



# *The Scarlet Letter*

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Lesson on Syntax and Diction

# Who is the author?

## Washington Post

NEW YORK — Hillary Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders traded testy accusations and open scorn over policy differences and personal judgment in a debate Thursday that put on full display just how much the once-genteel Democratic presidential contest has turned ugly.

## Fox News

Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders shelved the niceties and went right after each other's perceived weak spots at a must-win Democratic primary debate Thursday night where the front-runner challenged her rival's grasp of complex policy issues – and the insurgent senator hammered her as a Wall Street pal just now talking the talk of working Americans.

# How does each source feel about the subject?

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# Syntax

- Syntax (n): the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language.
  - Manipulating the syntax can impact the meaning of a sentence

For example: Where is the emphasis in these two sentences?

I cannot go out.

Go out I cannot.

# Diction

- Diction (n): the choice of words used in a literary work.
  - Reveals how an author feels about their subject, or can add meaning to a text.

For example: how does the diction used in the following sentences add meaning to each?

The lazy man pushed out of his cushioned seat.

The man jumped eagerly off his chair.

# Types of sentences

- Modifying syntax takes skill, and it elevates the level of your writing.

## Basic sentence types:

- Simple
- Compound
- Complex
- Compound-complex

## Basic punctuation:

- Commas
- Periods
- Exclamation points
- Semicolons
- Dashes

# Periodic Sentence

- Periodic sentence: a sentence that is not grammatically complete until its end.
- Example: “That morning, after a turbulent flight and some exciting experiences, we finally reached Edmonton.”

# Parallel Sentence

Parallelism: “Parallelism is the use of components in a sentence that are grammatically the same; or similar in their construction, sound, meaning or meter. Parallelism examples are found in literary works as well as in ordinary conversations” (literarydevices.net)

- Examples: To err is human; to forgive divine.

Flying is fast, comfortable, and safe.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.  
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.



# Inverted Sentence

- Inverted sentence: the verb comes before the subject (Yoda-speak)

Example:

The mind of a child is truly wonderful.

Truly wonderful is the mind of a child.

# Hester's Description

The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance, on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was lady-like, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days; characterized by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the delicate, evanescent, and indescribable grace, which is now recognized as its indication. And never had Hester Prynne appeared more lady-like, in the antique interpretation of the term, than as she issued from the prison.

# Hester's Home

- It may seem marvelous, that, with the world before her,-- kept by no restrictive clause of her condemnation within the limits of the Puritan settlement, so remote and so obscure,--free to return to her birthplace, or to any other European land, and there hide her character and identity under a new exterior, as completely as if emerging into another state of being,--and having also the passes of the dark, inscrutable forest open to her, where the wildness of her nature might assimilate itself with a people whose customs and life were alien from the law that had condemned her,--it may seem marvelous, that this woman should still call that place her home, where, and where only, she must needs be the type of shame.

# Dimmesdale's Voice

But even when the minister's voice grew high and commanding,--when it gushed irrepressibly upward,--when it assumed its utmost breadth and power, so overflowing the church as to burst its way through the solid walls, and diffuse itself in the open air,--still, if the auditor listened intently, and for the purpose, he could detect the same cry of pain. What was it? The complaint of a human heart, sorrow-laden, perchance guilty, telling its secret, whether of guilt or sorrow, to the great heart of mankind; beseeching its sympathy or forgiveness,--at every moment,--in each accent,--and never in vain! It was this profound and continual undertone that gave the clergyman his most appropriate power.