

WORKSHEET 1: INTRODUCTION TO UNUSUAL ARRANGEMENTS OF WORDS

Part A

The six sentences that follow are all very much alike. The same four words—and only those four—appear in each of the six sentences. Furthermore, each of the six sentences delivers the very same message that each of the other five delivers. Still, no one sentence in the group is exactly the same as any other—each sentence has its own, special, unique arrangement of words. After you have read and compared the six sentences, answer the questions that follow them.

1. Ate the sandwich I.
2. I the sandwich ate.
3. I ate the sandwich.
4. Ate I the sandwich.
5. The sandwich I ate.
6. The sandwich ate I.

Question: Which of these six sentences would you use if you wanted someone else to understand your meaning quickly and easily? *Answer:* Sentence number ____.

Question: Which of these sentences would you be most likely to create while speaking in a relaxed way with a friend? *Answer:* Sentence number ____.

Question: In how many different positions does the word "sandwich" appear in these six sentences? *Answer:* In ____ positions.

Question: In how many different positions does the word "ate" appear in these six sentences? *Answer:* In ____ positions.

Question: In how many different positions does the word "I" appear in these six sentences? *Answer:* In ____ positions.

Question: How does the clearest sentence of the six differ from all of the other sentences? (If you cannot answer this question now, leave the following lines blank and wait for the class discussion.) *Answer:* _____

Question: Which of the six sentences is most like "Peculiar was the thief"? *Answer:* Sentence number ____.

Question: Which of the six sentences is most like "The thief was peculiar"? *Answer:* Sentence number ____.

Part B

The two sentences that follow are also much alike. Sentence one delivers the same message that sentence two delivers, and sentence one contains the very same words that sentence two contains. But the arrangement of words in one sentence is quite different from the arrangement of words in the other. After you have read and compared the sentences, answer the questions that follow them.

1. Ralph saw Martha on the channel 9 late show at twelve o'clock, while eating pistachio ice cream, before turning to homework.
2. On the channel 9 late show at twelve o'clock, while eating pistachio ice cream, before turning to homework, Ralph saw Martha.

Question: Which of the two sentences would you use if you wanted someone to understand your meaning quickly and easily? *Answer:* Sentence number _____.

Question: What are the three major elements in each sentence?

Answer: _____, _____, and _____.

Question: Where do the three major elements appear in sentence two?

Answer: _____.

Part C

Following are two more sentences that are very much alike. The same words that occur in one sentence also occur in the other, and the meaning that one delivers, the other delivers as well. But, as the two sentences in part B differ in their arrangements of words, so do the two sentences that follow. First, read and compare the sentences, and then answer the questions that come after them.

1. While my cousin Joan was walking sadly home from school, she heard, far away in the afternoon, little children happily singing.
2. While home from school sadly was my cousin Joan walking, little children far away happily singing in the afternoon she heard.

Question: Which of these two sentences would you use if you wanted someone else to understand your meaning quickly and easily?

Answer: Sentence number _____.

Question: In sentence two, several words that are closely related to "walking" appear at some distance from "walking." What are two of those words?

Answer: _____ and _____.

Question: If you were asked to make sentence two clearer, what word or words would you first move closer to "heard"?

Answer: _____.

Fun and Games

Give an unusual arrangement to the words in each of these sentences:

1. Joan went to school.

2. Martha quickly called Ralph on the telephone.

3. Mary laughed and sang when she saw that her present for her sixth birthday, which came on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, was a new bicycle with a red seat, chrome fenders, and yellow tires.

