

# Terms Associated with Grammar

## High School

Definitions contain examples from *Jane Eyre*, along with an explanation of how the grammatical or syntactical structure contributes to meaning.

**Phrases**—See the Grammar Foundation Lessons for examples

**Clauses**—See the Grammar Foundation Lessons for examples.

### Sentences—Purpose

A **declarative sentence** makes a statement: e.g., “I was afraid of someone coming out of the inner room” (190).

An **imperative sentence** gives a command: e.g., “Give me five pounds, Jane” (198).

An **interrogative sentence** asks a question: e.g., “What crime was this, that lived incarnate in this sequestered mansion, and could neither be expelled nor subdued by the owner?” (185).

An **exclamatory sentence** provides emphasis or expresses strong emotion: e.g., “What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large prominent teeth!” (27).

### Sentences—Structure

**Antithetical sentences** contain two statements which are balanced, but opposite:

e.g., “‘I see,’ he said, ‘the mountain will never be brought to Mahomet, so all you can do is to aid Mahomet to go to the mountain; I must beg of you to come here’” (101). When Rochester injures his ankle in a riding accident, Jane cannot catch his horse for him. When he realizes she cannot catch it in a rhythmical, memorable way he tells her she will have to help him catch the horse. In another example, Rochester discusses trying to live a better life after Jane inspires him, and he contrasts his former deathlike existence with his resolve to improve:

“...my heart was a sort of charnel; it will now be a shrine” (120).

In a **balanced sentence**, the phrases or clauses balance each other by virtue of their likeness of structure, meaning, or length: e.g., “She sucked the blood: she said she’d drain my heart” (187). And “He disavowed nothing: he seemed as if he would defy all things” (255). In both of these sentences, the second independent clause extends the meaning of the first by stating how far the character will go.

A **complex sentence** contains an independent clause and one or more subordinate, or dependent, clauses: e.g., “When your uncle received your letter intimating the contemplated union between yourself and Mr. Rochester, Mr. Mason, who was staying at Madeira to recruit his health, on his way back to Jamaica, happened to be with him” (259). With the dependent clause first in this sentence, the speaker adds to the already suspenseful moment as Jane waits to learn how Mr. Mason found about her impending wedding to Rochester.

A **compound sentence** contains two independent clauses joined by a semicolon or by a coordinating conjunction preceded by a comma: e.g., “He was not in any of the lower rooms; he was not in the yard, the stables, or the grounds” (195). The similarity of these two independent clauses emphasizes the difficulty Jane has in locating Rochester, when she must return to her ailing Aunt Reed, seeking Rochester’s permission to leave.

A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more independent clauses and one or more subordinate, or dependent, clauses: e.g., “Hannah had been cold and stiff, indeed, at the first: latterly she had begun to relent a little; and when she saw me come in tidy and well-dressed, she even smiled” (299). The intricacy of the sentence represents the complications in Jane’s initial relationship with the housekeeper at Moor House.

A **loose** or **cumulative sentence** has its main clause at the beginning of the sentence: e.g., “A rude noise broke on these fine ripples and whisperings, at once so far away and so clear: a positive tramp, tramp; a metallic clatter, which effaced the soft wave-wanderings; as, in a picture, the solid mass of a crag, or the rough boles of a great oak, drawn in dark and strong on the foreground, efface the aerial distance of azure hill, sunny horizon, and blended clouds, where tint melts into tint” (98). This sentence with its initial independent clause and its added-on descriptive units recreates the sounds of Rochester’s riding towards Jane on the road to Hay as she hears them and tries to make sense of the sounds.

A **periodic sentence** has its main clause at the end of the sentence. It forces the reader to retain information from the beginning of the sentence and often builds to a climactic statement with meaning unfolding slowly: e.g., “Having seen Adele comfortably seated in her little chair by Mrs. Fairfax’s parlour fireside, and given her her best wax doll (which I usually kept enveloped in silver paper in a drawer) to play with, and a story-book for change of amusement; and having replied to her ‘Revenez bientôt, ma bonne amie, ma chère Mlle. Jeannette,’ \* with a kiss, I set out” (97). (\* “Come back soon, my good friend, my dear Miss Janie.”) With the dependent grammatical units placed before the independent clause at the end, Brontë captures Jane’s preparations for leaving on her fateful walk to Hay, building up to her main point.

