

example of periodic sentence

example of periodic sentence is a powerful rhetorical device used in writing and speech to create emphasis and suspense by placing the main clause or predicate at the end of the sentence. This stylistic structure can enhance the impact of a statement by withholding the core meaning until the very last moment, engaging readers and listeners more effectively. Understanding the characteristics, purpose, and effective usage of periodic sentences is essential for writers, students, and professionals aiming to elevate their language skills. This article explores the definition, examples, and benefits of periodic sentences, while also contrasting them with other sentence structures such as loose sentences. Detailed analysis and illustrative examples will clarify how and why periodic sentences function as compelling communication tools. The discussion further covers common pitfalls to avoid and tips for incorporating periodic sentences into various forms of writing, including literary, academic, and persuasive contexts.

- Definition and Characteristics of Periodic Sentences
- Examples of Periodic Sentences in Literature and Everyday Use
- Benefits and Effects of Using Periodic Sentences
- Comparison Between Periodic and Loose Sentences
- How to Construct an Effective Periodic Sentence
- Common Mistakes and Tips for Using Periodic Sentences

Definition and Characteristics of Periodic Sentences

A periodic sentence is a type of sentence structure where the main clause or the central idea is deliberately placed at the end, after several dependent clauses, phrases, or modifiers. This arrangement contrasts with a loose sentence, where the main idea appears near the beginning. The defining characteristic of a periodic sentence is its suspenseful buildup, which postpones the completion of the thought until the final words. This delay creates emphasis and often evokes a stronger emotional or intellectual response from the audience.

Key features of periodic sentences include:

- Subordinate clauses or introductory phrases precede the main clause.
- The sentence cannot be fully understood until the end is reached.

- It often uses commas, semicolons, or dashes to separate introductory elements from the main clause.
- It builds suspense or interest by withholding the main point.

Examples of Periodic Sentences in Literature and Everyday Use

Examples of periodic sentences can be found in classical literature, speeches, and everyday writing. These examples illustrate how the delayed main clause intensifies meaning and keeps the reader engaged.

Classical Literature Examples

Many renowned authors have used periodic sentences to great effect. For instance, Charles Dickens frequently employed this structure to build descriptive tension:

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note, as his corpse was borne to the grave." Here, the main action "his corpse was borne to the grave" is postponed, enhancing the solemnity of the scene.

Modern and Everyday Examples

In everyday writing and speech, periodic sentences can make statements more impactful. For example:

"Despite the heavy rain, the bitter cold, and the howling wind, the marathon continued." This sentence delays the main clause "the marathon continued" to emphasize the adverse conditions endured.

Benefits and Effects of Using Periodic Sentences

Using periodic sentences offers several advantages in both written and spoken language. These benefits contribute to the sentence's enduring popularity among skilled communicators.

- **Creates suspense:** By withholding the main idea, the sentence builds anticipation, making the reader eager to reach the conclusion.
- **Emphasizes the main point:** Placing the key information at the end gives it greater weight and memorability.
- **Enhances rhythm and flow:** The buildup of clauses can create a poetic or rhetorical cadence that enriches the text.
- **Improves persuasion:** The suspenseful structure can be particularly effective in speeches and argumentative writing.

Overall, periodic sentences are instrumental in crafting sentences that are not only informative but also stylistically engaging.

Comparison Between Periodic and Loose Sentences

Understanding the difference between periodic and loose sentences is crucial for mastering sentence variety and style. While both structures have their place, they produce different effects on the reader.

Loose Sentences

Loose sentences start with the main clause, followed by additional information or subordinate elements. They provide clarity early and are often more straightforward:

"The marathon continued despite the heavy rain, the bitter cold, and the howling wind." In this example, the main idea appears immediately, making the sentence easier to process but less suspenseful.

Periodic Sentences

In contrast, periodic sentences delay the main clause, heightening suspense and emphasizing the final point:

"Despite the heavy rain, the bitter cold, and the howling wind, the marathon continued."

Choosing between these sentence types depends on the desired tone, pace, and emphasis in the writing.

How to Construct an Effective Periodic Sentence

Constructing a compelling periodic sentence requires careful planning and attention to sentence elements. Writers should follow these guidelines to maximize clarity and impact.

1. **Identify the main clause:** Determine the core idea or action you want to emphasize at the end of the sentence.
2. **Build suspense with modifiers:** Use dependent clauses, phrases, or descriptive elements at the beginning to set the scene or provide context.
3. **Ensure grammatical correctness:** All introductory elements must logically and grammatically lead to the main clause.
4. **Maintain sentence balance:** Avoid overly long or complicated introductions that can confuse the reader.
5. **Use punctuation effectively:** Employ commas, semicolons, or dashes to separate introductory material from the main clause clearly.

Following these steps helps create periodic sentences that are both engaging and easy to understand.

Common Mistakes and Tips for Using Periodic Sentences

While periodic sentences are effective, misuse can lead to confusion or awkwardness. Recognizing common errors and applying best practices ensures clarity and style.

Common Mistakes

- **Overly complex introductions:** Excessive subordinate clauses can overwhelm readers and obscure the main point.
- **Incomplete sentences:** Forgetting to include the main clause or ending prematurely results in sentence fragments.
- **Poor punctuation:** Missing or incorrect punctuation can disrupt the flow and clarity of the sentence.
- **Inappropriate use:** Using periodic sentences in informal or fast-paced writing may hinder readability.

