

NATIONAL 5/HIGHER ENGLISH  
SENTENCE STRUCTURE TECHNIQUES

Technique	What is it?	Example	General Effect/Usage
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Structural  
Techniques

Inversion	The reversing of the normal word order in a sentence.	<u>Never</u> would I have thought that you could have done such a thing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasises the word that comes first, or delays an important idea till the end of the sentence for suspense/ emphasis.</li> </ul>
Parenthesis	Extra information – added to a sentence using commas, dashes or brackets – that could be omitted without making the remaining sentence grammatically incorrect.	The student, <u>a diligent and studious young man</u> , began his exam confidently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adds extra information. Specific effect dependent on context.</li> </ul>
List	A type of sentence construction where a number of related items are separated by commas.	The farm at the end of our road has <u>chickens, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and a couple of horses</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasises the number – and sometimes the range – of things in the list.</li> <li>Can be used to build towards a climax or an anti-climax.</li> </ul>
Complex List	A type of sentence construction where, for clarity, a number of related items are separated by semicolons, because the items themselves contain already commas.	The farm at the end of our road has <u>chickens that are free-range and organic; goats, imported from France, for making cheese; and a herd of beef cattle</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasises the number – and sometimes the range – of things in the list.</li> <li>Can be used to build towards a climax or an anti-climax.</li> <li>Can also be used to emphasise the complexity of the information it communicates.</li> </ul>

Short sentences	Brief or very brief sentences, generally of around six words or fewer.	I walked to the door. I opened it. No one was there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used to build tension or create drama.</li> <li>• Can also be used to create a matter-of-fact tone.</li> </ul>
Minor sentences	A clause that functions as a sentence, but which is not a sentence because it lacks a finite verb.	I opened the door. <u>No one there.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates tension and/or a sense of urgency.</li> <li>• Can also be used to indicate a conversational tone.</li> </ul>
Single sentence paragraph	A very brief paragraph of just one sentence.	<p>The simple truth is that we are still destroying the world's oceans at a shocking rapid rate.</p> <p><u>But this must change.</u></p> <p>Making these changes, however, is another story and those who have...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises the idea contained in the paragraph.</li> <li>• Can also be used to link paragraphs together or provide a turning point in a line of argument.</li> </ul>
Dramatic Pause	A break in a sentence, created by a colon or a dash, which causes the reader to pause. It can be created using a colon or a dash.	But none of these relatively minor disagreements should detract from the central issue at <u>stake</u> : the system as a whole is in desperate need of reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises the idea that comes immediately after the pause.</li> </ul>
Rhetorical Questions	A question that is used to help make a point, rather than in anticipation of an answer.	<u>With all the recent reforms to the system, is it any wonder that people are confused?</u> What is now needed is a period of stability where those at the...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage the reader.</li> <li>• To indicate frustration.</li> <li>• Can also be used, depending on the context, to indicate confusion.</li> </ul>
Repetition/ Anaphora	A repeated word or phrase.	<u>We must continue to</u> work for a peaceful solution. <u>We must continue to</u> support those who are suffering. <u>We must continue to</u> hope that sense will prevail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises the repeated word or phrase.</li> <li>• Can be used to build towards a climax.</li> </ul>

Antithesis/ Parallel structure	Two opposing ideas, expressed using a similar structure, placed alongside each other for contrast.	The poor eat to live; the rich live to eat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasises the contrast.</li> <li>Achieves a sense of balance.</li> </ul>
Long sentences	Unusually long and complex sentences, especially in comparison with those around it.	It's time to get a grip of life. I need to join a gym and sign up for one of those dreadful classes with a made up name like 'boxercise'; get my haircut like the little one in that new girl band – I think she's called Cindy, but it might be Celina; apply for a new job that pays millions for minimal effort; and then go on holiday. On second thoughts, I might just go on holiday.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can emphasise the complexity of the situation or the argument.</li> </ul>
Climax	Arranging ideas in such a way as to build towards the central idea.	We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasises the key idea.</li> </ul>
Anti-climax	Arranging ideas in order of increasing significance, as if to build towards a climax, but suddenly reversing this at the end.	Three elements are essential for life: air, water, and milk chocolate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can create humour or a mocking tone.</li> </ul>

