

Prose Models - Literary Gaming - Tools for Creativity

Our goal is to develop rhetorical tools with the intent of expanding our creativity. Imagine a literary board game where the impediments or obstructions, we call these **challenges**, change with each round of play. Since freedom is paramount we have the "I don't wanna" loophole: If you need to write a haiku on a given day--your call!

Outline of Activity

- 1) Provide the definition of the rhetorical mechanism ("tool")
- 2) Random selection of topic, setting, action
- 3) Three (more?) minutes for writing examples
- 4) Read examples aloud
- 5) Discuss examples. Which entertained?

To save time, subjects, settings, or actions are randomly selected. Participants may disregard these to write of their real life, their current project's characters, or any thing else in pursuit of creativity. Sociability is a fundamental.

Set-Up / Challenge

A brief description/ definition of a rhetorical tool (e.g. compound sentence)

A **structure** is selected in which to use the tool (Two simple sentences, and two compound)

A place to begin: Random selected subject, setting, action, words, other.

Especially as they become more complex, when we explore scenic and narrative structures, the tool need not be a surprise. We may decide to prepare longer examples with more complex challenges in advance.

Write / Read

The challenge set, we have perhaps three minutes to write a creative and imaginative example. We then read our examples aloud.

Critique/Analysis

We discuss what we've written to ensure examples have accurately met the challenge. We give kudos for stylistic decisions, creative nuance, elegance of design and other. This phase should take little to no time at all. Please note the differences between the analytic and the judgmental; we do the former.

Structures

Random subjects are used to save time and are not the point of the challenge; replace or discard them at will. The challenge is using the rhetorical tool. To discuss these, we must have the same general understanding of terms. For this, please review "Nomenclature #1" at the end of the document.

Structural Challenges - The larger the structure, the greater the demand for brevity. In dealing with scene and narrative, we may produce outlines instead of prose.

Sentence (Word structures) - Loose, periodic, compound, complex, etc.

Paragraph (Sentence structures) - Topic sentence last, extended, series, circular, ...

Scenic (Paragraph structures) - Introductory, conflict, crisis, call to action, ...

Narrative (Scenic structures) - Genre, comedy, tragedy, seasons, parallel, ...

Narrative Challenges

Bridge - Write a transition between two otherwise unrelated scene structures.

Skeleton - A framework of scene is established; fill it with details.

Perspective Shift - "Man bounces a ball at home; breaks window." Write it happy, sad, a folk tale, a mystery.

Style Roulette - In advance, read a short story by Chekhov, Munro or Updike. Write a piece stylistically inspired by the story.

Heads and Tails - Write a brief outline. In the next round, refined the outline of one act or segment. In the next round, sketch one scene from the second

outline.

Strategies

This game is not competitive, it is instead communal, educational, and inspirational. There is no winning or losing. We are learning and having fun by being creative. Rhetorical tools are accumulated one by one and we actualize them together through training and repetition. Rather than "score keeping", it's better seen as a music ensemble; we just want to make music together and have a good time. Every time we play, we ascend; the playing itself is the reward.

In real-time we will work quickly, which helps avoid unnecessary self-criticism. It's not intended to be refined. It's a puzzle; you fill the blanks with what fits, but within that pursuit you still try to make it specific, visual, intriguing, narrative, evocative; and hopefully entertaining. We acknowledge compositional elegance, structural flow, meter. But to address all this while navigating the narrow channel of the challenge; that's the primary goal.

The more difficult the challenge, the less opportunity for style! At first we're only trying to get under the limbo-stick without falling flat. But the mechanism becomes familiar, and when understood and used repeatedly, becomes effortless.

We proceed from sentence structure to paragraph structure, and from there to scenes. Scenes are likely too long to process in our short time together. Instead, we may produce a scenic outline or sketch; a few sentences to represent the various parts. Similarly, narrative constructs may be more an outline than a fully written example, but we can still write out abbreviated examples of component scenes. In general these would be outlines, synopses, and sketches.

