Periodic Sentences

If you want to make a statement or emphasize an idea, save your main point for the end of the sentence. It's in that momentary pause—when one sentence ends and another begins—that ideas truly shine.

For example, take the sentence:

"The game continued despite the rain and lightning."

By rearranging it so the independent clause (the main point) comes at the end, you can strengthen the focus on the key idea:

"Despite heavy rain and lightning, **the game continued**."

This version solidifies the most important point—that the game continued.

Sentences that save the main idea for the end are called periodic sentences. While they shouldn't be overused (as they might lose their rhetorical effect), a well-placed periodic sentence can create real impact.

Here's a great example:

"In the almost incredibly brief time which it took the small but sturdy porter to roll a milk-can across the platform and bump it, with a clang, against other milk-cans similarly treated a moment before, **Ashe fell in love**." — P.G. Wodehouse, Something Fresh (1915)

By saving the main point—falling in love—for the end, Wodehouse leaves the reader with a lasting emotional impact.

Another example:

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, **I am nothing**."

Here, the main point isn't about love itself, but rather about the futility of actions without love. The structure underscores that without love, all accomplishments are meaningless.

Now that you understand periodic sentences, here's your task:

Write 5 periodic sentences on topics of your choice. Then, explain why placing the main point (the independent clause) at the end makes sense in each example. Good luck!

Periodic Sentence #1

Explanation:

Periodic Sentence #2

Explanation:

Periodic Sentence #3

Explanation:

Periodic Sentence #4

Explanation:

Periodic Sentence #5

Explanation:

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