

Handout on the Art of Styling Sentences

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Note: This handout lists the excellent strategies for styling sentences in *The Art of Styling Sentences: 20 Patterns for Success*, Third Edition (Barron's Educational Series, 1993) By Marie L. Waddell, Robert M. Esch, and Robert R. Walker.

I am providing this handout to you because there won't be time to cover improving sentences in depth during my brief presentation. This kind of topic is best covered in a workshop rather than in a general presentation. The same information is also provided in an accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

The Art of Styling Sentences

Pattern 1

Compound Sentence: semicolon, no conjunction

S V; S V

Hard work is only one side of the equation; talent is the other.

Pattern 2

Compound Sentence with Elliptical construction

S V DO or SC; S, DO or SC

A red light means stop; a green light, go.

Pattern 3

Compound Sentence with Explanatory Statement

General statement: specific example

Darwin's Origin of Species forcibly states a harsh truth: only the fittest survive.

Pattern 4

A Series without a Conjunction

A,B,C

The United States has a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Pattern 4A

A Series with a Variation

A or B or C

Despite his handicaps, I have never seen Larry angry **or** cross **or** depressed.

Pattern 5

A Series with a Balanced Pair

A and B, C and D, E and F (may be in any slot in the sentence)

"God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger." --Heraclitus

Pattern 6

An Introductory series of Appositives

Appositive, appositive, appositive--summary word S V

Vanity, greed, corruption-- which serves as the novel's source of conflict?

Pattern 7

An Internal Series of Appositives or Modifiers

S --appositive, appositive, appositive--V

The necessary qualities for political life--guile, ruthlessness, and garrulity--she learned by carefully studying his father's life.

Pattern 7A

A Variation: a Single Appositive or a Pair

S --appositive--V

A sudden explosion--artillery fire--signaled the beginning of a barrage.

Pattern 8

Dependent Clauses in a Pair or in a Series

If..., if..., if..., then S V

If your clothes are made of cotton, if you wash them with soap, if you hang them on the line, you may not need a fabric softener.

Pattern 9

Repetition of a Key Term

S V key term, repeated key term

"Victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be [. . .]." Winston Churchill

Pattern 9A

A Variation: Some Word repeated in a Parallel Structure

S V repeated key word in same position

His **greatest** discoveries, his **greatest** successes, his **greatest** influence upon daily life came to Edison only after repeated failure.

Pattern 10

Emphatic Appositive at End, after a Colon

S V word: appositive

Airport thieves have a common target: unwary travelers.

Pattern 10A

A Variation: Appositive (single or pair or series) after a Dash

S V word--appositive

Adjusting to a new job requires one quality above--a sense of humor.

Pattern 11

Interrupting Modifier Between S and V

S (modifier that whispers) V

The hunter (a common sight in New Hampshire woods during the winter) carried a large caliber rifle.

Pattern 11A

A Full Sentence as Interrupting Modifier

S--a full sentence--V

Juliet's famous question--"Wherefore art thou, Romeo?"--is often misunderstood.

Pattern 12

Introductory or Concluding Participles

Participial Phrase, S V (or reverse)

Laughing at his foolish behavior, she fell backwards in her chair.

Despised by most Westerners, the terrorist group acted with impunity.

Pattern 13

A Single Modifier Out of Place for Emphasis

Modifier, S V

To begin with, some ideas are just plain difficult.

Pattern 14

Prepositional Phrase Before S--V

Prepositional Phrase S V (or V S)

During the long winter months, Tom toiled as a trapper.

Pattern 15

Object or Complement Before S--V

Object or Complement S V

His kind of sarcasm (,)I do not like.

Pattern 15A

Complete Inversion of Normal Pattern

Object or Complement or modifier V S

Down the field and through the tacklers ran the Heisman Trophy winner.

Pattern 16

Paired Constructions

Paired Construction

The more S V, the more S V

The more I saw of his work, the more I knew I didn't want to purchase any.

Pattern 16A

A Paired Construction for Contrast Only

A "this, not that" or "not this but that" construction

Genius, not stupidity, has limits.

Pattern 17

Dependent Clause as Subject or Object or Complement

S [dependent clause] V

What a man cannot imagine cannot be created.

Pattern 18

Absolute Construction Anywhere in Sentence

Absolute construction, S V

His early efforts failing, Ted tried a new approach to the calculus problem.

The French defeated, the Germans advanced on Paris.

Pattern 19

The Short, Simple Sentence for Relief or Dramatic Effect.

S V

Perseverance pays.

I think not.

Pattern 19A

A Short Question for Dramatic Effect

Interrogative word standing alone

Question based solely on intonation

Why not?

You really care?

Pattern 20

The Deliberate Fragment

Merely a part of a sentence

Fine.

First, the nuts and bolts.