

Identifying and Writing Loose and Periodic Sentences Foundation Lesson

About this Lesson

Because effective writers know how to use the “loose” or “cumulative” and “periodic” sentence constructions, this lesson is designed to acquaint students these structures, their characteristics, and the effects they create. Students will also create loose and periodic sentences of their own.

A **loose** or **cumulative sentence** is one in which a *main* or *independent clause* comes first, followed by further grammatical units, both phrases and dependent clauses. A loose sentence makes sense and will stand alone as a sentence even if brought to a close before the period.

The loose or cumulative sentence is extremely flexible and can convey a great deal of information and imagery in an economical way. Loose sentences almost seem like poems because they are packed with imagery and detail.

A **periodic sentence** has its main clause at the end of the sentence with additional grammatical units added before this *main* or *independent clause*. A periodic sentence does not make sense and will not stand alone as a complete sentence until the main clause is included at the end.

The periodic sentence often creates suspense by delaying the completion of the sentence meaning. The main clause may be given more emphasis or amplification in the periodic sentence.

This lesson is included in Module 3: Integrating Grammar, Exploring Syntax.

Objectives

Students will

- demonstrate an understanding of loose and periodic sentences and their effects within a text.
- create loose and periodic sentences by manipulating and imitating sentences provided in the lesson.

Level

Grades Six through Ten

Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts

LTF® Foundation Lessons are designed to be used across grade levels and therefore are aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards. Teachers should consult their own grade-level-specific Standards. The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

Explicitly addressed in this lesson:

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	Understand	III
R.5	Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	Analyze	III
L.6	Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.	Understand	II
SL.1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Understand	II

Implicitly addressed in this lesson:

Code	Standard	Level of Thinking	Depth of Knowledge
W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Create	III
L.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Understand	I
L.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	Understand	I

LTF Skill Focus

The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

Levels of Thinking					
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Close Reading <i>written, spoken, and visual texts</i>		Grammar <i>purposeful use of language for effect</i>		Composition <i>written, spoken, and visual products</i>	
		Sentences Purpose declarative Structure antithetical Analysis of a Text Meaning and Effect related to parts of speech, phrases, clauses, sentences, and syntax		Style/Voice Imitation of Stylistic Models Conscious Manipulation of sentence Patterns	

Connections to AP*

Analysis of syntax is a task that is required of students in both the free response and multiple choice sections of AP English Literature and AP English Language exams. Students should also incorporate loose and periodic sentences into their essays to demonstrate “stylistic maturity.”

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Materials and Resources

- copies of Student Activity

Assessments

The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:

- short answer
- guided questions

Teaching Suggestions

Teachers might review both sentence structures and sentence purposes as a segue into the lesson. It is important to stress to students that not every sentence can be classified as either loose or periodic. According to the *New Oxford Guide to Writing*, there are two additional sentence structures: **convoluted** and **centered**. In a **convoluted** structure, the main clause opens and closes the sentence with subordinate phrases and clauses being placed between the subject and predicate parts of the main clause. In a **centered** structure, the main clause is preceded by introductory phrases or subordinate clauses and followed by additional phrases and subordinate clauses. The LTF lesson introduces students to the loose and periodic structures because this terminology is on AP English exams.

Answers

Activity One:

(1) *L* (2) *blank* (3) *L* (4) *P* (5) *L* (6) *P* (7) *L* (8) *P* (9) *P* (10) *L*

Answers to 11-15 are subjective and will vary. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses.

Activity Two:

1. (He is a small man)
2. *L*
3. Answers will vary, but the additional phrases and dependent clause emphasize the fact that Morrie is small which might elicit affection from the reader toward Morrie.
4. To compensate for my youth on campus (I wear old gray sweatshirts and box in a local gym and walk around) with an unlit cigarette in my mouth, even though I do not smoke,
5. *N*
6. I wear old gray sweatshirts and box in a local gym, and walk around with an unlit cigarette in my mouth, even though I do not smoke, to compensate for my youth on campus.
7. Answers will vary, but some students will note that the introductory phrase in the original sentence construction actually modifies the latter part of the sentence.
8. If you want the experience of having complete responsibility for another human being, and to learn how to love and bond in the deepest way, (then you should have children.)
9. *P*
10. If you want the experience of having complete responsibility for another human being
If you want to learn how to love and in the deepest way
11. Answers will vary. Possible answers might include “then you should get a pet” or “then you should get married.”
12. Answers will vary, but students should realize that the periodic sentence structure piques the reader’s curiosity.
13. (I study his shrunken frame) the loose clothes, the sock-wrapped feet) that rest stiffly on foam rubber cushions, unable to move, like a prisoner in leg irons.
14. *L*
15. As the reader, we join with the first person narrator as he looks at each aspect of Morrie’s deteriorating physical condition. Placing the prepositional phrase “like a prisoner in leg irons” at the end of the sentence makes the fact that Morrie can no longer walk resonate in the reader’s mind.

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A **loose** or **cumulative sentence** is one in which a *main* or *independent clause* comes first, followed by further grammatical units, both phrases and dependent clauses. A loose sentence makes sense and will stand alone as a sentence even if brought to a close before the period.