Following this are three documents:

- 1 Nomenclature #1
- 2 The 27 basic sentence types from *New Strategy of Style*
- 3 An broad outline of *New Strategy of Style*

Nomenclature #1:

Sentences and Clauses have:

Main Thought - Usually subject, verb, object, or subject/predicate

Predicate - Contains the verb and states something about the subject.

Modifying Phrase - Incomplete structure which describes or limits:

"With her uncle", "high above", "now overly cautious"

Clauses - Have both subject and predicate.

Independent clause can stand alone: "I'll cook dinner."

Dependent clause has a subordinator: "*IF I have money*, I'll cook dinner."

Clauses use coordinators or punctuation to produce compound sentences.

Clauses are subordinated to produce complex sentences.

Simple Sentence - Contains a single independent clause.

Can be extensively elaborated, but not with another clause:

Simple: "Though late, the dance continued."

Compound: "The hour was late **but** the dance continued."

Complex: "*Though the hour was late*, the dance continued."

Elements in simple sentences can be compounded:

"*Birds and bees* are tiny things." "*We laughed and howled* together."

Compound Sentence - coordinates clauses ("FANBOYS" = For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So)

Equal or logically related clauses joined with conjunction or punctuation:

"She ate a chicken taco **and** I tried the beef." "She had two, I had one."

Complex Sentence - An independent clause with one or more dependent clauses.

Subordinators make clear the relationship between clauses:

Time: when, while, since, before, after, until, once / *Place*: where, wherever

Cause: because, since, as, now that, inasmuch as / *Condition*: if, unless

Contrast: although, even though, despite, in spite of

Other: that, which, who, whoever, whom, what, why, how, while, whereas

Basic Sentence Structures 01-21

Distilled from *New Strategy of Style* (1978), Weathers & Winchester

#	Name	Info	Example
01	Loose	Express the main thought at the outset and add details, modifying and compounding as a source of rhythm. This can be diffuse, anticlimactic and overworked.	I remember one splendid morning, all blue and silver, in the summer holidays when I reluctantly tore myself away from the task of doing nothing in particular, and put on a hat of some sort and picked up a walking-stick, and put six very bright colored chalks in my pocket.
02	Periodic	Delay completing the main thought until the end or near it. Delaying phrases and clauses postpones it. Note parallelism of prepositional phrases. Complex sentences are easily written as periodic; compound sentences aren't but their clauses can be. Loose sentences can be changed to periodic by adding or moving forward a modifier, inverting the sentence, or beginning sentence with "It was."	Crossing a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration.
03	Inverted	Subject-verb-complement is usual order, almost always with declarative sentences. To shift emphasis in sentence alter the order of basic elements. Reader is surprised to encounter difference in order. End-position of sentence is the most emphatic, first is slightly less, middle is certainly least. When complement or verb is the most important element, consider inverting. Careful, it can be awkward.	Immoral Ovid was, but he had high standards in art.
04	Elliptical (the virtual sentence)	Fragmentary statement that is virtually complete, because of what is said elsewhere or suggested. Good for dialogue, description intros, conclusions, transitions and even emphasis. Use infrequently.	Six o'clock. A cold summer's evening.
05	Simple	Is surprisingly rare and almost always striking. If you wish to be forcefully clear and direct, the briefest sentence alone is emphatic; used together with longer sentences it is a basis for sharp contrasts.	Centuries passed.

