A Working Vocabulary on Rhetoric and Grammar for Grade 11 AP English Language and Composition Course

with much help from Richard Nordquist, About.com/grammar

Active voice

In most English sentences with an action verb, the subject performs the action denoted by the verb.

These examples show that the subject is doing the verb's action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Action Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The man</td>
<td>eaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn</td>
<td>mailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorful parrots</td>
<td>live</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the subject does or "acts upon" the verb in such sentences, the sentences are said to be in the active voice.
Ad Hominem:
Definition:
The person presenting an argument is attacked instead of the argument itself. This takes many forms. For example, the person's character, nationality or religion may be attacked. Alternatively, it may be pointed out that a person stands to gain from a favorable outcome. Or, finally, a person may be attacked by association, or by the company he keeps.

There are three major forms of Attacking the Person:

- **Ad hominem (abusive):** instead of attacking an assertion, the argument attacks the person who made the assertion.
- **Ad hominem (circumstantial):** instead of attacking an assertion the author points to the relationship between the person making the assertion and the person's circumstances.
- **Ad hominem (tu quoque):** this form of attack on the person notes that a person does not practice what he preaches.

Examples:

- You may argue that God doesn't exist, but you are just a fat idiot. (ad hominem abusive)
- We should discount what Steve Forbes says about cutting taxes because he stands to benefit from a lower tax rate. (ad hominem circumstantial)
- We should disregard Fred's argument because he is just angry about the fact that defendant once cheated him out of $100. (ad hominem circumstantial)
- You say I should give up alcohol, but you haven't been sober for more than a year yourself. (ad hominem tu quoque)
- You claim that Mr. Jones is innocent, but why should anyone listen to you? You are a Mormon after all. (ad hominem circumstantial)

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound or letter at the beginning of each or most of the words in a sentence. The easiest way to use alliteration would be to repeat the starting letter of the words.

**Examples – Using alliteration with a letter**

*Anxious ants avoid the anteater's advances.*
*Squawking seagulls swoop on sunbathers.*
*The wild winds whisk to the west.*
*Zany zebras zigzagged through the zoo.*

For a more complex form of alliteration you can use the first syllable of the words, using the same sound to make the alliteration effect.

**Example – Using alliteration with the first syllable**

*The allure of alliteration allows all authors\ To perfect the punch of their poetry and prose.*
*Writers weave their witty, wonderful words into webs;*\ *Sparkling spiderwebs spun by specialised specimens*\ *To tempt, tease and trap their intended targets.*
Allusion
-a reference within a work to something famous outside it, such as a well-known person, place, event, story, or work of art, literature, music, pop culture.

Examples of Allusion
Examples of allusion cover the following subjects:

- Biblical allusions
- Literary allusions
- Mythological allusions

Examples of Allusion in Poems, Poetry, Literature & Mythology
Poems with Allusion examples can be found by the most famous poets including Milton, Shakespeare and TS Eliot.

- "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" poem by Robert Frost
- "The Wasteland" by T.S. Eliot's which alludes to "Paradise Lost" by John Milton and "Percival by Chrétien de Troyes
- Dante’s Inferno which alludes to the Greek mythological figures, Phaethon and Icarus
- The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare alludes to the Greek mythological character Cupid: “Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see quick Cupid’s post that comes so mannerly.”
- Frankenstein by Mary Shelley alludes to both Shakespeare and Greek Mythology in several places
- The Prelude by William Wordsworth alludes to Paradise Lost by John Milton

Examples of Biblical Allusion
Examples of Biblical allusions include:

- "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck has numerous examples of Biblical allusions
- The quote "John was not his brother's keeper" is an allusion to the biblical story of Cain and Abel.

Anadiplosis
A rhetorical device. Repetition of the final words, or any prominent word, of a sentence or line at the beginning of the next

Examples of Anadiplosis in Poems, Poetry and Speeches
Poems with Anadiplosis examples can be found by the most famous people including Francis Bacon and John Keats

- He retained his virtues amidst all his - misfortunes -- misfortunes which no prudence could foresee or prevent." Francis Bacon
- Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats
  Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
  Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
  Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
- Biblical example: "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep (Gen. 1:1-2)."
Analogy

A term that signifies a relational comparison of or similarity between two objects or ideas.

Many famous people have also used analogies to explain their positions or their opinions on an issue. For instance, consider the following analogy examples:

- "I am to dancing what Roseanne is to singing and Donald Duck to motivational speeches. I am as graceful as a refrigerator falling down a flight of stairs." - Leonard Pitts, "Curse of Rhythm Impairment" Miami Herald, Sep. 28, 2009

- "If you want my final opinion on the mystery of life and all that, I can give it to you in a nutshell. The universe is like a safe to which there is a combination. But the combination is locked up in the safe." Peter De Vries, Let Me Count the Ways

- "Writing a book of poetry is like dropping a rose petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting for the echo." - Don Marquis

- "They crowded very close about him, with their hands always on him in a careful, caressing grip, as though all the while feeling him to make sure he was there. It was like men handling a fish which is still alive and may jump back into the water." - George Orwell, A Hanging

- "Withdrawal of U.S. troops will become like salted peanuts to the American public; the more U.S. troops come home, the more will be demanded." - Henry Kissinger in a Memo to President Richard Nixon

- "... worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing bubble gum." - Baz Luhrmann, Everybody's Free (to Wear Sunscreen)

- "Dumb gorgeous people should not be allowed to use literature when competing in the pick-up pool. It's like bald people wearing hats." - Matt McGrath from the movie Broken Hearts Club
Anaphora

Anaphora is the Greek term used to describe the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. Anaphora, like many other rhetorical techniques, is commonly used in literature as well as in speeches. From literature, consider the opening words from Charles Dickens’ *Tale of Two Cities*:

*It was the best of times,*  
*it was the worst of times,*  
*it was the age of wisdom,*  
*it was the age of foolishness,*  
*it was the epoch of belief,*  
*it was the epoch of incredulity,*  
*it was the season of Light,*  
*it was the season of Darkness,*  
*it was the spring of hope,*  
*it was the winter of despair,*  
*we had everything before us,*  
*we had nothing before us,*  
*we were all going direct to Heaven,*  
*we were all going direct the other way –*

In August, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. gave us one of the richest speech examples for anaphora. This includes “I have a dream …” and many other repetition-laden passages, including:

*Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy.*  
*Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.*  
*Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.*  
*Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children.*

Anastrophe

The reversal of the natural order of words in a sentence or line of poetry.

Anastrophe occurs whenever normal syntactical arrangement is violated for emphasis:

*The verb before the subject-noun (normal syntax follows the order subject-noun, verb):*  
Glistens the dew upon the morning grass. (Normally: The dew glistens upon the morning grass)

*Adjective following the noun it modifies (normal syntax is adjective, noun):*  
She looked at the sky dark and menacing. (Normally: She looked at the dark and menacing sky)

*The object preceding its verb (normal syntax is verb followed by its object):*  
Troubles, everybody's got. (Normally: Everybody's got troubles)
Preposition following the object of the preposition (normal syntax is preposition, object ["upon our lives"]:)
It only stands / Our lives upon, to use Our strongest hands
—Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra 2.1.50-51

Antithesis

Rhetorical contrast of ideas by means of parallel arrangements of words, clauses, or sentences.
Meaning Opposition; contrast

Famous Modern Example of Antithesis
The most famous modern example of Antithesis was the words of astronaut Neil Armstrong when he became the first man to set foot on the moon

"One small step for a man, one giant leap for all mankind."

Other famous examples of antithesis are "To err is human, to forgive, divine." the famous quote by Alexander Pope and "The brave men, living and dead" from the Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln.

Examples of Antithesis in Poems & Poetry
Poems with Antithesis examples can be found by the most famous poets including John Milton, Alexander Pope and William Shakespeare.

- An Essay on Man by Alexander Pope "unlike short-sighted, egocentric humans, God “sees with equal eye” the fall of a hero and a sparrow, the destruction of an atom or a solar system.”
- Samuel Johnson, The History of Rasselas "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful."
- "Hee for God only, shee for God in him” Paradise Lost by John Milton.
- “Too black for heaven, and yet too white for hell.” from “The Hind and the Panther” by John Dryden
- Brutus: "Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more." from Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare

Aphorism

Definition: A term for speech or writing that is short, direct, and memorable
Often relating to abstract truth rather than to practical matters.

Examples
"In times like these, it is helpful to remember that there have always been times like these.” —Paul Harvey

"Believe not all you can hear, tell not all you believe." —Native American proverb

"A lie begets a lie." —English proverb

"To each the boulders that have fallen to each." —Robert Frost, "Mending Wall"
What is the Origin of Aphorisms?

What is the origin of the word? The word derives from the Greek word 'aphorismos' meaning to define.

Additional examples of famous Aphorisms are as follows:

- "I think therefore I am" by Rene Descartes
- "Lost time is never found again" by Benjamin Franklin
- "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so"
  Mark Twain

Apostrophe

A figure of speech in which some absent or nonexistent person or thing is addressed as if present and capable of understanding.

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are. Up above the world so high, Like a diamond in the sky." This nursery rhyme from 'The Star', written by Jane Taylor, is a child's address to a star. Talking to a star being an imaginary idea, this rhyme makes for a classic example of an Apostrophe.

"Blue Moon, you saw me standing alone
Without a dream in my heart
Without a love of my own." - from "Blue Moon" by Lorenz Hart

Oh! Stars and clouds and winds, ye are all about to mock me; if ye really pity me, crush sensation and memory; let me become as nought; but if not, depart, depart, and leave me in darkness." - from Frankenstein

Appositive

An appositive is a word placed after another word to explain or identify it. The appositive always appears after the word it explains or identifies. It is always a noun or a pronoun, and the word it explains is also a noun or pronoun.

ex. My uncle, a lawyer, is visiting us.

My teacher, Miss Marshall, is very strict.

An appositive phrase consists of the appositive and its modifiers which may themselves be phrases.

ex. My radio, an old portable, is in the repair shop.

The boys climbed the mountain, one of the highest in the West.
Argument From Ignorance

Arguments of this form assume that since something has not been proven false, it is therefore true. Conversely, such an argument may assume that since something has not been proven true, it is therefore false. (This is a special case of a false dilemma, since it assumes that all propositions must either be known to be true or known to be false.)