### Punctuation Marks

Comma	,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though it will be tough to solve, only making it a top priority will make a difference.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to separate clauses in a sentence.</li> <li>Used to separate items in a list (see above for example).</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to create parenthesis (see above for example).</li> </ul>
Semi-colon	;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The countryside is our inheritance; the land is our legacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joins two related sentences.</li> <li>Separates a complex list (see above for example).</li> <li>Can be used to create antithesis (see above for example).</li> </ul>
Colon	:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main problem is that the results have been poor: one win in twelve matches is simply not good enough.</li> <li>There are several reasons why Scotland is a great country: the landscape, the cultural heritage, and the friendly people.</li> <li>Macbeth said: "Is this a dagger which I see before me."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to introduce an expansion or a definition.</li> <li>Used to introduce a list.</li> <li>Used to introduce a quotation.</li> <li>Used to create a dramatic pause (see above for example).</li> </ul>
Dash	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The schoolboy in the picture – front row, second from the left – grew up to be a millionaire.</li> <li>Blue sky, white sand and turquoise water – holidays don't get any better than this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to create parenthesis.</li> <li>Used to create a break in the sentence in much the same way as a colon, though regular use of a dash is an indication of less formal writing.</li> </ul>
Brackets	( )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Prime Minister (and her entourage) will arrive at 10pm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to create parenthesis.</li> </ul>
Inverted commas	" "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"The best idea," argued the teacher, "is to plan your revision carefully."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to indicate direct speech.</li> <li>Used to indicate that a word or phrase is borrowed from</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “delicious” food served by the fast food “restaurants” in our area has proved to be extremely popular with young people.</li> </ul>	<p>another source. This can have the effect of casting doubt on the validity of the word(s), and even suggest that the author believes the opposite to be true. It can, as a result, be used to create irony.</p>
Question mark	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the meaning of this?</li> <li>What can be done about this? Who is responsible? What alternatives are there to this deleterious system?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to indicate a question, or a rhetorical question.</li> <li>A series of questions can indicate confusion or frustration.</li> </ul>
Ellipsis	...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Because it is my name... I have given you my soul; leave me my name!”</li> <li>“I’m not sure what to think...”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to show that something has been left out of omitted.</li> <li>Used in direct speech to indicate the speaker trailing off, which can indicate uncertainty.</li> </ul>
Exclamation mark	!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not fear!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used to indicate strong emotions such as: surprise, alarm, anger, frustration.</li> <li>Can also be used to indicate humour.</li> </ul>
Hyphen	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new building had a state-of-the-art design.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not to be confused with a dash. Used to join two or more related words together so that they are treated as a single idea.</li> </ul>

## Parts of Speech

Present tense verbs	A word describing an action that is happening now. For example: walk, jump, run.	I <u>walk</u> through the museum. The corridors <u>are</u> filled with people. We <u>are</u> all looking for one thing: the new exhibition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can give a price of writing a sense of immediacy and drama. It is as if the incident described is happening now.</li> </ul>
Present participles	The form of the verb that ends in –ing and is used to create continuous tenses. For example: walking, running, jumping, eating.	The mob moved through the city as night fell. <u>Running, shouting, smashing,</u> and <u>looting</u> in the streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When used together, can create a sense of continual action.</li> </ul>
Conjunctions and Conjunctive adverbs	Words that are used to join ideas together. For example: and, but, because, although accordingly, also, consequently, conversely, finally, furthermore, hence, however, indeed, instead, likewise, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, next, nonetheless, similarly, still, subsequently, therefore, thus, etc.	<u>Accordingly</u> , it is incumbent on all who care about the next generation to engage more actively in this debate. <u>But</u> this engagement must be informed, rather than merely passionate. <u>Moreover</u> , it must be persuasive rather that pugilistic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used to emphasise the stages of a writer’s argument and create links.</li> </ul>