

## SUPERB STYLE: IN THREE BIG STEPS

The landscape we navigate:

Books

Blogs

Articles

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Science

Newspapers

### SECTION I—DICTION AND SYNTAX

A. Diction is \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ verbs, nouns

\_\_\_\_\_ words

1. D \_\_\_\_\_

2. C \_\_\_\_\_

**Gettysburg Address**

3. S \_\_\_\_\_

### Spectrum of Sound

Writers can subliminally shape the perception of the reader by choosing sounds that match the mood they wish to create. The speed of the chosen vowel sounds can either speed up the reader, giving a sense of urgency, or slow the reader down, giving a sense of suspense or calm.

The sounds of the consonants can indicate hardness or softness, depending on which the writer chooses.

### Speed of Vowel Sounds, quickest to slowest

Ī — Ē — Ā — EH — I — AH — Ō — OO — UH

### Consonant Sounds, Harshesht to Smoothest

K — T — Q — P — B — D — G — J — F — Z — H — M — N — S — L — R — V — W

### Sound Devices

Writers can add beauty and unity by using sound devices.

**Alliteration**—repeat the initial sound of words close by

**Assonance**—similar vowel sounds close by (can be different letters)

**Consonance**--similar consonants\_sounds close by

**B. Syntax is \_\_\_\_\_.**

Key: variety of length, order, class and type, openers

### Grammar Terms

- A. **Nouns** are people, places, things.
1. Subjects are nouns that do the work.
  2. Direct objects receive the action of the verb.
  3. Indirect objects identify recipient of action.
  4. Predicate nominatives rename the subject. Follow linking verb. "We will be losers."
  5. Appositives rename the subject and are in between commas.

6. Object of the preposition ends a prepositional phrase.
- B. **Verbs** express an action (*bring*), an occurrence (*become, happen*), or a state of being (*be, seem*).
- C. **Modifiers** add detail.  
 Adjectives: describe nouns, pronouns.  
 Adverbs: describe verbs, adjectives, adverbs.
- D. **Conjunctions** join phrases or clauses or lists  
coordinating conjunctions: connect equal, independent clauses or items in a list.  
subordinating conjunctions: begin adverbial dependent clauses
- E. **Phrases:** Phrases have only a subject or a verb and are not a complete thought  
prepositional phrase: adjective or adverb with preposition and noun  
verb phrase, group of verbs working together (We can sleep later).  
infinitive phrase: To wait is not a problem.
- F. **Clauses** have both a subject and a verb  
dependent clauses: Can function as nouns, adjectives or adverbs. Not a complete thought.  
independent clauses: can stand alone.
- G. **Sentence class**.  
simple sentence: only one independent clause, no independent  
compound sentence: at least two independent clauses and no dependent.  
Compound/complex sentence: two independent clauses and any number of dependent.
- H. **Sentence type**  
declarative: Makes a statement and ends with a period.  
exclamatory: Expresses intense or immediate feeling. Ends with an exclamation mark.  
interrogative: Asks a question and ends in a question mark.  
imperative: Issues a command.

**Example:** Declaration of Independence, para 1

## MCKEON SHEET --SYNTAX AND SENTENCE BEGINNINGS

- 1 Begin with a subject.  
The sea is a whole world unto itself.
- 2 Begin with a prepositional phrase.  
In the past, the treasures of the sea were thought to be limitless.
- 3 Begin with an adverb.  
Slowly the sea reveals its secret to us.
- 4 Begin with a gerund.  
Swimming in the Mediterranean is like bathing in a large turquoise tub.
- 5 Begin with an infinitive phrase.  
To protect our future on this earth we must protect ocean life as well.
- 6 Begin with past participle phrase.  
Satisfied with the day's catch, the sun-parched fisherman turned his boat toward shore.
- 7 Begin with a present participle phrase.  
Skimming the choppy surface, pelicans search hungrily for their evening meal.
8. Begin with an adverbial clause.  
Whenever a man sails away from his homeland, he is inevitably caught by the romance of the sea.
9. Use an appositive.  
The Pacific, the largest body of water, touches the shores of six continents.
10. Ask a question.  
Who wouldn't want to sail off to a tropical island?
11. Use an exclamation.  
Beware the fury of the Atlantic storm!
12. Use conversation.  
The captain warned, "All queasy stomachs should stay by the rail."
13. Use a quote.  
"The most dangerous storms I've faced were my own," and Hemingway certainly created storms in his life.
14. Use an absolute phrase.  
Heart pounding, I cut the sails loose.