06	Simple - Anticipation	The part of speech a phrase modifies determines its location to some extent. Phrases at the beginning operate as mild anticipation, in the middle as interruption, at the end as afterthought. Connection to the sentence can be by connecting word and punctuation or by punctuation alone.	After skirting the river for three or four miles, I found a rickety footbridge. // Even after dark the touch of the wind has the warmth of flesh. // Compared with that of the Taoists and the far eastern Buddhists, the Christian attitude towards nature has been curiously insensitive and often downright domineering and violent.
07	Simple - Interruption	The first example has brief phrase interrupted by a connecting word, "in," and enclosed in commas, partly for emphasis and partly because it interrupts the syntactic flow of the sentence. The second is so mild as to hardly be noticed. The third uses appositive phrase.	A barn, in day, is a small night. // The thought of her was like champagne itself! // You, the listener, sit opposite me.
08	Simple - Afterthought	Any syntactical subordinate thought that comes after the main thought. It may be dramatic and significant, or casual and superfluous. The first actually has two such phrases. The second is so mild it needs no punctuation. The third consists of two phrases, and needs a comma partly because of its length and complexity, also the writer wanted to express a single afterthought by using several phrases.	How beautiful to die of a broken heart, on paper. // There are our young barbarians all at play. // The steadiest winds are the trades, blowing diagonally toward the equator from the northeast to the southwest.
09	Elaborated Simple	Once you begin modifying the various parts of a simple sentence by adding phrases at the beginning, middle or end, you find the basic pattern can be extensively elaborated without loss of lucidity. Remember a primer style is less to be feared than a pretentious one, for clarity is the writer's first objective. You might compose a second version of the same sentence in which you modify the subject or use a compound subject or in which you modify the subject instead of the verb.	The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the grey desolate east.
10	Compound	This coordinates grammatically independent but logically related thoughts. Develop a vocabulary of coordinators: <u>And</u> , <u>or</u> , <u>but</u> , <u>however</u> , <u>for</u> , <u>nor</u> , <u>so</u> , <u>consequently</u> , <u>therefore</u> , <u>then</u> , <u>still</u> , <u>yet</u> , <u>otherwise</u> . Develop also a vocabulary of punctuation: Semicolons, commas, dashes and colons. Some coordinators need a semicolon before and a comma after: <u>Also</u> , <u>additionally</u> , <u>however</u> , <u>nevertheless</u> , <u>therefore</u> , <u>consequently</u> , <u>hence</u> , <u>furthermore</u> , <u>indeed</u> , <u>still</u> , <u>then</u> . Be sure clauses joined by conjunctions are of equal importance and clearly belong in the same sentence.	The great tragic artists of the world are four, and three of them are Greek.

11	Compound - Coordinator only	With no punctuation this is rare and risky. Theoretically none of the clauses are emphasized. In practice the final is usually a little more punchy. When you want to fuse clauses into single undifferentiated statement, this is good.	We would walk out with a bottle of pop apiece and sometimes the pop would backfire up our noses and hurt.
12	Compound - Punctuation only	Compounds are almost always separated by some form of punctuation. A comma separates and emphasizes slightly final clauses. Used when clauses are short and similar in form. A dash points up a hesitation or delay. A semicolon is a standard coordinating mark, it emphasizes the entire sentence. Semicolons are a bit too heavy and formal to be used very often. A colon is even more formal, suggesting that what follows is a distinct addition to or explanation of what came before. When the relationship of clauses is so clear that no coordinator is necessary, use punctuation alone to link it. Emphasizes slightly separateness.	In the morning it was sunny, the lake was blue.
13	Compound - Elaborated	Clauses can be increased from the usual two to three and even more, the elements within the clauses can be inverted or compounded and modified in different ways. The alternatives of correct punctuation and effective coordinators are many. The first one is simple; the long second is not only inverted but also contains several modifiers; the third is as brief as possible and inverted as well.	We were somewhere near Sorrento; behind us lay the long curve of faint-glimmering lights on the Naples shore; ahead was Capri.
14	Complex - Anticipation (Subordinates and punctuation)	The thought of lesser importance, subordinated in a complex sentence which consists of one independent and one or more dependent clauses. Always phrase the main thought as an independent and subordinate details as dependent clauses. Never obscure the main thought with unnecessary subordinate details or by sequences of subordinate clauses each one dependent upon the one before. Subordinators are: <u>who</u> , <u>whom</u> , <u>where</u> , <u>which</u> , <u>that</u> , <u>what</u> . Some more surely distinguish dependent from main clause: <u>although</u> , <u>as</u> , <u>as if</u> , <u>so</u> , <u>so that</u> , <u>because</u> , <u>before</u> , <u>after</u> , <u>if</u> , <u>since</u> , <u>that</u> , <u>until</u> , <u>till</u> , <u>unless</u> , <u>when</u> , <u>where</u> . Some (<u>as</u> , <u>so</u> , <u>while</u>) can lead to ambiguity. Be careful.	If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.