Examples:

i. Since you cannot prove that ghosts do not exist, they must exist.
ii. Since scientists cannot prove that global warming will occur, it probably won't.
iii. Fred said that he is smarter than Jill, but he didn't prove it, so it must be false.

Asyndeton

From the Greek meaning 'no things that bind: Normally we say 'a, b, c, d and e' but asyndeton leaves out the 'and' (or another conjunction such as or / but / for / not / nor) and says instead 'a,b,c,d,e'.

Examples:

"Instead, they knew that our power grows through its prudent use; our security emanates from the justness of our cause, the force of our example, the tempering qualities of humility and restraint"
"Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things - some celebrated but more often men and women obscure in their labor, who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom"
"I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors" - Barack Obama

Bandwagon

A Bandwagon Fallacy is when a statement is assumed to be logically valid because of popular support.

Bandwagon Fallacy Examples

“7 in 10 doctors say acupuncture works, therefore it must work”

Here is a combination of appeal to authority and the bandwagon fallacy. Many people place trust in an authority on health like a doctor so when a majority of them promote a thing it must be true! No, sorry again, but this just isn’t so. We always need evidence, easily obtainable, repeatable, and testable evidence.
Many people once thought the earth was flat; this certainly didn’t make it so.

**Begging the Question**

Begging the Question is a fallacy in which the premises include the claim that the conclusion is true or (directly or indirectly) assume that the conclusion is true.

**Examples of Begging the Question**

"If such actions were not illegal, then they would not be prohibited by the law."

Interviewer: "Your resume looks impressive but I need another reference."
Bill: "Jill can give me a good reference."
Interviewer: "Good. But how do I know that Jill is trustworthy?"
Bill: "Certainly. I can vouch for her."

**Cause and Effect in Argumentation**

**Claims of cause and effect:** These claims argue that one person, thing, or event caused another thing or event to occur.

**Examples:**

The popularity of SUV's in America has caused pollution to increase.

**Multiple causes/one effect**

American children are not being protected from dangerous Chinese toys for three reasons: lack of Chinese governmental oversight, lack of U.S. testing on Chinese imports, and a lack of U.S. trade penalties against China for lax *toy safety laws*.

**One cause/multiple effects**

Obesity is one of the major problems facing Americans today. It can result in physical and mental health problems, as well as removal from an active lifestyle.
Cause and Effect Fallacy (a.k.a. Questionable Cause)

Did you know that cold weather causes illness? Or that the rise in Christianity in the last couple of decades caused the rise of immorality in society? Believe it or not, many people do believe the former (rather, bacteria and viruses cause illness), and I really have seen a skeptic assert the latter. The rise of immorality in American society has many complex causes, and it is likely that the rise of Christianity is incidental. These two claims are cause-and-effect fallacies. If event B occurs just after event A or simultaneously, never jump to the conclusion that A causes B. Several possibilities exist:

- A and B may just happen to occur together (coincidence). Neither is the cause of the other.
- A and B may be caused by another event, so that A did not cause B or vice versa.
- Maybe A did cause B, but such a conclusion must be verified by scientists or historians.

Chiasmus

Chiasmus is a figure of speech in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order, in the same or a modified form. In other words, the clauses display inverted parallelism.

Examples:

These are examples of chiasmus:

- He knowingly led and we followed blindly
- Swift as an arrow flying, fleeing like a hare afraid
- 'Bad men live that they may eat and drink, whereas good men eat and drink that they may live.'
  Socrates (fifth century B.C.)

Complex Sentence

A complex sentence has an independent clause joined by one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence always has a subordinator such as because, since, after, although, or when or a relative pronoun such as that, who, or which.

A. When he handed in his homework, he forgot to give the teacher the last page.
B. The teacher returned the homework after she noticed the error.
C. The students are studying because they have a test tomorrow.
D. After they finished studying, Juan and Maria went to the movies.
E. Juan and Maria went to the movies after they finished studying.
**Compound Sentence**

A compound sentence contains two independent clauses joined by a coordinator. The coordinators are as follows: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.* (Helpful hint: The first letter of each of the coordinators spells FANBOYS.) Except for very short sentences, coordinators are always preceded by a comma.

A. I tried to speak Spanish and my friend tried to speak English.
B. Alejandro played football so Maria went shopping.
C. Alejandro played football for Maria went shopping.

**Compound-Complex Sentence**

The compound-complex sentence combines elements of compound and complex sentences. It is the most sophisticated type of sentence you can use. Understanding how to construct the compound-complex sentence will help you take your writing to a new level of complexity.

A compound-complex sentence is comprised of at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

**Example:** Though Mitchell prefers watching romantic films, he rented the latest spy thriller, and he enjoyed it very much.

**Example:** Laura forgot her friend's birthday, so she sent her a card when she finally remembered.

Because compound-complex sentences are normally longer than other sentences, it is very important to punctuate them correctly

**Connotation**

Connotative words have an additional, suggested meaning. Connotation words refer to the associations that are connected to certain words or the emotional suggestions related to the words. The connotative meanings of words exist together with the denotative meanings of words.

**Examples:**
"A writer needs an 'ear' as much as a musician does," wrote Sydney J. Harris. "And without this ear, he is lost and groping in a forest of words, where all the trees look much alike."

A dictionary can tell us only what a word points to, not "what it feels like".

My attorney "knows all the ins and outs," but my opponent's attorney is a "slippery character."
The difference between "vandalism" and a "harmless prank" depends upon whose child has committed it.

**Declarative Sentence**

A sentence in the form of a statement (in contrast to a command, a question, or an exclamation). In a declarative sentence, the subject normally precedes the verb. A declarative sentence ends with a period.

**Examples:**

- I like cats.
- "I like children--fried."
  (W. C. Fields)
- "I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me."
  (Fred Allen)
- "The best goodbyes are short."
  (Sydney Greenstreet as Kasper Gutman in *The Maltese Falcon*, 1941)
- "We rob banks."
  (Warren Beatty as Clyde Barrow in *Bonnie and Clyde*, 1967)
- "You can get help from teachers, but you are going to have to learn a lot by yourself, sitting alone in a room."
  (Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss), "On Becoming a Writer," 1986)
- "A banker is a fellow who lends you his umbrella when the sun is shining, but wants it back the minute it begins to rain."
  (Mark Twain)
- "Friends and fellow citizens, I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote."
  (Susan B. Anthony, *On Women's Right to Vote*, 1872)
- "I'm the one who should be sorry. I was so ready to get out, so ready to taste that ocean, I was willing to put you in harm's way to get there. Nothing should be worth that."
  (Gill in *Finding Nemo*, 2003)
- "Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age."
  (Barack Obama, *Inaugural Address*, 2009)
- "Sonny, true love is the greatest thing in the world, except for a nice MLT: mutton, lettuce and tomato sandwich, where the mutton is nice and lean and the tomato is ripe."
(Billy Crystal as Miracle Max in *The Princess Bride*, 1984)

"Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world--I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife."

(Stella Conchita Hurston, "How It Feels to Be Colored Me," 1928)

"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

(Macbeth in William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, c. 1605)

"I celebrated Thanksgiving in an old-fashioned way. I invited everyone in my neighborhood to my house, we had an enormous feast, and then I killed them and took their land."

(Jon Stewart)

"There isn't any thought or idea that can't be expressed in a fairly simple declarative sentence, or in a series of fairly simple declarative sentences."

(E.B. White, "Fro-Joy")

**Deductive**

A method of reasoning from the general to the specific.

In a deductive argument, a conclusion follows necessarily from the stated premises.

**Examples**

Sherlock Holmes and Watson were on a camping trip. They had gone to bed and were lying there looking up at the sky. Holmes said, "Watson, look up. What do you see?"

"I see thousands of stars."

"And what does that mean to you?"

"I guess it means we will have another nice day tomorrow. What does it mean to you, Holmes?"

"To me, it means someone has stolen our tent."

"The fundamental property of a deductively valid argument is this: If all of its premises are true, then its conclusion must be true also, because the claim asserted by its conclusion already has been stated in its premises, although usually only implicitly."

"Here is an example of a very simple deductively valid argument:

Everything made of copper conducts electricity. (Premise)
This wire is made of copper. (Premise)
This wire will conduct electricity. (Conclusion)

Taken alone, neither premise makes the claim that the wire will conduct electricity; but taken together, they do, although not explicitly."
"You'd like to think that, wouldn't you? You've beaten my giant, which means you're exceptionally strong, so you could've put the poison in your own goblet, trusting on your strength to save you, so I can clearly not choose the wine in front of you.
But, you've also bested my Spaniard, which means you must have studied, and in studying you must have learned that man is mortal, so you would have put the poison as far from yourself as possible, so I can clearly not choose the wine in front of me.

(Vizzini in The Princess Bride, 1987)

Denotation

The direct or dictionary meaning of a word, in contrast to its figurative or associated meanings (connotations).

Vizzini: He didn't fall? Inconceivable.
Inigo Montoya: You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.
(The Princess Bride, 1987)

"You know a phrase I never understood? King size. It's used to denote something larger, but most of the kings you see are short. You ever notice that? Usually a king is a short little fat guy."
(George Carlin, Napalm & Silly Putty, 2001)

Wally: I can't believe I fell for counterfeit Superbowl tickets. The guys will be crestfallen when they find out.
Homer: Yes, if by "crestfallen" you mean they're going to kill us.
("Sunday, Cruddy Sunday," The Simpsons)

Denotation and Connotation: "House" and "Home"

"[The denotation of a word] is its primary signification or reference; [its connotation] is the range of secondary or associated significations and feelings which it commonly suggests or implies.
Thus 'home' denotes the house where one lives, but connotes privacy, intimacy, and coziness; that is the reason real estate agents like to use 'home' instead of 'house' in their advertisements."

"The denotation of a term is its exact and literal meaning. Consider the word home. Its denotation, or precise meaning, is 'residence or fixed dwelling place.' The denotation of the word city is 'center of population and commerce.'

"A word's connotation, on the other hand, consists of its emotive value. For example, connotations of the word home might be refuge, resting place, even boring or predictable habitation. The word city might connote place of excitement, energy, danger, or even sin.

