

Use of Simile (1)

“like” and “as,” or “as if”

- The position that receives the most attention lies at the end of a sentence

1. Simile without “like”

They may likewise be compared to a stage coach.

Such histories resemble a newspaper.

Our disputants put me in mind of the cuttle-fish, that when he is unable to extricate himself, blackens all the water about him till he becomes invisible.

2. Simile with like (prep.)

The force of his feelings is so much greater than his intellect that his mind serves his soul like a valet. (Robert Browning)

The savages have no bodily advantages beyond those of civilized men. They have not better health; and as to care or mental uneasiness, they are not above, but below it, like bears. (Johnson)

“as” or “as if” + clauses

1. A man will not reach eloquence if he is afraid of bombast, just as a man will not jump a hedge if he is afraid of a ditch. (Chesterton)
2. Often it was only the smallest trace, Watson, the faintest indication, and yet it was enough to tell me that the great malignant brain was there, as the gentlest tremors of the edge of the web remind one of the foul spider which lurks in the centre. (Conan Doyle)

- Since “like” cannot be followed by an ordinary sentence (S+V), starting an involved comparison with that word tends to require a more imaginative sentence structure.

1. There is no doubt that a man may appear very gay in company who is sad at heart. His merriment is like the sound of drums and trumpets in a battle, to drown the groans of the wounded and dying.