sleep is the cousin of wasted time

← four-measure sentence in the lyrics overrides repetitive beat; defines a
  four-bar phrase.

← 1 + 1 + 2 organization in the lyrics supports new 4-bar expansional
  beat

← sudden acceleration in the lyrics created by 2-beat motive takes control
  from the beat, defines 1.5-bar phrase

← beat and lyrics realign, one-beat lyrical repetition matches one-beat
  repetitions in the music
1. The way I feel, sometimes it's too hard to sit still.
2. Things are so passionate, times are so real.
3. Sometimes I try and chill, mellow down, blowin' smoke.
4. Smile on my face but it's really no joke.
5. You feel it in the streets, people breathe without hope.
6. They goin' through the motion, they dimmin' down the focus.
7. The focus gets clear and the light turn sharp.
8. and the eyes grow teary, the mind grow weary.
9. I speak it so clearly sometimes y'all don't hear me.
10. I push it past the bass, know nations gotta feel me.
11. I feel it in my bones, black I'm so wide awake
12. that I'm hardly ever sleep, My flow forever deep.
13. and it's volumes or scriptures when I breathe on a beat.
14. My presence speak volumes before I say a word. I'm
15. everywhere: penthouse, pavement and curb.
16. Cradle to the grave, tall cathedral or a shell,
17. universal ghetto life, holla black you know it well.
18. quiet storm[vital form] [pen pushed it right across]
19. mind is a vital force[high level right across]
20. soul is the lion roar[voice is the siren (...)]
21. I swing round, ring out and bring down the tyrant.
22. Chop a small axe and knock a giant lopsided.
23. The world is so dangerous, there's no need for fightin'.
24. Suckas trying to hide like the struggle won't find 'em,
25. and the sun bust through the clouds to clearly remind 'em its
26. everywhere: penthouse, pavement, and curb.
27. Cradle to the grave, tall cathedral or a shell,
28. universal ghetto life, holla black you know it well.

Beat defines a four-bar phrase.

Two-measure sentence begins to undermine the beat, but still
ends at the same time as the hypermeasure.

Overlapping rhyme scheme combined with single-bar syntactical
units helps destabilize the hypermeter.

Two 1.5-measure sentences displace the syntax against the
beat.

As a result of the earlier displacement, three-bar refrain is now
misaligned with the beat.

Italicized rhythmic motive strongly defines a three-bar phrase,
bringing the lyrics back into alignment with the beat.

Return to single-measure sentences supports the beat again.

Three-bar refrain now properly aligned with the beat.