"Think of denotation as the dictionary definition of a word, using the d as a mnemonic device. A connotation is the subjective, personal, even poetic interpretation of a word."
Dependent Clause

A group of words that has both a subject and a verb but (unlike an independent clause) cannot stand alone as a sentence. Also known as a subordinate clause. Dependent clauses include adverb clauses, adjective clauses, and noun clauses.

Examples

"My fake plants died because I did not pretend to water them."
(Mitch Hedberg)

"When I was young, I used to admire intelligent people; as I grow older, I admire kind people."
(Abraham Joshua Heschel, God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism, 1955)

"Whenever I get the urge to exercise, I lie down until the urge passes."
(attributed to Robert M. Hutchins)

"I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught."
(Winston Churchill, speech to the British House of Commons, 1952)

"A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new."
(attributed to Albert Einstein)

"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."
(attributed to Mark Twain)

"If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?"
(attributed to Albert Einstein)

Dialect

A regional or social variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, especially a way of speaking that differs from the standard variety of the language.

American English-Regional Variation

Three Major Dialect Regions:

Northern Region: This region consists of New England, from Vermont to New York and all the states between the Great Lakes and the Pacific Ocean.

Southern Region: This region includes Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and all of the states bordering the Gulf of Mexico, including Texas.

Midland Region: This is the largest region, consisting of most of the United States.
It extends from Pennsylvania and New Jersey west into Ohio and south along the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia into the Carolinas.

**Diction**

(1) The choice and use of **words** in **speech** or **writing**.
(2) A way of speaking, usually judged in terms of prevailing standards of **pronunciation** and **elocution**.

**Diction and Audience**

"**Diction** will be effective only when the words you choose are appropriate for the **audience** and **purpose**, when they convey your message accurately and comfortably. The idea of comfort may seem out of place in connection with diction, but, in fact, words can sometimes cause the reader to feel uncomfortable. You've probably experienced such feelings yourself as a listener--hearing a speaker whose words for one reason or another strike you as inappropriate."

(Martha Kolln, *Rhetorical Grammar*. Allyn and Bacon, 1999)

**Levels of Language**

"Sometimes **diction** is described in terms of four levels of language:
(1) **formal**, as in serious **discourse**; **informal**, as in relaxed but polite conversation;
(3) **colloquial**, as in everyday usage;
**slang**, as in impolite and newly coined words (see **neologism**).

It is generally agreed that the qualities of proper diction are appropriateness, correctness, and accuracy. A distinction is usually made between **diction**, which refers to the choice of words, and **style**, which refers to the manner in which the words are used."


**Ellipsis**

One of three equally spaced points ( . . . ) used in writing or printing to indicate the omission of words in a **quotation**.

"If you omit words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs in a quotation because they are irrelevant, do not change or misrepresent the meaning of the original quotation. . . .

"To indicate the omission of a word, phrase, or sentence, use **ellipsis dots**--three periods with spaces between them. . . . Since the dots stand for words omitted, they always go inside the **quotation marks** or **block quotation**. Leave a space between the last quoted word or punctuation mark and the first ellipsis dot and another space after the last dot before the next word or punctuation mark."

**Epanalepsis**

Repetition of the same word or clause after intervening matter. More strictly, repetition at the end of a line, phrase, or clause of the word or words that occurred at the beginning of the same line, phrase, or clause…

**Examples**

"In times like these, it is helpful to remember that there have always been times like these." — Paul Harvey

"Believe not all you can hear, tell not all you believe." — Native American proverb

"A lie begets a lie." — English proverb

"To each the boulders that have fallen to each." — Robert Frost, "Mending Wall"

**Epistrophe**

Repetition of a word or phrase at the end of successive sentences or clauses.

**Examples**

“… that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”
— Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 19 November 1863

“There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem.”
— Lyndon Johnson, Washington, D.C., 15 March 1965

“Our struggle has reached a decisive moment. We call on our people to seize this moment, so that the process towards democracy is rapid and uninterrupted. … I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination.”
— Nelson Mandela, Cape Town, 11 February 199
Ethos

In classical rhetoric, a persuasive appeal (one of the three artistic proofs) based on the character or projected character of the speaker or writer.

According to Aristotle, the chief components of a compelling ethos are good will, practical wisdom, and virtue.

The personality of the orator outweighs the issues."
(John Leopold)

"I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV."
(1960s TV commercial for Excedrin)

"If, in my low moments, in word, deed or attitude, through some error of temper, taste, or tone, I have caused anyone discomfort, created pain, or revived someone's fears, that was not my truest self. If there were occasions when my grape turned into a raisin and my joy bell lost its resonance, please forgive me. Charge it to my head and not to my heart. My head--so limited in its finitude; my heart, which is boundless in its love for the human family. I am not a perfect servant. I am a public servant doing my best against the odds."
(Jesse Jackson, Democratic National Convention Keynote Address, 1984)

Etymology

(1) The origin or derivation of a word (also known as lexical change).
(2) The branch of linguistics concerned with the history of the forms and meanings of words.

"Ours is a mongrel language which started with a child's vocabulary of 300 words, and now consists of 225,000; the whole lot, with the exception of the original and legitimate 300, borrowed, stolen, smooched from every unwatched language under the sun, the spelling of each individual word of the lot locating the source of the theft and preserving the memory of the revered crime."
(Mark Twain, Autobiography)

"As early as the 15th century, scribes and early printers performed cosmetic surgery on the lexicon. Their goal was to highlight the roots of words, whether for aesthetic pizzazz, homage to etymology, or both. The result was a slew of new silent letters. Whereas debt was spelled det, dett, or dette in the Middle Ages, the 'tamperers,' as one writer calls them, added the b as a nod to the word's Latin origin, debitum. The same goes for changes like the b in doubt (dubium), the o in people (populous), the c in victuals (victus), and the ch inschool (scholar)."
(David Wolman, Righting the Mother Tongue: From Olde English to Email, the Tangled Story of English Spelling, Harper, 2010)
"The origin of words that reproduce natural sounds is self-explanatory. French or English, cockoo and miaow are unquestionably onomatopoeias. If we assume that growl belongs with gaggle, cackle, croak, and creak and reproduces the sound it designates, we will be able to go a bit further. Quite a few words in the languages in the world begin with gr- and refer to things threatening or discordant. From Scandinavian, English has grue, the root of gruesome (an adjective popularized by Walter Scott), but Old Engl. gryre (horror) existed long before the emergence of grue-. The epic hero Beowulf fought Grendel, an almost invincible monster. Whatever the origin of the name, it must have been frightening even to pronounce it."


**Euphemism**

The substitution of an inoffensive term (such as "passed away") for one considered offensively explicit ("died").

**Examples:**

*Dan Foreman:* Guys, I feel very terrible about what I'm about to say. But I'm afraid you're both being let go.

*Lou:* Let go? What does that mean?

*Dan Foreman:* It means you're being fired, Louie.

(In Good Company, 2004)

*Mr. Prince:* We'll see you when you get back from image enhancement camp.

*Martin Prince:* Spare me your euphemisms! It's fat camp, for Daddy's chubby little secret!

("Kamp Krusty," The Simpsons, 1992)

*Dr. House:* I'm busy.

*Thirteen:* We need you to . . .

*Dr. House:* Actually, as you can see, I'm not busy. It's just a euphemism for "get the hell out of here."

("Dying Changes Everything," House)

**Exclamatory Sentence**

A type of sentence that expresses strong feelings by making an exclamation. (Compare with sentences that make a statement, express a command, or ask a question.) An exclamatory sentence ends with an exclamation point.
Examples:

"It's alive! It's alive!"
(Colin Clive as Dr. Frankenstein in *Frankenstein*, 1931)

"I can't believe it! Reading and writing actually paid off!"
(Homer Simpson, *The Simpsons*)

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams!"
(Henry David Thoreau)

"What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"
(William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II)

"Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room!"
(Peter Sellers as President Merkin Muffley in *Dr. Strangelove*, 1964)

**Fallacy**

An error in reasoning that renders an argument invalid.

**Examples**

*Learning how to swim does not guarantee you won't drown. I'm 55 years old, have never learned to swim and I haven't drowned.*

*Obama shouldn't go to Martha's Vineyard. Every time he does, something major happens.*

**False Analogy**

A fallacy in which an argument is based on misleading, superficial, or implausible comparisons.

**Example**

There are seven windows given to animals in the domicile of the head: two nostrils, two eyes, two ears, and a mouth. . . . From this and many other similarities in Nature, too tedious to enumerate, we gather that the number of planets must necessarily be seven."
(Francesco Sizzi, 17th-century Italian astronomer)


**False Dilemma**

A fallacy of oversimplification that offers a limited number of options (usually two) when in reality more options are available.

**Examples**

i. Either you're for me or against me.
ii. America: love it or leave it.
iii. Every person is either wholly good or wholly evil.

**Gerund**

A traditional grammatical term for a verbal that ends in -ing and functions as a noun.

**Examples**

"Eighty percent of success is showing up."
(Woody Allen, *Love and Death*, 1975)

"Shooting paintballs is not an art form."
(Bart Simpson, *The Simpsons*)

"Humor is laughing at what you haven't got when you ought to have it."
(Langston Hughes, "A Note on Humor," 1966)

**Hyperbole**

A figure of speech (a form of irony) in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect; an extravagant statement.

**Examples:**

*Principal Skinner:* The things you don't know would fill a whole library and leave room for a few pamphlets.

*Superintendent Chalmers:* There's no need for hyperbole, Seymour.

("Bart Stops to Smell the Roosevelt’s." *The Simpsons*, October 2, 2011)
"I was helpless. I did not know what in the world to do. I was quaking from head to foot, and could have hung my hat on my eyes, they stuck out so far."
(Mark Twain, "Old Times on the Mississippi")

**Imagery**

Vivid *descriptive language* that appeals to one or more of the senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste).

**Example:**

"In our kitchen, he would bolt his orange juice (squeezed on one of those ribbed glass sombreros and then poured off through a strainer) and grab a bite of toast (the toaster a simple tin box, a kind of little hut with slit and slanted sides, that rested over a gas burner and browned one side of the bread, in stripes, at a time), and then he would dash, so hurriedly that his necktie flew back over his shoulder, down through our yard, past the grapevines hung with buzzing Japanese-beetle traps, to the yellow brick building, with its tall smokestack and wide playing fields, where he taught."
(John Updike, "My Father on the Verge of Disgrace" in *Licks of Love: Short Stories and a Sequel*, 2000)

**Imperative Sentence**

A type of *sentence* that gives advice or instructions or that expresses a request or command.