15	Complex - Anticipation (Subordinates only)	If anticipation (dependent clause) is short and relationship to the independent clause is obvious, consider omitting the usual comma. Placing the subordinator between the clauses can facilitate this. Momentum is improved if you exploit the principle of open punctuation whenever ease of reading and understanding is not likely to be affected. This could have been “ideas, they” but brevity would be lost. Clauses are very closely related, and brevity of anticipation makes it easier.	Whenever people are short on ideas they tend to use long words.
16	Complex - Interruption (Subordinates and punctuation)	There is an advantage in placing dependent clauses within the sentence if it would weaken the initial effect as anticipation or assume too much importance as an afterthought. By doing this you can place an important item (e.g. the subject) at the beginning and another (e.g. object) at the end in the most emphatic positions. If the dependent clause is fairly incidental consider this, but even if it is important it can be pointed up by proper punctuation. Of all complex sentences this is perhaps the most subtle--suspended thought, and the periodicity conferred by interruption.	Richard’s crown, which he wore to the last, was picked out of a bush and placed upon the victor’s head.
17	Complex - Interruption (Punctuation only)	If the relationship of the dependent to independent clause is unmistakably clear, you can drop the subordinator and use punctuation. Be sure it is really an interruption. Restrictive clause is essential to the sense of the sentence and can't be separated from what it modifies, it should not be isolated with punctuation. But a non-restrictive clause, although it adds a lot is nevertheless incidental and should be punctuated. The interruption must be surrounded by marks of some kind, in a pair except where first the first comma or mark is replace by a conjunction. Usually the longer and more interjectional, the stronger the punctuation. Commas are mild, parentheses are decisive, dashes emphasize, semicolons and colons are rare to enclose an interruption, only for very special purposes.	This tree, I learned quite early, was exactly my age, was, in a sense, me.
18	Complex - Restrictive Interruption (Subordinate only)	Not really an "interruption" here, but it does come between subject and verb-complement. Usually such an interruption is identified by a subordinator like “which.” Too many can make the prose tedious (especially “that” and “which”). When relationship is clear you might suppress the subordinator, but this takes an acute judgment and ear. Better off looking for the right subordinator.	All works of art which deserve their name have a happy end.

19	Complex - Afterthought (Subordinator and punctuation)	Because of its position in the sentence, the dependent clause is often more emphatic as an afterthought, especially when punctuated with something stronger than a comma.	Charles had decided definitely on Princeton, even though he would be the only boy entering that year from St. Regis.
20	Complex - Afterthought (Subordinator only)	If the afterthought is fairly short and not decidedly subordinate to the independent clause, punctuation alone might effectively mark the dependent clause. If it were clearly restrictive, like “Artistic temperament is a disease that afflicts amateurs,” don’t consider commas. “Which sloped...” even though restrictive it has only the subordinator. Separateness was being played down here.	The trees stood massively in all their summer foliage spotted and grouped upon a meadow which sloped gently down from the big white house.
21	Elaborated Complex	The number of dependent clauses can be increased, can take different forms, and positions. Here, it is anticipation, a complex subject, interruption, verb and modifier, “especially,” “here,” are afterthoughts. But perfectly clear because nothing is abstract. It is a matter-of-fact observation; simple comparison, simple vocabulary.	Early in May, the oaks, hickories, maples, and other trees, just putting out amidst the pinewoods around the pond, imparted a brightness like sunshine to the landscape, especially in cloudy days, as if the sun were breaking through mists and shining faintly on the hillsides here and there.
22	Compound - Complex Combination	A combination of two patterns; coordinates and subordinates several thoughts. At least contains two independent clauses, and one dependent. Here the dependent clause is all the more subordinated, sandwiched as it is between main thoughts. It could've been two sentences, but using a compound-complex can indicate more precisely the relationship among a number of details.	Years ago the British used to run a flying-boat down through Africa, and although it was a slow and sometimes rather bumpy journey I can remember no flight that was quite so pleasant.
23	Elaborated Compound - Complex Elaborated Combination	This form represents the upper limit of the sentence spectrum. Here it has one dependent clause, five independent clauses, and another dependent clause.	Late one September night, as I sat reading, the very father of all waves must have flung himself down before the house, for the quiet of the night was suddenly overturned by a gigantic, tumbling crash and an earthquake rumbling; the beach so shook in its dune that the flame of a lamp quivered and pictures jarred on the wall.
24	Representative series - Two part	One must decide on a number of examples, series of modifications, series of qualifications, etc. If you wish to represent totality, certainty, absoluteness, then choose two. When you use two, the voice becomes highly confident.	How are we to find the knowledge of reality in the world without, or in the shifting, fluid world within?

