

Sentence Patterns

Pattern #1

Subject verb; subject verb.

Two short, complete sentences brought together with a semi colon. One is not more specific than the other.

The future is uncertain; all we can do is our best.

Pattern #2

General statement: Specific statement.

Both are complete statements. The colon says to the reader that what comes next is more specific.

A study of the recursive writing process reveals a crucial truth: Good writing requires revision.

Pattern #3

Emphatic appositive at the end, after the colon

This allows the writer to build to a climax. The first statement is a complete sentence. The second statement is not.

The success of the Cardinals rests primarily on the shoulders of one man: Albert Pujols.

Were those my students, I'd make one thing clear to them: the importance of due dates.

Pattern # 4

A series of balanced pairs

Note the rhythm.

Eager yet fearful, confident but somewhat uncertain, Caroline peeked at her essay grade.

Walking, talking, and chewing gum at the same time is nearly impossible.

Pattern # 5

Parallel construction

Write similar ideas in similar grammatical constructions.

To be or not to be . . .

The answer will not come from the White House; the answer will come from your house.

Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

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Pattern #6

Semi colon + conjunctive adverb

Conjunctive adverbs include the following: *therefore, nevertheless, consequently, however, moreover, indeed, otherwise, similarly, specifically, still, subsequently, then, thus, finally, furthermore, conversely, instead*

You've gone through three stages of revision; therefore, your essay is ready to submit.

Pattern #7

Subject—appositive—verb.

An appositive is a noun that renames another noun/pronoun with no verb in between.

My favorite writer—John Steinbeck—created characters I feel I know personally.

Pattern #8

Subject—appositive, appositive, appositive—verb.

The dash is like the comma only more dramatic and visually effective.

Punctuation marks—colon, semi colon, comma—are important to effective communication.

Pattern #9

Subject—Complete sentence—verb.

A complete sentence within a complete sentence.

Henry James' advice to young writers—live your life in such a way that nothing will be wasted on you—proves good advice for all of us.

Pattern #10

The deliberate fragment!

Here the writer purposely writes a fragment for special effect.

Oh, what a sunset!

Pattern #11

Object or complement before subject and verb

This inversion allows you to stress a specific part of the sentence.

The Tin Lizzie may have been the most dependable automobile of its day, but quiet it wasn't.

His kind of sarcasm I do not like.