**Examples**

"We're going into the attic now, folks. *Keep your accessories with you at all times.*"
(Buzz Lightyear, *Toy Story 3*, 2010)

"*Go ahead, make my day.*"
(Clint Eastwood as Harry Callahan in *Sudden Impact*, 1983)

"*Always do right.* This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."
(Mark Twain)

Westley: *Give us the gate key.*
Yellin: I have no gate key.
Inigo Montoya: *Fezzik, tear his arms off.*
Yellin: Oh, you mean *this* gate key.
(*The Princess Bride*, 1987)
**Independent Clause**

A group of words made up of a **subject** and a **predicate**. An independent clause (unlike a dependent clause) can stand alone as a **sentence**.

**Examples**

When liberty is taken away by force, **it can be restored by force**. When it is relinquished voluntarily by default, **it can never be recovered**.

(Dorothy Thompson)

"**The average man does not want to be free. He simply wants to be safe.**

(H.L. Mencken)

"When people talk, **listen completely. Most people never listen.**

(Ernest Hemingway)

"**I was born** when you kissed me. **I died** when you left me. **I lived a few weeks** while you loved me."

(Humphrey Bogart in the movie *In a Lonely Place*)

"**Advertising is the rattling of a stick inside a swill bucket.**

(George Orwell)

**Induction**

A method of reasoning that moves from specific instances to a general conclusion. In an inductive argument, a **rhetor** (that is, a speaker or writer) collects a number of instances and forms a generalization that is meant to apply to all instances.

"**Induction** operates in two ways. It either advances a conjecture by what are called confirming instances, or it falsifies a conjecture by contrary or disconfirming evidence. A common example is the hypothesis that all crows are black. Each time a new crow is observed and found to be black the conjecture is increasingly confirmed. But if a crow is found to be not black the conjecture is falsified."


"Here is a simple example of an inductively valid argument of the kind sometimes called **induction by enumeration**:

I loaned my friend $50 last November and he failed to pay me back. (Premise) I loaned him another $50 just before Christmas, which he hasn't paid back (Premise), and yet another $25 in January, which is still unpaid. (Premise) I suppose it's time to face facts: He's never going to pay me back. (Conclusion)

"We use inductive reasoning so frequently in everyday life that its nature generally goes unnoticed."

Infinitive

A verbal--usually preceded by the particle *to*--that can function as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb.

Examples

"It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt."
(Mark Twain)

"Until the advent of television emptied the movie theaters, it was from a weekly visit to the cinema that you learned (or tried to learn) how to walk, to smoke, to kiss, to fight, to grieve."
(Susan Sontag, "The Decay of Cinema," (1996)

"No one wants to hear from my armpits."
(Bart Simpson, *The Simpsons*)

"We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses")

Interrogative Sentence

A type of sentence that asks a question.

Examples

"What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?"
(Henry David Thoreau, letter to Mr. Blake, May 1860)

"Are you a good witch or a bad witch?"
(Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, in *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939)

"O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?"
(Juliet in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, 1595)

"If winning isn't everything, why do they keep score?"
(Vince Lombardi)
Ironic
Irony is an implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant.

1. **verbal irony** is when an author says one thing and means something else.
2. **dramatic irony** is when an audience perceives something that a character in the literature does not know.
3. **irony of situation** is a discrepancy between the expected result and actual results.

### Jargon

The specialized **language** of a professional, occupational, or other group, often meaningless to outsiders.

"**Jargon** is the verbal sleight of hand that makes the old hat seem newly fashionable; it gives an air of novelty and specious profundity to ideas that, if stated directly, would seem superficial, stale, frivolous, or false."

(David Lehman)

"'Hygienic treatment' is funeral **jargon** for the temporary preservation of a corpse."

(Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death*, 1963)

### Juxtaposition

In **composition**, the placing of verbal elements side by side, leaving it up to the reader to establish connections and impose a **meaning**.

### Examples

"Watchmen at lonely railroad crossings in Iowa, hoping that they'll be able to get off to hear the United Brethren evangelist preach . . . Ticket-sellers in the subway, breathing sweat in its gaseous form. . . . Farmers plowing sterile fields behind sad meditative horses, both suffering from the bites of insects. . . . Grocery-clerks trying to make assignations with soapy servant girls. . . . Women confined for the ninth or tenth time, wondering helplessly what it is all about. . . ."

"We could take your name,' she said, 'and send it to you.' And it wouldn't be so bad if only you could read a sentence all the way through without jumping (your eye) to something else on the same page; and then (he kept thinking) there was that man out in Jersey, the one who started to chop his trees down, one by one, the man who began talking about how he would take his house to pieces, brick by brick, because he faced a problem incapable of solution, probably, so he began to hack at the trees in the yard, began to pluck with trembling fingers at the bricks in the house. Even if a house is not washable, it is worth taking down. It is not till later that the exhaustion sets in.

"But it is inevitable that they will keep changing the doors on you, he said, because that is what they are for; and the thing is to get used to it and not let it unsettle the mind. . . ."


**Logos**

In *classical rhetoric*, the means of *persuasion* by demonstration of *logical proof*, real or apparent.

**Logical proofs** (SICDADS) are convincing because they are real and drawn from experience. Answer all of the proof questions that apply to your issue.

*Signs:* What signs show that this might be true?

*Induction:* What examples can I use? What conclusion can I draw from the examples? Can my readers make the "inductive leap" from the examples to an acceptance of the conclusion?

*Cause:* What is the main cause of the controversy? What are the effects?

*Deduction:* What conclusions will I draw? What general principles, warrants, and examples are they based on?

*Analogies:* What comparisons can I make? Can I show that what happened in the past might happen again or that what happened in one case might happen in another?

*Definition:* What do I need to define?

*Statistics:* What statistics can I use? How should I present them?


**Loose Sentence**

A sentence structure in which a *main clause* is followed by one or more *coordinate* or *subordinate* phrases and clauses.

"At its simplest the *loose sentence* contains a main clause plus a subordinate construction:

*We must be wary of conclusions drawn from the ways of the social insects, since their evolutionary track lies so far from ours.* (Robert Ardrey)

The number of ideas in loose sentences is easily increased by adding phrases and clauses, related either to the main constructions or to a preceding subordinate one:

- *I found a large hall, obviously a former garage, dimly lit, and packed with cots.* (Eric Hoffer)
- *I knew I had found a friend in the woman, who herself was a lonely soul, never having known the love of man or child.* (Emma Goldman)
As the number of subordinate constructions increases, the loose sentence approaches the **cumulative** style."

**Malapropism**

Absurd or humorous misuse of a word, especially by confusion with one of similar sound.

**Examples**

"A witness shall not bear **falsies** against thy neighbor."
( Archie Bunker in *All in the Family*)

"**groin-acologist**" for "gynecologist"
( Archie Bunker in *All in the Family*)

"Why not? Play captains against each other; create a little **dysentery** in the ranks."
( Christopher Moltisanti in *The Sopranos*)

"That's another thing. I don't want to hear anymore how it was in your day. From now on, keep your **antidotes** to local color, like Dynoflow or the McGuire Sisters."
( Tony Soprano to "Feech" La Manna in *The Sopranos*)

"However, they delineate—quotas, I think, **vulcanize** society."
( George W. Bush)

"There's no **stigmata** connected with going to a shrink."
( Little Carmine in *The Sopranos*)

**Metaphor**

A **figure of speech** in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something in common.

**Examples**

"Men's words are bullets, that their enemies take up and make use of against them."
( George Savile, *Maxims*)

"Language is a road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going."
( Rita Mae Brown)

"Memory is a crazy woman that hoards colored rags and throws away food."
( Austin O'Malley, *Keystones of Thought*)

"A man may break a word with you, sir, and words are but wind."
( William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*)
"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."
(Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854)

**Metonymy**

A *figure of speech* in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated (such as "crown" for "royalty"). Metonymy is also the *rhetorical* strategy of describing something indirectly by referring to things around it, as in describing someone's clothing to characterize the individual.

**Examples**

"Detroit is still hard at work on an SUV that runs on rain forest trees and panda blood."
(Conan O'Brien)

The White House asked the television networks for air time on Monday night.

* The suits on Wall Street walked off with most of our savings.

* "The B.L.T. left without paying."
  (waitress referring to a customer)

**Non Sequitur**

A *fallacy* in which a *conclusion* does not follow logically from what preceded it.

* "Non sequiturs are most obvious when absurd. For instance, from the facts that most cats like milk and some cats have tails I could not derive the conclusion that David Hume was the greatest British philosopher. That would be a complete *non sequitur* that borders on the surreal, whether or not its conclusion is true. *Non sequiturs* are often advertised by the spurious use of 'so' and 'therefore' . . . , but the context of a statement can also suggest that it is a conclusion derived from what has gone before even when there is no such word used to indicate it.

  * "Any formal fallacy will have a *non sequitur* as its conclusion, though most of these *non sequiturs* will be less obvious than the one above."

*Ralph Wiggum*: Martin Luther King had a dream. Dreams are where Elmo and Toy Story had a party and I was invited. Yay! My turn is over!

*Principal Skinner*: One of your best, Ralphie.

Object

A word or group of words, functioning as a noun or a pronoun, that is influenced by a verb (direct object), a verbal (indirect object), or a preposition (object of a preposition).

**direct object**

"He had a **sensation** of anxiety and shame, a **sensitivity** acute beyond usefulness, as if the nervous system, flayed of its old hide of social usage, must record every **touch** of pain."

(John Updike)

**indirect object**

"He told **me** the story of what happened when he won the Silver Star, but he never told **me** he won the Silver Star for it."

(Vanessa Kerry)

**object of a preposition**

"Boys are playing basketball around a **telephone pole** with a **backboard** bolted to **it**."

(John Updike, *Rabbit, Run*)

Onomatopoeia

The use of words (such as *hiss* or *murmur*) that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to.

Examples

"**Chug, chug, chug. Puff, puff, puff. Ding-dong, ding-dong.** The little train rumbled over the tracks."

