**Sentence Emphasis**

**Ways of Securing Emphasis**

If you need to emphasize a specific fact or point in your text, there are several ways to focus the reader’s attention on it. The following are the most important ways of securing emphasis :

1. Position
2. Climactic Sequence
3. Repetition of key words
4. Sentence Length and Structure:
   1. Length
   2. Structure: - periodic sentences - balanced sentences - active voice
5. Use of emphatic expressions
6. Punctuation/ typography

**Cumulative Sentence**

The cumulative sentence (loose sentence) begins with a standard sentence pattern and adds multiple details after it.

Examples

● The women moved through the streets as winged messengers, twirling around each other in slow motion, peeking insides homes and watching easy sleep of men and women.

- Terry Tempest Williams

○ The underlined section is the standard sentence pattern, then it adds extra details.

● It is a wilderness that is beautiful, dangerous, abundant, oblivious of us, mysterious, never to be conquered or controlled or second-guessed, or known more than a little.

-Wendell Berry’s *An entrance into the woods*

**Periodic Sentences (climactic)**

● A periodic sentence is a sentence which has been deliberately structured to place the main point at the end. Therefore, a period sentence will have its main clause or predicate as the end of the sentence. The very last word in the sentence will be the point the writer wants to emphasize.

**Purpose**

● Periodic sentences are mostly used to emphasize or to create suspense.

● Periodic sentences can also be more persuasive than normal sentences as they allow a writer to put all the reasoning or evidence up front before making the final point.

Examples

● “Like the waters of the river, like the motorists on the highway, and like the yellow trains streaking down the Santa Fe tracks, **drama**, in the shape of exceptional happenings, **had never stopped there**." (Truman Capote, In Cold Blood) ***The bold is the main clause.***

● Despite the blinding snow, the freezing temperatures, and the heightened threat of attack from polar bears, **the team continued.**

● With two raw blisters and now unable to carry my pack due to two broken ribs and broken collar bone, I **stared at my dead phone pleadingly.**

**●** The winner of best city, with a mile-long modern shopping mall, cycle paths hugging every road, and a network of canals, **is Milton Keynes.**

**Inverted Sentences**

● In standard English sentences, the subject comes before the verb. However, the writer may choose to reverse the order and put the verb before the subject. This is known as an inverted sentence.

● Inverted sentences can be used to create emphasis on what the writer is saying, contrast surrounding sentences, control the rhythm of a sentence, and create tension. Essentially, it aims at helping the writer avoid monotony.

Examples

● “In the **woods**, is perpetual **youth**.” -Ralph Waldo Emerson “Nature” (VS). Emerson juxtaposes woods with youth to call attention to these two words. In other words, *Perpetual youth is in the woods.* (SV)

■ This is what the previous example would look like if Emerson chose to write this sentence in standard structure.

● “Everywhere was the shadow of death.” -Rachel Carson

● “Under them are the evergreen thickets of rhododendron.” –Wendell Berry

**Exercises: Emphasis**

1. **Combine each of the following sentence groups into one loose (cumulative) sentence, subordinating supporting details to more important ideas. Then, combine each group into one periodic sentence. (Each group can be combined in a variety of ways, and you may have to add, delete, change, or reorder words.) How do the two versions of the sentence differ in emphasis?**

**Example:** More women than ever before are running for office.

They are encouraged by the success of other female candidates.

**Cumulative**: More women than ever before are running for office, encouraged by the success of other female candidates.

**Periodic:** Encouraged by the success of other female candidates, more women than ever before are running for office.

1. **Rewrite the sentences given below placing the underlined word at the beginning or the end of the sentence to gain emphasis.**
2. Though he is poor, he is happy.
3. The birds flew up.
4. Though he was hurt, he didn’t stop playing.
5. The guns relentlessly boomed out.
6. I would like for myself only his old photograph.

**E. 1. Write two loose (cumulative) sentences at least ten words long using each of the basic statements. Do not change the basic statement; just add to it.**

• She liked the song. • They had a good time.

**2. sing the following basic statements, write two periodic sentences at least fifteen words long.**

• Mary left the room. • The circus was his life.

1. **Compose two sentences as directed:**

A **LOOSE** sentence which you turn into a **PERIODIC** sentence to gain emphasis.

*-* A sentence which contains a list of three words, phrases or clauses put ***IN ORDER OF******CLIMAX***

**Key Points and Guidelines**

 The end of the sentence is the most emphatic position.

 The beginning of the sentence is the next most emphatic position.

 Place the most persuasive part of a sentence at the end of the sentence.

 Start a sentence with old information, and end it with new information.

 Begin a sentence with simple information, and end it with complex information.