## WRITING ANALYSIS

### Word/Sentence

Total number of words in essay (or one page) \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of sentences \_\_\_\_\_

Longest sentence \_\_\_\_\_

Shortest sentence \_\_\_\_\_

Average sentence \_\_\_\_\_

Number of sentences that contain more than 10 words over the average sentence \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage of sentences that contain more than 10 words over the average \_\_\_\_\_

Number of sentences that contain 5 more words or more below the average \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage of sentences that contain 5 words or more below the average \_\_\_\_\_

### Paragraph length

Longest paragraph (in no. of sentences) \_\_\_\_\_

Shortest paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

Average paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

### Grammatical Types of Sentences

Simple sentences \_\_\_\_\_ percentage \_\_\_\_\_

Compound sentences \_\_\_\_\_ percentage \_\_\_\_\_

Complex sentences \_\_\_\_\_ percentage \_\_\_\_\_

Compound-complex \_\_\_\_\_ percentage \_\_\_\_\_

### Sentence Openers

Total number of declarative sentences \_\_\_\_\_

Starts with a subject \_\_\_\_\_

Starts with an expletive \_\_\_\_\_

Starts with a coordinating conjunction \_\_\_\_\_

Adverb word \_\_\_\_\_

Prepositional phrase \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal phrase \_\_\_\_\_

Adjective phrase \_\_\_\_\_

Inverted word order \_\_\_\_\_

### Diction

Total number of active verbs \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of passive verbs \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of linking verbs \_\_\_\_\_

What are your strengths and weaknesses in syntax?

## Gettysburg Address

1 "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. (87 years back, those who lived then started a new nation, desiring liberty and equality for all. Why is one better?) (TS America dedicated to liberty and equality).

2 "Now **we are** engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. **We are** met on a great battle-field of that war. **We have come** to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that **we should** do this. (TS: we have our duties).

3 "But, in a larger sense, **we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow**—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have [consecrated](#) it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. (TS: the soldiers did what we cannot)

4 "**It is** for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. **It is** rather for us to be here **dedicated to the great task** (4 dedications) remaining before us—**that** from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—**that** we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—**that** this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and **that** government **of the people, by the people, for the people**, shall not perish from the earth." (TS: We are obligated to fight to save the dream)

## **“LIVING LIKE WEASELS”**

**Annie Dillard**

1      A weasel is wild. Who knows what he thinks? He sleeps in his underground den, his tail draped over his nose. Sometimes he lives in his den for two days without leaving. Outside, he stalks rabbits, mice, muskrats, and birds, killing more bodies than he can eat warm, and often dragging the carcasses home. Obedient to instinct, he bites his prey at the neck, either splitting the jugular vein at the throat or crunching the brain at the base of the skull, and he does not let go. One naturalist refused to kill a weasel who was socketed into his hand deeply as a rattlesnake. The man could in no way pry the tiny weasel off, and he had to walk half a mile to water, the weasel dangling from his palm, and soak him off like a stubborn label.

“Shooting the Elephant,” Orwell

## SECTION II—BREAKING THE RULES

**1 Anaphora** \_\_\_\_\_ successive phrases or clauses with the same word or words.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**Declaration, analyze para 2, 3**

**2 Epistrophe** \_\_\_\_\_ successive phrases with same word or words.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**3 Anadiplosis** \_\_\_\_\_ of one phrase begin the next.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**4 Asyndeton** \_\_\_\_\_ conjunctions in a list.