A **simple sentence** contains one independent clause: e.g., “Mr. Rochester has a wife now living” (255). Ironically, this simple sentence may be the most complicated statement in the book. Its stark simplicity contrasts with the shock of its message.

## Syntax Techniques

The techniques listed here are powerful strategies for using language. Students find it both interesting and valuable to identify these techniques in the works of authors and to use them in their own writing.

**Syntax** means the arrangement of words and the order of grammatical elements in a sentence. In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë uses every type of sentence construction for every purpose because the story she tells requires such variety. Interestingly, she almost never uses the **periodic sentence** in this story filled with mystery and surprise. Brontë’s method of telling Jane’s story reflects her character traits of honesty and straightforwardness. Jane tells her story honestly, and she tells it straight. Brontë’s syntax does not create additional suspense. Also, although Brontë rarely uses **polysyndeton**, she often employs **asyndeton**, reflecting her desire to propel the story forward rather than linger on particular elements or details.

**Juxtaposition** is a poetic and rhetorical device in which normally unassociated ideas, words, or phrases are placed next to one another, often creating an effect of surprise and wit. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens uses juxtaposition in Chapters 12 and 13. Chapter 12, “The Fellow of Delicacy,” concerns the quite indelicate Mr. Stryver (see *verbal irony*). The following chapter, “The Fellow of No Delicacy,” concerns Sydney Carton, whose manners may seem indelicate but who is willing to sacrifice for others, even eventually substituting his own life for Charles Darnay’s. Thus the juxtaposition of the two chapters highlights the character traits of each man.

**Natural order of a sentence** involves constructing a sentence so the subject comes before the predicate: e.g., “I should have been afraid to touch a horse when alone, but when told to do it I was disposed to obey” (100). First we understand Jane’s feelings about horses; then we understand why she tries to catch one despite her fear.

**Omission**

**Asyndeton** (a-syn'-de-ton) is deliberate omission of conjunctions in a series of related clauses; it speeds the pace of the sentence: e.g., “Her relatives encouraged me; competitors piqued me; she allured me; a marriage was achieved almost before I knew where I was” (268-269). This sentence captures the whirlwind Rochester found himself in upon arrival in the West Indies where he meets and marries Bertha Mason.

**Ellipsis** (el-lip'-sis) is the deliberate omission of a word or words that are readily implied by the context; it creates an elegant or daring economy of words: e.g., “This room was chill, because it seldom had a fire; it was silent, because [it was] remote from the nursery and kitchens; [it was] solemn, because it was known to be so seldom entered” (11). And, “My couch had no thorns in it that night; my solitary room [had] no fears” (85). The bracketed words indicate words that Brontë omitted. Brontë’s use of ellipsis in these two sentences eliminates extraneous words and creates a strong rhythmical pattern.

**Parallel structure** (*parallelism*) refers to a grammatical or structural similarity between sentences or parts of a sentence. It involves an arrangement of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs so that elements of equal importance are equally developed and similarly phrased: e.g., “The burden must be carried; the want provided for; the suffering endured; the responsibility fulfilled” (286). These four grammatical units in parallel form sum up life as Jane sees it—each part being equally significant.

**Polysyndeton** (pol-y-syn'-de-ton) is the deliberate use of many conjunctions for special emphasis—to highlight quantity or mass of detail or to create a flowing, continuous sentence pattern; it slows the pace of the sentence: e.g., “I had had no communication by letter or message with the outer world: school-rules, school-duties, school-habits and notions, and voices, and faces, and phrases, and costumes, and preferences, and antipathies: such was what I knew of existence” (74). The extra *ands*

in this sentence effectively capture the monotony of Jane’s years of routine at Lowood and her desire for a different life.