Tips for Effective Use

- Use periodic sentences selectively to create emphasis rather than in every sentence.
- Revise sentences to balance suspense with clarity, ensuring the reader is guided smoothly to the main idea.
- Read sentences aloud to check rhythm and impact.
- Combine periodic sentences with other sentence structures to maintain variety and interest.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an example of a periodic sentence?

A periodic sentence is one where the main clause or predicate is at the end. For example: "Despite the heavy rain and the long journey, we reached our destination on time."

How does a periodic sentence differ from a loose sentence?

A periodic sentence delays the main clause until the end, creating suspense, while a loose sentence starts with the main clause followed by additional information. For example, periodic: "In spite of the storm, we continued our hike." Loose: "We continued our hike despite the storm."

Can you provide a complex example of a periodic sentence?

Certainly! "Although he was tired, and despite the late hour, he continued to work on his project with determination."

Why are periodic sentences effective in writing?

Periodic sentences build suspense and emphasize the main point by postponing it until the end, making the sentence more impactful.

Is the sentence 'After a long day at work, she finally relaxed on the couch' a periodic sentence?

No, this is not a periodic sentence because the main clause comes immediately after the introductory phrase. A periodic sentence would delay the main clause until the end.

Give an example of a periodic sentence in literature.

From Edgar Allan Poe: "Despite the chilling winds, the eerie silence, and the darkness all around, the raven perched silently upon the bust."

How can I identify a periodic sentence?

Look for sentences where the main subject and verb appear at the end, often after introductory phrases or dependent clauses that build up to the main idea.

What is the purpose of using periodic sentences in speeches?

Periodic sentences create suspense and keep the audience engaged by withholding the main idea until the end, enhancing rhetorical effect.

Are periodic sentences commonly used in modern writing?

Yes, especially in formal, literary, or persuasive writing where emphasis and dramatic effect are desired.

Can you rewrite this sentence as a periodic sentence: 'She won the race because she trained hard'?

Certainly! "Because she trained hard, she won the race." (Note: This is still a loose sentence. A true periodic sentence would be: "Only after months of intense training did she win the race.")

Additional Resources

1. *The Art of Rhetoric: Mastering Periodic Sentences*

This book delves into the classical techniques of rhetoric, with a special focus on the periodic sentence. It explains how to craft sentences that build suspense and emphasize key ideas by delaying the main clause. Readers will find numerous examples from historical speeches and literature, making it a practical guide for writers and speakers seeking to enhance their style.

2. *Periodic Sentences in English Literature*

Exploring the use of periodic sentences across different periods of English literature, this book highlights how authors have used this structure to create rhythm and impact. It includes analyses of works by authors such as John Milton and Henry James, demonstrating how periodic sentences contribute to tone and meaning. The book is ideal for students and literary enthusiasts aiming to deepen their understanding of sentence construction.

3. *Crafting Complex Sentences: The Power of Periodic Structure*

Focused on sentence complexity, this book teaches readers how to develop intricate periodic sentences that improve clarity and persuasion. Through exercises and examples, it guides writers in balancing suspense and coherence. The book is a valuable resource for advanced learners looking to elevate their writing style.

4. *Rhetorical Devices: Periodic Sentences and Beyond*

This comprehensive guide covers a wide range of rhetorical devices, dedicating significant attention to periodic sentences. It explains their function in enhancing argumentation and engagement in both speech and writing. The book includes tips for identifying and using periodic sentences effectively in various contexts.

5. *The Periodic Sentence: A Historical and Practical Approach*

Offering both historical background and practical advice, this book traces the evolution of the periodic sentence from classical antiquity to modern usage. It provides step-by-step instructions for composing periodic sentences and highlights their role in persuasive writing. The text is well-suited for educators and students of rhetoric.

6. *Syntax and Style: Understanding Periodic Sentences*

This book bridges the gap between syntactic theory and stylistic application, focusing on the periodic sentence as a key element of effective prose. It discusses the grammatical components that make periodic sentences work and their stylistic effects. Readers will benefit from detailed examples and analysis that

improve both comprehension and writing skills.

7. Effective Writing with Periodic Sentences

Designed for writers seeking to enhance their persuasive writing, this book emphasizes the strategic use of periodic sentences to maintain reader interest. It covers techniques for delaying the main idea to create emphasis and anticipation. Practical exercises help readers apply these concepts to essays, speeches, and creative writing.

8. Periodicity in Prose: Exploring Sentence Rhythm and Structure

This book investigates how periodic sentences contribute to the rhythm and musicality of prose. It examines literary examples and provides guidance on incorporating periodic structures to enrich narrative flow. Ideal for writers and literary critics, it offers insights into the aesthetic qualities of sentence construction.

9. Advanced Grammar: The Role of Periodic Sentences

Focusing on advanced grammar topics, this book highlights the periodic sentence as an important syntactic tool. It explains the mechanics behind sentence periodicity and its impact on clarity and style. The book is a useful reference for linguists, educators, and advanced students aiming to master complex sentence forms.

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