("Watty Piper" [Arnold Munk], *The Little Engine That Could*)

"**Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Oxymoron

A figure of speech in which incongruous or seemingly contradictory terms appear side by side; a compressed paradox.

Keep in mind that an oxymoron is an apparent contradiction.

Here are some common examples of oxymoronic expressions: act naturally, random order, original copy, conspicuous absence, found missing, alone together, criminal justice, old news, peace force, even odds, awful good, student teacher, deafening silence, definite possibility, definite maybe, terribly pleased, ill health, turn up missing, jumbo shrimp, loose tights, small crowd, and clearly misunderstood.

Examples:

"How is it possible to have a civil war?"
(George Carlin)

"O brawling love! O loving hate! . . .
O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
This love feel I, that feel no love in this."
(William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet)

"The best cure for insomnia is to get a lot of sleep."
(attributed to W.C. Fields)

"A yawn may be defined as a silent yell."
(G.K. Chesterton, George Bernard Shaw, 1909)

Paradox

A figure of speech in which a statement appears to contradict itself.

Examples

"The swiftest traveler is he that goes afoot."
(Henry David Thoreau, Walden, 1854)

"If you wish to preserve your secret, wrap it up in frankness."
(Alexander Smith, "On the Writing of Essays." Dreamthorp, 1854)

"I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love."
"War is peace."
"Freedom is slavery."
"Ignorance is strength."
(George Orwell, *1984*)

**Parallelism**

Similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses. Also called parallel structure.

**Examples**

"When you are right you cannot be too radical; when you are wrong, you cannot be too conservative."
(Martin Luther King, Jr.)

"After a few miles, we drove off a cliff.

"It wasn’t a big cliff. It was only about four feet high. But it was enough to blow out the front tire, knock off the back bumper, break Dad’s glasses, make Aunt Edythe spit out her false teeth, spill a jug of Kool-Aid, bump Missy’s head, spread the Auto Bingo pieces all over, and make Mark do number two."

"New roads; new ruts."
(G. K. Chesterton)

"He's quite a man with the girls. They say he's closed the eyes of many a man and opened the eyes of many a woman."
(telegraph operator to Penny Worth in *Angel and the Badman*, 1947)

"They are laughing at me, not with me."
(Bart Simpson, *The Simpsons*)

**Parentheticals**

Phrases, sentences, and words inside parentheses ( ).

In rhetorical analysis, pay attention to parenthetical statements. Two questions should arise when you see a parenthetical.

*Why are these words inside parenthesis? And Are there other parentheticals that together make a pattern in the essay?*

**Example**
The Big Bopper (*J.P. to his friends*) rolled into Chantilly Lace and all the girls went wild.

**Participle**

A verbal that functions as an adjective.

"When the participle is a single word—the verb with no complements or modifiers—it usually occupies the adjective slot in preheadword position:

Our *snoring* visitor kept the household awake.
The *barking* dog next door drives us crazy.

". . . While the single-word participle generally fills the preheadword adjective slot, it too can sometimes open the sentence—and with considerable drama:

*Exasperated*, she made the decision to leave immediately.
*Outraged*, the entire committee resigned.

**Passive Voice**

In traditional grammar, a verb form (or voice) in which the grammatical subject receives the verb’s action. Example: "A good time *was had* by all." Contrast with active voice.

The most common form of the passive in English is the short passive or agentless passive: a construction in which the agent (that is, the performer of an action) is not identified. Example: "Mistakes *were made*.

**Examples**

The painting *was sold* to someone who later donated it to the college.

"Fiction *was invented* the day Jonas arrived home and told his wife that he was three days late because he *had been swallowed* by a whale."

(Gabriel Garcia Marquez)

"In the beginning the Universe *was created*. This has made a lot of people very angry and *has been widely regarded* as a bad move."

(Douglas Adams)

"America *was discovered* accidentally by a great seaman who was looking for something else . . . . America *was named* after a man who discovered no part of the New World. History is like that, very chancy."

(Samuel Eliot Morison)
**Pathos**

"Of the three appeals of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, it is the [last] that impels an audience to act. Emotions range from mild to intense; some, such as well-being, are gentle attitudes and outlooks, while others, such as sudden fury, are so intense that they overwhelm rational thought. Images are particularly effective in arousing emotions, whether those images are visual and direct as sensations, or cognitive and indirect as memory or imagination, and part of a rhetor's task is to associate the subject with such images."


**Examples**

"Hillary Clinton used a moment of brilliantly staged emotion to win the New Hampshire Democratic primary . . . . As she answered questions in a diner on the morning before the election, Mrs. Clinton's voice began to waver and crack when she said: 'It's not easy. . . . This is very personal for me.'

"Emotions can be an electoral trump card, especially if one can show them as Mrs Clinton did, without tears. The key is to appear stirred without appearing weak."


**The Lighter Side of Pathos: Pathetic Appeals in *Monty Python* **

*Restaurant Manager*: I want to apologize, humbly, deeply, and sincerely about the fork.

*Man*: Oh please, it's only a tiny bit. . . . I couldn't see it.

*Manager*: Ah, you're good kind fine people for saying that, but *I* can see it. To me it's like a mountain, a vast bowl of pus.

*Man*: It's not as bad as that.

*Manager*: It gets me here. I can't give you any excuses for it--there are *no* excuses. I've been meaning to spend more time in the restaurant recently, but I haven't been too well. . . . (emotionally) Things aren't going very well back there. The poor cook's son has been put away again, and poor old Mrs. Dalrymple who does the washing up can hardly move her poor fingers, and then there's Gilberto's war wound--but they're good people, and they're kind people, and together we were beginning to get over this dark patch. . . . There was light at the end of the tunnel. . . . Now this. Now this.

*Man*: Can I get you some water?

*Manager (in tears)*: It's the end of the road!

(Eric Idle and Graham Chapman, episode three of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, 1969)
**Periodic Sentence**

A long and frequently involved sentence, marked by suspended syntax, in which the sense is not completed until the final word—usually with an emphatic climax.

**Examples**

"In the almost incredibly brief time which it took the small but sturdy porter to roll a milk-can across the platform and bump it, with a clang, against other milk-cans similarly treated a moment before, Ashe fell in love."
(P.G. Wodehouse, *Something Fresh*, 1915)

"To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, that is genius."
(Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," 1841)

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."
(The King James Bible, I Corinthians 13)

**Personification**

A trope or figure of speech (generally considered a type of metaphor) in which an inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities or abilities.

**Examples**

The wind stood up and gave a shout.  
He whistled on his fingers and

Kicked the withered leaves about  
And thumped the branches with his hand

And said he'd kill and kill and kill,  
And so he will! And so he will!  
(James Stephens, "The Wind")

"Fear knocked on the door. Faith answered. There was no one there."
(proverb quoted by Christopher Moltisanti, *The Sopranos*)

"Pimento eyes bulged in their olive sockets. Lying on a ring of onion, a tomato slice exposed its seedy smile . . . ."

"Good morning, America, how are you?  
Don't you know me I'm your native son."
I'm the train they call the City of New Orleans; I'll be gone five hundred miles when the day is done." (Steve Goodman, "The City of New Orleans," 1972)

"The only monster here is the gambling monster that has enslaved your mother! I call him Gamblor, and it's time to snatch your mother from his neon claws!" (Homer Simpson, The Simpsons)

**Phrase**

A small group of related words within a sentence or clause.

**Absolute Phrase**
"Still he came on, shoulders hunched, face twisted, wringing his hands, looking more like an old woman at a wake than an infantry combat soldier." (James Jones, The Thin Red Line)

**Adjective Phrase**
"It is always the best policy to speak the truth--unless, of course, you are an exceptionally good liar." (Jerome K. Jerome)

**Adverb Phrase**
"Movements born in hatred very quickly take on the characteristics of the thing they oppose." (J. S. Habgood)

**Gerund Phrase**
"Failing the exam was a major disappointment to him, to me and to Eva." (Judith Hubback, From Dawn to Dusk)

**Infinitive Phrase**
"To laugh is to live profoundly." (Milan Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting)

**Noun Phrase**
"Buy a big bright green pleasure machine!" (Paul Simon)

**Participial Phrase**
"He moved ahead more quickly now, dragging his heels a little in the fine dust." (John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath)

**Prepositional Phrase**
"I could dance with you until the cows come home. On second thought I'd rather dance with the cows until you come home." (Groucho Marx)

**Verb Phrase**
"Your father may be going away for a little while." (Ellen Griswold in Vacation, 1983)
Point of View

The perspective from which a speaker or writer recounts a narrative or presents information. Depending on the topic, purpose, and audience, writers of nonfiction may rely on the first-person point of view (I, we), the second-person (you, your), or the third-person (he, she, it, they).

"Point of view is the place from which a writer listens in and watches. Choosing one place over another determines what can and can't be seen, what minds can and can't be entered. . . .

"The main choice of course is between the third and first person, between a disembodied voice and 'I' (in nonfiction synonymous with the author). For some, the choice is made before sitting down to write. Some writers feel obliged to use the third person, by tradition the voice of objectivity, the disinterested mode of address appropriate for the newspaper or for history. Other writers, by contrast, seem to adopt the first person as a reflex, even if they are not writing autobiographically. But choosing a point of view really is a choice, fundamental to the construction of nonfiction narratives and carrying serious consequences. No moral superiority inheres in the first or third person, in their many varieties, but the wrong choice can deaden a story or distort it enough to turn it into a lie, sometimes a lie composed of facts."

(Tracy Kidder and Richard Todd, Good Prose: The Art of Nonfiction. Random House, 2013)

Subjective and Objective Viewpoints

"Pronouns reflect the various viewpoints. You can choose first person (I, me, us, our), second person (you), or third person (he, she, they, their). First person is considered intense, subjective, and emotionally hot. It is the natural choice for memoir, autobiography, and most personal-experience essays. The reader is the center of attention for second person. It is the favored point of view for instructional material, advice, and sometimes admonishment! It is intimate without being intense--unless the 'voice' of the author is authoritarian or controlling instead of instructive. . . .

"Third person can be subjective or objective. For instance, when used for an 'as told to' personal-experience essay, third person is subjective and warm. When used for news and information, third person is objective and cool."


Poisoning the Well

A logical fallacy (a type of ad hominem argument) in which a person attempts to place an opponent in a position from which he or she is unable to reply.

