

Free modifiers

I Mid-branching sentences

I feel—and the anxiety is still vivid to me—that I might easily have failed before I began.

I, sensing a possible rival, wondering who he was, watched him warily.

The effect?

I. Left-branching sentences

Sensing a possible rival, wondering who he was, I watched him warily.

II. Right-branching sentences

I watched him warily, sensing a possible, wondering who he was.

Inverted appositives

Which one is better? Why?

A lonely boy, Coleridge retreated into books.

A lonely boy, Coleridge was born in 1772.

Parallelism

But it is, on the contrary, wonderfully dramatic and picturesque.

(Deliberate faulty parallelism) Here was himself, young good-looking, snappy dresser and making dough.

Sentence length

Only a portion of the painting is shown here, called a “detail.” The actual painting is wider and includes more buildings and people.

→ This book will not tell you how to die. Some cheer-leaders of war can always get out a pamphlet telling the best way to go through that small but unnecessary business at the end.

Why is the latter better?

Syntactic symbolism

Somewhere a *ponderous tower clock* slowly *dropped* a dozen strokes into the *gloom*.

What effect does the use of the stop consonants produce?

The intransitive at the end

He fortified himself with a glass of wine, and proceeded to fulfill his function. He waited.