**Repetition** is a device in which words, sounds, and ideas are used more than once to enhance rhythm and to create emphasis: e.g., “All John Reed’s violent tyrannies, all his sisters’ proud indifference, all his mother’s aversion, all the servants’ partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well” (11-12). The repeated use of all emphasizes Jane’s heightened sensitivities when she is stuck in the red room as punishment for finally standing up for herself.

**Anadiplosis** (an'-a-di-plo'-sis) is the repetition of the last word of one clause at the beginning of the following clause; it ties the sentence to its surroundings: e.g., “He then said that she was the daughter of a French opera-dancer, Celine Varens, towards whom he had once cherished what he called a ‘grande passion.’ This passion Celine had professed to return with even superior ardour” (123). Clearly the placement of passion at the beginning of the second sentence leads to a further refinement of the meaning of passion.

**Anaphora** (a-naph'-o-ra) is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses; it helps to establish a strong rhythm and produces a powerful emotional effect: e.g., “What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! What a great nose! And what a mouth! And what large prominent teeth!” (27). The repetition of “what a \_\_ [Mr. Brocklehurst] had” reflects Jane’s childish assessment of each of his features—she is too close to him for comfort, and his features seem exaggerated to her. (And the construction reminds us of “Little Red Riding Hood”—what big eyes you have! What big teeth!)

**Epanalepsis** (ep’-an-a-lep’-sis) is the repetition at the end of a clause of the word that occurred at the beginning of the clause; it tends to make the sentence or clause in which it occurs stand apart from its surroundings: e.g., “Breakfast was over, and none had breakfasted” (39). Bracketing the sentence with the image of breakfast signifies the finality of the fact that the girls did not get to eat that morning at Lowood.

**Epistrophe** (e-pis’-tro-pee) is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the ends of successive clauses; it sets up a pronounced rhythm and gains a special emphasis both by repeating the word and by putting the word in the final position: e.g., “Genius is said to be self-conscious: I cannot tell whether Miss Ingram was a genius, but she was self-conscious—remarkably self-conscious indeed” (151).

“Oh, Jane, you torture me!’ He exclaimed. ‘With that searching and yet faithful and generous look, you torture me!’” (214).

The repetition of *self-conscious* and *you torture me* at the ends of clauses focuses attention on those concepts because they are the last images in the sentences, completing the thought.

### Reversal

**Antimetabole** (an’-ti-me-ta-bo-lee) is a sentence strategy in which the arrangement of ideas in the second clause is a reversal of the first; it adds power through its inverse repetition: e.g., “And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you” (222). In the passage this sentence is taken from, Rochester has teased Jane by telling her he will send her away to Ireland when he marries Blanche Ingram. Here, Jane finally declares her love for Rochester in an eloquent reversal of the idea that she wishes it were as hard for him to part from her as it will be for her to be sent away from him.

**Inverted order of a sentence** (*inversion*) involves constructing a sentence so the predicate comes before the subject: e.g., “Long did the hours seem while I waited the departure of the company, and listened for the sound of Bessie’s step on the stairs...” (24). This is a device in which

typical sentence patterns are reversed to create an emphatic or rhythmic effect. Brontë focuses attention on *long* before stating what seemed long—*the hours*. She wants to recreate Jane’s restlessness as she waits for Bessie to finish her duties and then come to say goodnight to her.

A **rhetorical question** is a question that requires no answer. It is used to draw attention to a point and is generally stronger than a direct statement: e.g., “Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, forever condemned? Why could I never please? Why was it useless to try to win any one’s favour?” (12). Jane already knows the painful answers to these questions; they just reflect her unhappiness with her status in the Reed household.

A **rhetorical fragment** is a sentence fragment used deliberately for a persuasive purpose or to create a desired effect: e.g., “How dare I, Mrs. Reed? How dare I? Because it is the truth. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity” (31). The fragment drives home Jane’s point to Mrs. Reed that she has been poorly treated.