



Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Using Antithesis in Writing

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Good writers know how to use certain forms of expression to make strong arguments. The word *antithesis* means "opposition" or "contrast," and it is a tool you can use in writing to express an idea. Read more about it below.

I. What is antithesis?

Antithesis is the juxtaposition (placing side by side) of two opposing ideas in the same sentence or pair of sentences.

Examples:

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."
—*Martin Luther King Jr.*

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness . . ."
—*Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities*

"The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."
—*Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address"*

YOUR TURN

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences to create antithesis.

1. The sorrow of his youth led to the _____ of his old age.
2. As the skyscrapers soared to great heights, the people in them descended to _____.
3. Choose to succeed today or to _____ tomorrow.

II. Parallel structure

Notice that in all the examples of antithesis above, the opposing parts of the sentences have the same structure, or grammatical form. Some even repeat words in both parts of the sentence. This is called parallel structure. The repetition emphasizes the contrast the writer creates.

YOUR TURN

Complete the sentences below using the same structure in the second half of the sentence as in the first half. Make sure you use antithesis!

1. To live in freedom is to fly, but _____.
2. Jokes are for the clever; _____.
3. The human heart is expressed through music, but _____.

III. Make antithesis work for you

Think of a topic about which you have a strong opinion. Write three sentences using antithesis to express your ideas on the topic. For a greater challenge, incorporate your sentences into an essay or a speech.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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