<p>25 Representative series - Three part</p>	<p>Less dogmatic and absolute than a series of two. Use when you wish to indicate reasonable, judicious and normal attitudes toward a subject. This type is the most frequently used, because most times this is the way that a writer wants to appear.</p>	<p>All history teaches us that of these questions that we think the pressing ones will be transmuted before they are answered, that they will be replaced by others, and that the very process of discovery will shatter the concepts that we today use to describe our puzzlement.</p>
<p>26 Representative series - Four part</p>	<p>To indicate a more emotional, human-oriented, or subjective attitude. The series of involvement, it indicates the you the writer are concerned or even emotional about the content. Units may be words as in the first example, or phrases as in the second.</p>	<p>London was hideous, vicious, cruel and above all overwhelming. // They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still.</p>
<p>27 Representative series - Five or more parts</p>	<p>Although the four part is human, each additional lengthening increases the attitude, begins to add elements of humor and even absurdity.</p>	<p>There is not a more mean, stupid, dastardly, pitiful, selfish, spiteful, envious, ungrateful animal than the public.</p>

New Strategies of Style - Outline

01 Inventions

Observing

Experiencing

Reading

Speculating/Imagining

02 Subject / Thesis

Beginning

After preliminaries

End of first paragraph

Beginning of 2nd

Climax - End of the Middle part

Ending

Climax & Ending - Figuratively and Directly

Beginning and End

03 Classification and Order - Ideas/Data

Classify

Eliminate unnecessary material

Simplify homogenous groups

Subordinate subgroups

Order into relevant groups / sequences

By Function

By Composition

By Configuration

Effective order

Chronology

Cause and Effect

Emphatic order

Climactic (Least to Most)

Anticlimactic (Most to Least)

04 Beginnings and Endings

Set stage, engage reader, indicate feeling, perspective, approach

Establish Tone, Style, and Attitude

Direct Beginning

First sentence states subject

First paragraph Identify, define, or synopsis, foreshadowing

Delayed Beginning

Initial attention-getting device

Anecdote

Generalization

Opening Sentence

Simple, direct

Loose, multicaused

Modifying word, phrase, clause

Long initial phrase or clause

Endings

Summarize the composition

Reach conclusion

Restatement of the subject/thesis

Greater truth that the subject illustrates

05 Expansion

Controlled Expansion

Horizontal - logically associated ideas, new but related

And, on the other hand, next therefore, thus, consequently

Causes

Consequences

Vertical - no new material, instead analysis, illustrations

Description

Structure, parts, makeup

Examples

Restatement

Denials and negations

Comparisons

Contrasts

06 Momentum

Strand of an idea runs throughout

Recurring images associated with the idea

Repetition and pronoun references for binding

Synonyms and antonyms if association is assured

Question and answer

Pro/Con series of statements

Parallelism

Transitions - Connectives and conjunctions

 Yet, and, or, but, thus

Numerators

 First suggests a second

 To begin with implies finally

Transitional sentence

 Mentions what was discussed and what is upcoming

 Frequently first sentence in a paragraph

07 Emphasis

08 Rhetorical Profile

09 Paragraphs

10 Paragraph Models

11 Sentences

12 Sentence Models

13 Words

14 Metaphors

15 Punctuations