**Power**

**Cost:**

**Pyle, analyze paragraph 7.**

**5 Polysyndeton** \_\_\_\_\_ conjunctions in a list.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**Pyle, analyze paragraphs 5, 9.**

**Note on 5: 1 long sentence 41 words about stuff, then one short 6 words about people.**

**6 Analogies, or Comparisons** four main ones, they compare the \_\_\_\_\_

to the \_\_\_\_\_

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**6a Metaphor** asserts that one thing \_\_\_\_\_ another thing.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**6b Simile** comparison between two different things that resemble each other in at

least one way.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**6c Metonymy** the \_\_\_\_\_ image is associated with the subject but isn't the same thing

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**6d Personification** metaphorically represents an animal or inanimate object as having \_\_\_\_\_ attributes.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**7 Ellipsis** the intentional \_\_\_\_\_ of words that are understood in context

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**8 Fragment** not an \_\_\_\_\_

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**9 Anathemism** substitute typical \_\_\_\_\_ for another (i.e, noun to verb)

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**10 Parallelism** presents several ideas of \_\_\_\_\_  
by putting each of them into the same kind of grammatical structure.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**10 Chiasmus** the balanced elements are presented in \_\_\_\_\_  
rather than the same order.

**Power:**

**Cost**

**11 Sound: alliteration, assonance, consonance**

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**11a Alliteration**—repeat \_\_\_\_\_ sound.

**11b Assonance**—similar \_\_\_\_\_ sounds close by.

**11c Consonance**--similar \_\_\_\_\_ sounds close by, different vowel.

**12 Understatement** Deliberately expresses an idea as \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ than it actually is.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**13 Hyperbole** deliberately \_\_\_\_\_ conditions.

**Power:**

**Cost:**

**14 Allusion** short, informal \_\_\_\_\_ to a famous person or event or quote

**Power:**

**Cost:**

### **Exercises**

- 1. Choose any rhetorical device, use it in a sentence, and explain your purpose.**
- 2. Choose another and do the same.**
- 3. What have the exercises taught you?**

**OR**

**Take a piece of your writing, and transform it with an intentional use of a rhetorical device**

## Declaration of Independence

1 When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. (71 words, 1 sentence. Strong connot.)

2 We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government...

(84 wds, 1 sentence, where is anaphora, what effect, how many declarations)

(Analyze anaphora here...some charges are deleted for brevity)

3 The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

## “ON THE ROAD TO BERLIN”

Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men*

### Polysyndeton

5 For a mile out from the beach there were scores of tanks and trucks and boats that were not visible, for they were at the bottom of the water--swamped by overloading, or hit by shells, or sunk by mines. Most of their crews were lost. (sentence 1: 41 words. Sentence 2: 6 words)

### Anaphora

7 On the beach itself, high and dry, were all kinds of wrecked vehicles. There were tanks that had only just made the beach before being knocked out. There were jeeps that had burned to a dull gray. There were big derricks on caterpillar treads that didn't quite make it. There were half-tracks carrying office equipment that had been made into a shambles by a single shell hit, their interiors still holding the useless equipage of smashed typewriters, telephones, office files.

8 There were LCTs turned completely upside down, and lying on their backs, and how they got that way I don't know. There were boats stacked on top of each other, their sides caved in, and their suspension doors knocked off.