"Another technique by which the personality of a speaker is sometimes discredited is called poisoning the well. An enemy, when he poisons a well, ruins the water; no matter how good or how pure the water was, it is now tainted and hence unusable. When an opponent uses this technique, he casts such aspersions on a person that the person cannot possibly recover and defend himself without making matters much worse.

CITY COUNCILMAN: The Mayor's a very good talker. Yes, talk he can do . . . and do very well. But when it comes time for action, that's a different matter. How can the mayor respond? If he remains silent, he runs the risk of appearing to accept the councilman's criticisms. But if he stands up and defends himself, then he is talking; and the more he talks, the more he
appears to be confirming the accusations. The well has been poisoned, and the mayor is in a difficult position."
(Robert J. Gula, Nonsense. Axios, 2007)

**Polysyndeton**

A rhetorical term for a sentence style that employs many coordinating conjunctions.

**Examples**

"[I]t is respectable to have no illusions--and safe--and profitable--and dull."
(Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim, 1900)

"Most motor-cars are conglomerations (this is a long word for bundles) of steel and wire and rubber and plastic, and electricity and oil and petrol and water, and the toffee papers you pushed down the crack in the back seat last Sunday."
(Ian Fleming, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang: The Magical Car, 1964)

"He pulled the blue plastic tarp off of him and folded it and carried it out to the grocery cart and packed it and came back with their plates and some cornmeal cakes in a plastic bag and a plastic bottle of syrup."
(Cormac McCarthy, The Road. Knopf, 2006)

"Let the white folks have their money and power and segregation and sarcasm and big houses and schools and lawns like carpets, and books, and mostly--mostly--let them have their whiteness."
(Maya Angelou, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 1969)

**Predicate**

One of the two main parts of a sentence or clause, modifying the subject and including the verb, objects, or phrases governed by the verb.

**Examples**

""We rob banks."
(Warren Beatty as Clyde Barrow in Bonnie and Clyde, 1967)

"Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people."
(Eleanor Roosevelt)

""If you build it, he will come."
(Ray Liotta as Shoeless Joe Jackson in Field of Dreams, 1989)

"Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."
(Mark Twain)
**Predicate Adjective**

A traditional term for an adjective that usually comes after a linking verb and not before a noun.

**Examples**

"The Earth was small, light blue, and so touchingly alone, our home that must be defended like a holy relic. The Earth was absolutely round. I believe that I never knew what the word 'round' meant until I saw the earth from space."
(Cosmonaut Aleksei Leonov, quoted by Daniel B. Botkin in *No Man's Garden*. Island Press, 2001)

"The scene is instant, whole and wonderful. In its beauty and design that vision of the soaring stands, the pattern of forty thousand empetalled faces, the velvet and unalterable geometry of the playing field, and the small lean figures of the players, set there, lonely, tense, and waiting in their places, bright, desperate solitary atoms encircled by that huge wall of nameless faces, is incredible."
(Thomas Wolfe, *Of Time and the River*, 1935)

**Predicate Nominative**

The traditional term for a noun, pronoun, or other nominal that follows a linking verb. The contemporary term for a predicate nominative is subject complement.

**Examples**

"Today is a king in disguise."
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

"We are the world

We are the children

We are the ones who make a brighter day

So let's start giving."
(Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie, "We Are the World," 1985)
**Premise**

A *proposition* upon which an *argument* is based or from which a *conclusion* is drawn; either the major or the minor proposition of a *syllogism* in a *deductive* argument.

"*Logic* is the study of *argument*. As used in this sense, the word means not a quarrel (as when we 'get into an argument') but a piece of reasoning in which one or more statements are offered as support for some other statement. The statement being supported is the *conclusion* of the argument. The reasons given in support of the conclusion are called *premises*. We may say, 'This is so (conclusion) because that is so (premise).' Or, 'This is so and this is so (premises), therefore that is so (conclusion).' Premises are generally preceded by such words as *because, for, since, on the ground that*, and the like."


"Here is a simple example of reasoning about the nature/nurture issue: Identical twins sometimes have different IQ test scores. Yet these twins inherit exactly the same genes. So environment must play some part in determining a person's IQ. Logicians call this kind of reasoning an argument. In this case, the argument consists of three statements:

1. Identical twins often have different IQ scores.
2. Identical twins inherit the same genes.
3. So environment must play some part in determining IQ.

The first two statements in this argument give reasons for accepting the third. In logic talk, they are said to be *premises."


**Prompt**

In essay questions, *prompt* has two definitions: the correct one and the common one. The correct one is that the prompt is the paragraph or language that defines the essay task. It does not include the passage itself. The common definition of *prompt* is one you hear teachers and consultants use to refer to any and all parts of an essay question.
**Pun**

A **play on words**, either on different senses of the same word or on the similar sense or sound of different words. Known in rhetoric as *paronomasia*.

**Examples**

I would like to go to Holland someday. Wooden shoe?

"There was a man who entered a **pun** contest. He sent in ten different puns, in the hope that at least one of the puns would win. Unfortunately, no pun in ten did."


"When it rains, it pours."

(slogan of Morton Salt since 1911)

"When it pours, it reigns."

(slogan of Michelin tires)

Kings worry about a receding heir line.

"What food these morsels be!"

(slogan of Heinz pickles, 1938)

"American Home has an edifice complex."

(slogan of *American Home* magazine)

"Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight"

(Dylan Thomas, "Do not go gentle into that good night")

"Look deep into our ryes."

(slogan of Wigler's Bakery)

"Hanging is too good for a man who makes **puns**; he should be drawn and quoted."

(Fred Allen)

"Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana."

(Groucho Marx)

"I saw a documentary on how ships are kept together. Riveting!"


A vulture boards a plane, carrying two dead possums. The attendant looks at him and says, "I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger."
Red Herring

An observation that draws attention away from the central issue in an argument or discussion; an informal logical fallacy.

Examples

• "We admit that this measure is popular. But we also urge you to note that there are so many bond issues on this ballot that the whole thing is getting ridiculous."

• "Argument" for a tax cut:

"You know, I've begun to think that there is some merit in the Republican's tax cut plan. I suggest that you come up with something like it, because if we Democrats are going to survive as a party, we have got to show that we are as tough-minded as the Republicans, since that is what the public wants."

• "Argument" for making grad school requirements stricter:

"I think there is great merit in making the requirements stricter for the graduate students. I recommend that you support it, too. After all, we are in a budget crisis and we do not want our salaries affected."
Repetition

An instance of using a word, phrase, or clause more than once in a short passage--dwelling on a point. Needless or unintentional repetition (a tautology or pleonasm) is a kind of clutter that may distract or bore a reader. Used deliberately, repetition can be an effective rhetorical strategy for achieving emphasis.

Anadiplosis
Repetition of the last word of one line or clause to begin the next.
"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain."
(William Shakespeare, Richard III)

Anaphora
Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses.
"I want her to live. I want her to breathe. I want her to aerobicize."
(Weird Science, 1985)

Antistasis
Repetition of a word in a different or contrary sense.
"A kleptomaniac is a person who helps himself because he can't help himself."
(Henry Morgan)

Commoratio
Emphasizing a point by repeating it several times in different words.
"Space is big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space."
(Douglass Adams, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, 1979)

Diacope
Repetition broken up by one or more intervening words.
"A horse is a horse, of course, of course,
And no one can talk to a horse of course
That is, of course, unless the horse is the famous Mister Ed."
(Theme song of 1960s TV program Mr. Ed)

Epanalepsis
Repetition at the end of a clause or sentence of the word or phrase with which it began.
"Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?"
(Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Itylus")

Epimone
Frequent repetition of a phrase or question; dwelling on a point.
"And I looked upwards, and there stood a man upon the summit of the rock; and I hid myself among the water-lilies that I might discover the actions of the man. . . .
"And the man sat upon the rock, and leaned his head upon his hand, and looked out upon the desolation. . . .
. And I lay close within shelter of the lilies, and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude;--but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock."
(Edgar Allan Poe, "Silence")
"The man who stood, who stood on sidewalks, who stood facing streets, who stood with his back against store windows or against the walls of buildings, never asked for money, never begged, never put his hand out."
(Gordon Lish, "Sophistication")

**Epiphora**
Repetition of a word or phrase at the end of several clauses.
"She's safe, just like I promised. She's all set to marry Norrington, just like she promised. And you get to die for her, just like you promised."
(Jack Sparrow, The Pirates of the Caribbean)

**Epizeuxis**
Repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no words in between.
"If you think you can win, you can win."
(William Hazlitt)

"Will you ever be old and dumb, like your creepy parents? Not you, not you, not you, not you, not you, not you."

**Gradatio**
A sentence construction in which the last word of one clause becomes the first of the next, through three or more clauses (an extended form of *anadiplosis*).
"To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly."
(Henri Bergson)

**Negative-Positive Restatement**
A method of achieving emphasis by stating an idea twice, first in negative terms and then in positive terms.
"Color is not a human or personal reality; it is a political reality."
(James Baldwin)

**Ploce**
Repetition of a word with a new or specified sense, or with pregnant reference to its special significance.
"If it wasn't in Vogue, it wasn't in vogue."
(promotional slogan for Vogue magazine)

**Polyptoton**
Repetition of words derived from the same root but with different endings.
"I hear the voices, and I read the front page, and I know the speculation. But I'm the decider, and I decide what is best."
(George W. Bush, April 2006)

**Symplece**
Repetition of words or phrases at both the beginning and end of successive clauses or verses: a combination of anaphora and epiphora.
"They are not paid for thinking--they are not paid to fret about the world's concerns. They were not respectable people--they were not worthy people--they were not learned and wise and brilliant people--but in their breasts, all their stupid lives long, resteth a peace that passeth understanding!"
(Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, 1869)
Rhetorical Questions

A question asked merely for effect with no answer expected. The answer may be obvious or immediately provided by the questioner. A rhetorical question can be "an effective persuasive device, subtly influencing the kind of response one wants to get from an audience" (Edward P.J. Corbett).