Read aloud the underlined portions of the following sentences, noting how they make a complete sentence even if you do not read the remainder of the sentence. These three sentences are called “loose” or “cumulative” sentences.

“One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it.”
“The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe

“As I spoke, a light came over him, as though the setting sun had touched him with the same suffused glory with which it touched the mountains.”
“A Mother in Manville” by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

“Arnie hollered, arguing that some people were meant to work and others to come up with brilliant ideas.”
“Born Worker” by Gary Soto

A **periodic sentence** has its main clause at the end of the sentence with additional grammatical units added before this *main* or *independent clause*. A periodic sentence does not make sense and will not stand alone as a complete sentence until the main clause is included at the end.

Read the underlined portions of the following sentences aloud, noting how they do not create a full sentence unless you read the remainder of the sentence. These are called “periodic” sentences; the main clause is at the end.

“And while Arnie accompanied him, most of the time he did nothing.”
“Born Worker” by Gary Soto

“In the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table, he laughed at his fears.”
“The Monkey’s Paw” by W. W. Jacobs

“Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house”
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

Activity One

Classifying Sentences as Loose and Periodic

Read the following sentences, and place an L by the loose sentences and a P by the periodic sentences. Leave blank the sentence(s) that do not fit either pattern.

1. _____ “You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation!” “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe
2. _____ “The details of packing my personal belongings, loading my car, arranging the bed over the seat, where the dog would ride, occupied me until late in the day.” “A Mother in Manville” by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
3. _____ “I felt an inexpressible relief, a soothing conviction of protection and security, when I knew that there was a stranger in the room, an individual not belonging to Gateshead, and not related to Mrs. Reed.” *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë
4. _____ “Whatever her reasons, whether she is fat, or can’t climb the stairs, or is afraid of English, she won’t come down.” *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros
5. _____ “She [Winnie] wandered for a long time, looking at everything, listening to everything, proud to forget the tight, pruned world outside, humming a little now, trying to remember the pattern of the melody she had heard the night before.” *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt
6. _____ “After seventy days of wind and sun, of wind and clouds, of wind and sand, a little rain came.” *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse
7. _____ “One morning, the hobbits woke to find the large field, south of Bilbo’s front door, covered with ropes and poles for tents and pavilions.” *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J. R. R. Tolkien
8. _____ “Close by Miss Temple’s bed, and half covered with its white curtains, there stood a little crib.” *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë
9. _____ “Dazed and suffering intolerable pain from throat and tongue, with the life half throttled out of him, Buck attempted to face his tormentors.” *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London
10. _____ “My father started chipping away at a plaster wall in the living room of our house in Bybanks shortly after my mother left us one April morning.” *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech

Analyzing for Effect or Purpose

11. In your own words, explain the general effect created through the use of
 - a. a loose/cumulative sentence

 - b. a periodic sentence

12. Select a sentence that you thought was particularly effective and explain how or why the pattern of the sentence affects the reader.

Manipulating Sentence Structure

13. Rearrange the sentence below to make it into a periodic sentence. You may have to change a few words.

“The king and his court were in their places opposite the twin doors—those fateful portals so terrible in their similarity.” “The Lady or the Tiger?” by Frank Stockton

14. What is the effect of the change from loose to periodic?

15. Select one loose sentence and one periodic sentence from the previous page to use as models. Write original sentences following the same pattern as your model sentences.

Activity Two

Loose/Periodic sentences used for effect

Read the following sentences from *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom, a nonfiction book about the relationship between the author and his college professor Morrie Schwartz. Then answer the questions following each sentence.

Sentence One

He is a small man who takes small steps, as if a strong wind could, at any time, whisk him up into the clouds.

1. Put parentheses around the independent clause.
2. Is this sentence loose, periodic, or neither?
3. What character trait of the man (Morrie) is emphasized by the sentence structure?

Sentence Two

To compensate for my youth on campus, I wear old gray sweatshirts and box in a local gym and walk around with an unlit cigarette in my mouth, even though I do not smoke.

4. Put parentheses around the independent clause. Underline the compound verbs. Circle the coordinating conjunctions in the sentence.
5. Is this sentence loose, periodic, or neither?
6. Create a new sentence arrangement by placing the independent clause at the beginning of the sentence.
7. Where is the best place to move the modifying phrase *to compensate for my youth on campus*?

Sentence Three

If you want the experience of having complete responsibility for another human being, and to learn how to love and bond in the deepest way, then you should have children.

8. Put parentheses around the independent clause.
9. Is the sentence loose, periodic, or neither?
10. Separate the introductory dependent clauses into two clauses that begin with *if*.
If you want _____
If you want _____
11. Could any other independent clause logically follow these introductory elements?
12. What is the intended effect of this sentence structure?

Sentence Four

I study his shrunken frame, the loose clothes, the sock-wrapped feet that rest stiffly on foam rubber cushions, unable to move, like a prisoner in leg irons.

13. Put parentheses around the independent clause. Underline the subject and the verb of the independent clause. Circle the direct objects of the verb.
14. Is this sentence loose, periodic, or neither?
15. What is the author's intended effect?