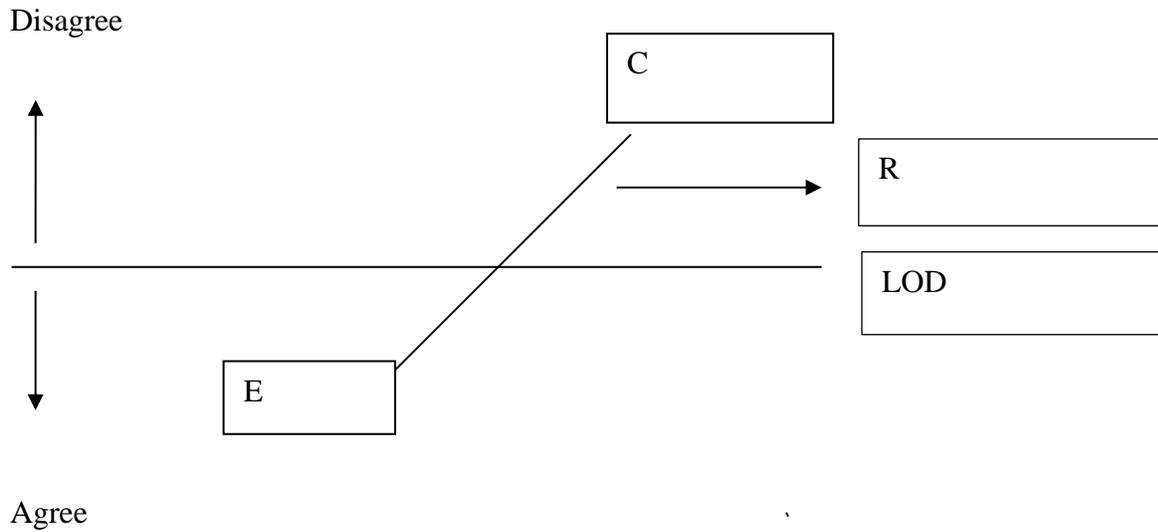
9 In this shore-line museum of carnage there were abandoned rolls of barbed wire and smashed bulldozers and big stacks of thrown-away life belts and piles of shells still waiting to be moved. In the water floated empty life rafts and soldiers' packs and ration boxes, and mysterious oranges. On the beach lay snarled rolls of telephone wire and big rolls of steel matting and stacks of broken, rusting rifles.

### Asyndeton

There were half-tracks carrying office equipment that had been made into a shambles by a single shell hit, their interiors still holding the useless equipage of smashed typewriters, telephones, office files.

## Session III—Persuading Your Readers

### Level of Dispute



**C** \_\_\_\_\_: what we wish the audience to accept; they do not agree with this.

**E** \_\_\_\_\_: what we use to support the c \_\_\_\_\_; the audience does agree with this.

**L** \_\_\_\_\_ of **D** \_\_\_\_\_ (**LOD**).

**R** \_\_\_\_\_, or the \_\_\_\_\_: how we use and arrange evidence to support our claim

**C** \_\_\_\_\_: when we establish a claim, then the LOD moves up to transform the previous claim into evidence. That new evidence (the previous claim) can be then used to establish another claim .

## **TYPES OF REASONING/WARRANT**

**D** \_\_\_\_\_: reasons from a general principle accepted by the audience to a specific application.

*Most effective:* when we share basic principles with audience.

*Least effective:* when we do not share those basic principles.

**I** \_\_\_\_\_: reasons from specific examples that the audience accepts to a general principle.

*Most effective:* when we do not share basic principles with the audience; this allows us to build shared principles, which can then be used deductively. Involves the audience, which is good for post moderns.

*Least effective:* we must make a clear connection between the specific examples to establish the principle, which can be more difficult.

**A** \_\_\_\_\_: reasons through group conversation to reach a conclusion.

*Most effective:* works well with post modern audiences. It brings the audience into the process more than any other method.

*Least effective:* individuals may disagree with the group consensus.

N \_\_\_\_\_: uses story to illustrate, demonstrate, or to prove the point.

*Most effective:* works well with post modern audiences, people relate well to stories.

*Least effective:* works better at illustrating or demonstrating than proving.

A \_\_\_\_\_: uses a similar example to explain or prove the claim.

*Most effective:* it provides an example.

*Least effective:* runs the risk of the two not being similar enough.