Examples

"Marriage is a wonderful institution, but who would want to live in an institution?"
(H. L. Mencken)

"It did not occur to me to call a doctor, because I knew none, and although it did occur to me to call the desk and ask that the air conditioner be turned off, I never called, because I did not know how much to tip whoever might come--was anyone ever so young?"
(Joan Didion, "Goodbye to All That." Slouching Towards Bethlehem, 1968)

"The means are at hand to fulfill the age-old dream: poverty can be abolished. How long shall we ignore this under-developed nation in our midst? How long shall we look the other way while our fellow human beings suffer? How long"
(Michael Harrington, The Other America: Poverty in the United States, 1962)

"Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for republicans? Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to understand?"
(Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" July 5, 1852)

"Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? If you prick us, do we not bleed, if you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?"
(Shylock in William Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice)

"Can I ask a rhetorical question? Well, can I?"
(Ambrose Bierce)
Rhetorical Shift

This occurs when the author of an essay significantly alters his or her diction, syntax, or both.

Examples

When Gary Soto wrote an essay detailing how he stole a pie when he was just six-years-old, Soto said he knew about God, "In fact, I was holy in almost every bone. But, boredom made me do it."

After Ulrich and his enemy Georg were trapped beneath a fallen tree in Saki's short story, "The Interlopers," Ulrich manage to sip some wine from his flask. "But what a heaven-sent draft it seemed! . . . he looked across with something like a throb of pity to where his enemy lay . . . 'Could you reach this flask if I threw it over to you?' asked Ulrich." This passage marks a turning point in deadly feud between two families that has lasted for three generations

Simile

A figure of speech in which two fundamentally unlike things are explicitly compared, usually in a phrase introduced by like or as.

Examples

"When he lifted me up in his arms I felt I had left all my troubles on the floor beneath melike gigantic concrete shoes."
(Anne Tyler, Earthly Possessions. Random House, 1977)

"She dealt with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat."
(James Joyce, "The Boarding House")

"I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I've watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhauser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain."
(Rutger Hauer as Roy Batty in Blade Runner, 1982)

"Without warning, Lionel gave one of his tight little sneezes: it sounded like a bullet fired through a silencer."

"When Lee Mellon finished the apple he smacked his lips together like a pair of cymbals."
(Richard Brautigan, A Confederate General From Big Sur, 1964)

"Good coffee is like friendship: rich and warm and strong."
Simple Sentence

A sentence with only one independent clause

Examples

"Children are all foreigners."
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

"Mother died today."
(Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, 1942)

"Of course, no man is entirely in his right mind at any time."
(Mark Twain, *The Mysterious Stranger*)

"Early to rise and early to bed makes a male healthy and wealthy and dead."
(James Thurber)

"Atheism is a non-prophet organization."
(George Carlin)

Slippery Slope

A fallacy in which a course of action is objected to on the grounds that once taken it will lead to additional actions until some undesirable consequence results.

Examples

"To judge from the news stories, the entire nation is coming to resemble San Francisco after a heavy rainfall. In the press, the phrase 'slippery slope' is more than seven times as common as it was twenty years ago. It's a convenient way of warning of the dire effects of some course of action without actually having to criticize the action itself, which is what makes it a favorite ploy of hypocrites: 'Not that there's anything wrong with A, mind you, but A will lead to B and then C, and before you know it we'll be up to our armpits in Z.'"
(Geoff Nunberg, commentary on "Fresh Air," National Public Radio, July 1, 2003)

The Slippery Slope of Public Murals
"I hope the art mural at 34th and Habersham will not be allowed. You open the gate for one, you open it for all and you'll have it all over the city. A person wanting to paint on buildings is nothing more than upscale graffiti. More than likely it will go too far."
(anonymous, "Vox Populi." *Savannah Morning News*, September 22, 2011)

The Slippery Slope of Immigration Reform
"In a well-meaning effort to curb the employment of illegal aliens, and with the hearty good wishes of
editorialists who ordinarily pride themselves on guarding against the intrusion of government into the private lives of individual Americans, Congress is about to take this generation's longest step toward totalitarianism.

"There is no "slippery slope" toward loss of liberties,' insists Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming, author of the latest immigration bill, 'only a long staircase where each step downward must be first tolerated by the American people and their leaders.'

"The first step downward on the Simpson staircase to Big-Brotherdom is the requirement that within three years the federal government come up with a 'secure system to determine employment eligibility in the United States.'

"Despite denials, that means a national identity card. Nobody who is pushing this bill admits that--on the contrary, all sorts of 'safeguards' and rhetorical warnings about not having to carry an identity card on one's person at all times are festooned on the bill. Much is made of the use of passports, Social Security cards and driver's licenses as 'preferred' forms of identification, but anyone who takes the trouble to read this legislation can see that the disclaimers are intended to help the medicine go down. . . .

"Once the down staircase is set in place, the temptation to take each next step will be irresistible." (William Safire, "The Computer Tattoo." The New York Times, Sep. 9, 1982)

**Stem**

In the multiple-choice section, this is the question you are asked to complete with the given possible answers.

**Example**

*Which of the following best describes Cyberus's attitude toward the avengers?*

**Straw Man**

A fallacy in which an opponent's argument is overstated or misrepresented in order to be more easily attacked or refuted.

**Examples**

1. Prof. Jones: "The university just cut our yearly budget by $10,000."
   Prof. Smith: "What are we going to do?"
   Prof. Brown: "I think we should eliminate one of the teaching assistant positions. That would take care of it."
   Prof. Jones: "We could reduce our scheduled raises instead."
   Prof. Brown: "I can't understand why you want to bleed us dry like that, Jones."
2. "Senator Jones says that we should not fund the attack submarine program. I disagree entirely. I can't understand why he wants to leave us defenseless like that."
3. Bill and Jill are arguing about cleaning out their closets:
   Jill: "We should clean out the closets. They are getting a bit messy."
   Bill: "Why, we just went through those closets last year. Do we have to clean them out every day?"
Jill: "I never said anything about cleaning them out every day. You just want to keep all your junk forever, which is just ridiculous."

Subject

The part of a sentence or clause that commonly indicates (a) what it is about, or (b) who or what performs the action (that is, the agent). The subject is typically a noun, noun phrase, or pronoun. In a declarative sentence, the subject usually appears before the verb ("Gus never smiles"). In an interrogative sentence, the subject usually follows the first part of a verb ("Does Gus ever smile?").

Examples

"My master made me this collar. He is a good and smart master, and he made me this collar so that I may speak."
(Dug in Up, 2009)
"Baseball is dull only to dull minds."
(Red Barber)
"Fettucini alfredo is macaroni and cheese for adults."
(Mitch Hedberg)
"You can't try to do things; you simply must do them."
(Ray Bradbury)
"Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds."
(Albert Einstein)

"This is not a book that should be tossed lightly aside. It should be hurled with great force."
(Dorothy Parker)

Subordinate Conjunction

A conjunction that introduces a dependent clause.

Examples

"If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there would be peace."
(John Lennon)

"I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible."
(Oscar Wilde)

"Every man, wherever he goes, is encompassed by a cloud of comforting convictions, which move with him like flies on a summer day."
(Bertrand Russell)
"A platitude is simply a truth repeated until people get tired of hearing it."
(Stanley Baldwin)

"I had a funny feeling as I saw the house disappear, as though I had written a poem and it was very good and I had lost it and would never remember it again."
(Raymond Chandler, *The High Window*, 1942)

"I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it."
(Pablo Picasso)

"If I had to live my life again, I'd make the same mistakes, only sooner."
(Tallulah Bankhead)
**Syllogism**

In logic, a form of deductive reasoning consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Here is an example of a valid categorical syllogism:
- **Major premise:** All mammals are warm-blooded.
- **Minor premise:** All black dogs are mammals.
- **Conclusion:** Therefore, all black dogs are warm-blooded.

The process of deduction has traditionally been illustrated with a syllogism, a three-part set of statements or propositions that includes a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.

**Major premise:** All books from that store are new.

**Minor premise:** These books are from that store.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, these books are new.

The major premise of a syllogism makes a general statement that the writer believes to be true. The minor premise presents a specific example of the belief that is stated in the major premise. If the reasoning is sound, the conclusion should follow from the two premises.

"A syllogism is valid (or logical) when its conclusion follows from its premises. A syllogism is true when it makes accurate claims—that is, when the information it contains is consistent with the facts. To be sound, a syllogism must be both valid and true. However, a syllogism may be valid without being true or true without being valid."


"**LOGIC,** n. The art of thinking and reasoning in strict accordance with the limitations and incapacities of the human misunderstanding. The basic of logic is the syllogism, consisting of a major and a minor premise and a conclusion—thus:
- **Major Premise:** Sixty men can do a piece of work sixty times as quickly as one man.
- **Minor Premise:** One man can dig a posthole in sixty seconds; therefore—
- **Conclusion:** Sixty men can dig a posthole in one second. This may be called the syllogism arithmetical, in which, by combining logic and mathematics, we obtain a double certainty and are twice blessed."

(Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary*)
**Synecdoche**

A *figure of speech* in which a part is used to represent the whole (for example, *ABCs* for *alphabet*) or the whole for a part

**Examples**

"Ed's buddy was in the market for a *new set of wheels* and wanted Ed's opinion about a particular model of Lexus."

"Land ho! All *hands* on deck!"
(Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*)

"*General Motors* announced four major plant closings, triggering fears of growing unemployment."

"Take thy *face* hence."
(William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*)

"And let us mind, faint *heart* n'er wan
A lady fair."
(Robert Burns, "To Dr. Blalock")

"Rationalizing guilt is a common trait of *white-collar* criminals."
(Larry J. Siegel, *Criminology*, 2012)

"At midnight I went on deck, and to my mate's great surprise put the ship round on the other tack. His *terrible whiskers* flitted round me in silent criticism."
(Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Sharer*)

"As a date, '9/11' is both singular and essentially repeatable. . . . Whenever the term '9/11' is used in this way a marker is put down referring us to this day, 9/11/2001, as if citation of this date (or its foreshortening as 9/11) is enough by the power of reference, and the power of its *referent*, to understand that day and to be affiliated with all that this day entails."
(Martin McQuillan, *Deconstruction After 9/11*. Routledge, 2009)
Syntax

(1) In linguistics, the study of the rules that govern the ways in which words combine to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. Syntax is one of the major components of grammar.

(2) The arrangement of words in a sentence.

Most normal children will have acquired the syntax of their language by the time they start school." (Charles H. Hargis, English Syntax: An Outline for Teachers of English Language Learners, 3rd ed. Charles C Thomas, 2008)

"Colorless green ideas sleep furiously." (Linguist Noam Chomsky created this sentence—which is grammatically correct but incomprehensible—to demonstrate that the rules governing syntax are distinct from the meanings words convey.)

"And the words slide into the slots ordained by syntax, and glitter as with atmospheric dust with those impurities which we call meaning." (Anthony Burgess, Enderby Outside, 1968)

Rules of Syntax
"[I]t is a mistake to believe that some English speakers follow rules in their speech and others do not. Instead, it now appears that all English speakers are successful language learners: they all follow unconscious rules derived from their early language development, and the small differences in the sentences that they prefer are best understood as coming from small differences in these rules. . . . The differences of the sort that we are looking at here follow lines of social class and ethnic group rather than geographical lines. Thus we can speak of social varieties or social dialects." (Carl Lee Baker, English Syntax, 2nd ed. MIT Press, 1995)

Speech and Writing
"Many kinds of spoken language . . . have a syntax that is very different from the syntax of formal writing. It is essential to understand that the differences exist not because spoken language is a degradation of written language but because any written language, whether English or Chinese, results from centuries of development and elaboration by a small number of users . . . . In spite of the huge prestige enjoyed by written language in any literate society, spoken language is primary in several major respects." (Jim Miller, An Introduction to English Syntax. Edinburgh University Press, 2002)
Synthesis

Synthesis is defined as combining a number of different parts or ideas to come up with a new idea or theory.

From Michigan State University

WHAT IS A SYNTHESIS?

A synthesis is a written discussion that draws on one or more sources. It follows that your ability to write syntheses depends on your ability to infer relationships among sources - essays, articles, fiction, and also nonwritten sources, such as lectures, interviews, observations. This process is nothing new for you, since you infer relationships all the time - say, between something you've read in the newspaper and something you've seen for yourself, or between the teaching styles of your favorite and least favorite instructors. In fact, if you've written research papers, you've already written syntheses. In an academic synthesis, you make explicit the relationships that you have inferred among separate sources.

The skills you've already been practicing in this course will be vital in writing syntheses. Clearly, before you're in a position to draw relationships between two or more sources, you must understand what those sources say; in other words, you must be able to summarize these sources. It will frequently be helpful for your readers if you provide at least partial summaries of sources in your synthesis essays. At the same time, you must go beyond summary to make judgments - judgments based, of course, on your critical reading of your sources - as you have practiced in your reading responses and in class discussions. You should already have drawn some conclusions about the quality and validity of these sources; and you should know how much you agree or disagree with the points made in your sources and the reasons for your agreement or disagreement.

Further, you must go beyond the critique of individual sources to determine the relationship among them. Is the information in source B, for example, an extended illustration of the generalizations in source A? Would it be useful to compare and contrast source C with source B? Having read and considered sources A, B, and C, can you infer something else - D (not a source, but your own idea)?

Because a synthesis is based on two or more sources, you will need to be selective when choosing information from each. It would be neither possible nor desirable, for instance, to discuss in a ten-page paper on the battle of Wounded Knee every point that the authors of two books make about their subject. What you as a writer must do is select the ideas and information from each source that best allow you to achieve your purpose.

PURPOSE

Your purpose in reading source materials and then in drawing upon them to write your own material is often reflected in the wording of an assignment. For example, your assignment may ask that you evaluate a text, argue a position on a topic, explain cause and effect relationships, or compare and contrast items. While you might use the same sources in writing an argumentative essay as your classmate uses in writing a comparison/contrast essay, you will make different uses of those sources based on the different purposes of the assignments. What you find worthy of detailed analysis in Source A may be mentioned only in passing by your classmate.
USING YOUR SOURCES
Your purpose determines not only what parts of your sources you will use but also how you will relate them to one another. Since the very essence of synthesis is the combining of information and ideas, you must have some basis on which to combine them. Some relationships among the material in your sources must make them worth synthesizing. It follows that the better able you are to discover such relationships, the better able you will be to use your sources in writing syntheses. Your purpose in writing (based on your assignment) will determine how you relate your source materials to one another. Your purpose in writing determines which sources you use, which parts of them you use, at which points in your essay you use them, and in what manner you relate them to one another.

TWO TYPES OF SYNTHESSES

THE EXPLANATORY SYNTHESIS: An explanatory synthesis helps readers to understand a topic. Writers explain when they divide a subject into its component parts and present them to the reader in a clear and orderly fashion. Explanations may entail descriptions that re-create in words some object, place, event, sequence of events, or state of affairs. The purpose in writing an explanatory essay is not to argue a particular point, but rather to present the facts in a reasonably objective manner. The explanatory synthesis does not go much beyond what is obvious from a careful reading of the sources. You will not be writing explanatory synthesis essays in this course. However, at times your argumentative synthesis essays will include sections that are explanatory in nature.

THE ARGUMENT SYNTHESIS: The purpose of an argument synthesis is for you to present your own point of view - supported, of course, by relevant facts, drawn from sources, and presented in a logical manner. The thesis of an argumentative essay is debatable. It makes a proposition about which reasonable people could disagree, and any two writers working with the same source materials could conceive of and support other, opposite theses.
Theme

The main idea of a text, expressed directly or indirectly.

Simply put, a story's **theme** is its idea or point (formulated as a generalization). The theme of a **fable** is its moral; the theme of a **parable** is its teaching; the theme of a short story is its implied view of life and conduct. Unlike the fable and parable, however, most fiction is not designed primarily to teach or preach. Its theme, thus, is more obliquely presented. In fact, theme in fiction is rarely *presented* at all; readers abstract it from the details of characters and action that compose the story.


**The Difference Between Plot and Theme**

"If you sometimes confuse **plot** with **theme**, keep the two elements separate by thinking of theme as what the story is about, and plot as the situation that brings it into focus. You might think of theme as the message of the story—the lesson to be learned, the question that is asked, or what it is the author is trying to tell us about life and the human condition. Plot is the action by which this truth will be demonstrated."


**Thesis and Theme**

"The **thesis** is the main point you are trying to argue [in a composition]: for instance… that housing discrimination is wrong. The **theme**, on the other hand, is a **motif** established by orchestrated **connotative** language that reinforces the thesis. Theme differs from thesis in that theme relies on inference and suggested meaning rather than on direct statement."

Thesis

The main idea of an essay, report, speech, or research paper, sometimes written as a single declarative sentence known as a thesis statement. A thesis may be implied rather than stated directly.

The Two Parts of an Effective Thesis
"An effective thesis is generally composed of two parts: a topic and the writer's attitude or opinion about or reaction to that topic."
(William J. Kelly, Strategy and Structure. Allyn and Bacon, 1996)

Drafting and Revising a Thesis
"It's a good idea to formulate a thesis early in the writing process, perhaps by jotting it on scratch paper, by putting it at the head of a rough outline, or by attempting to write an introductory paragraph that includes the thesis. Your tentative thesis will probably be less graceful than the thesis you include in the final version of your essay. Here, for example, is one student's early effort:
Although they both play percussion instruments, drummers and percussionists are very different.
The thesis that appeared in the final draft of the student's paper was more polished:
Two types of musicians play percussion instruments--drummers and percussionists--and they are as different as Quiet Riot and the New York Philharmonic.
Don't worry too soon about the exact wording of your thesis, however, because your main point may change as you refine your ideas."

A Good Thesis
- "A good thesis tells the audience exactly what you want them to know, understand, and remember when your speech is done. Write it as a simple, declarative sentence (or two) that restates the speech purpose and states the main points that support the purpose. Although you may formulate a thesis statement early in the speech development process, you may revise and reword it as you research your topic.'

- "An effective thesis statement singles out some aspect of a subject for attention and clearly defines your approach to it."
Tricolon

A rhetorical term for a series of three parallel words, phrases, or clauses.

Examples

"I require three things in a man. He must be handsome, ruthless, and stupid."
(attributed to Dorothy Parker)

"The whole apparatus of football, fraternities, and fun is a means by which education is made palatable to those who have no business in it."
(Robert Maynard Hutchins, "Where Do We Go From Here in Education?" Speech to the Economic Club of Detroit, May 12, 1947)

"You are talking to a man who has laughed in the face of death, sneered at doom, and chuckled at catastrophe."
(The Wizard in The Wizard of Oz, 1939)

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone."

"It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children."
(President Dwight Eisenhower, "The Chance for Peace." Speech delivered to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April, 1953)

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."
(attributed to Benjamin Franklin, among others)
**Understatement**

A *figure of speech* in which a writer or speaker deliberately makes a situation seem less important or serious than it is.

**Examples**

"A soiled baby, with a neglected nose, cannot be conscientiously regarded as a thing of beauty."
(Mark Twain)

"I have to have this operation. It isn't very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain."
(Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher In The Rye*, by J. D. Salinger)

"Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse."
(Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, 1704)

"The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace."
(Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress")

"I am just going outside and may be some time."
(Captain Lawrence Oates, Antarctic explorer, before walking out into a blizzard to face certain death, 1912)
Zeugma

A rhetorical term for the use of a word to modify or govern two or more words although its use may be grammatically or logically correct with only one.

Examples

"He carried a strobe light and the responsibility for the lives of his men."
(Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*. McClelland & Stewart, 1990)

"But Ted Lavender, who was scared, carried 34 rounds when he was shot and killed outside Than Khe, and he went down under an exceptional burden, more than 20 pounds of ammunition, plus the flak jacket and helmet and rations and water and toilet paper and tranquilizers and all the rest, plus an unweighed fear."
(Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*)

"She arrived in a taxi and a flaming rage."

"We were partners, not soul mates, two separate people who happened to be sharing a menu and a life."

"[H]e was alternately cudgelling his brains and his donkey when, passing the workhouse, his eyes encountered the bill on the gate."
(Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*)

"Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world."
(Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*)

"Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China-jar receive a flaw,
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade."
(Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*)

"She lowered her standards by raising her glass,
Her courage, her eyes and his hopes."
(Flanders and Swann, "Have Some Madeira, M'Dear")

"The theme of the Egg Hunt is 'learning is delightful and delicious'--as, by the way, am I."
(Allison Janney as C.J. Cregg in *The West Wing*)

"You held your breath and the door for me."
(Alanis Morissette, "Head over Feet")