ELA Virtual Learning

English II

May 19, 2020

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Lesson: May 19, 2020

Objective/Learning Target:

- I can analyze the impact of syntax on meaning, tone, and the overall writing style of the author.

Hey, man! What's up?

Hello, hun! I Miss you so so so much!

Yo! What you up to?

Last lesson we discussed how diction can play a role in an author's overall writing style. But what about sentence structure?

Imagine you received three text messages from friends and/or family members who just got new phones and numbers. Answer the question below.

- **How do your friends and family structure their sentences? Are their sentences very long or very short? Do they tend to omit or leave out certain words?**

Literary forensics is the scientific study of language in order to identify the author of an anonymous/disputed piece of writing. Literary forensics has been applied to settle plagiarism disputes as well as solve brutal crimes!

For this brief mini-project, students will take on the role of literary detective and our assigned the task determining the authorship of five anonymous poems.

In order to determine authorship, literary detectives focus on three main criteria: diction and syntax, themes, and mechanics. Today we will focus on **syntax**.
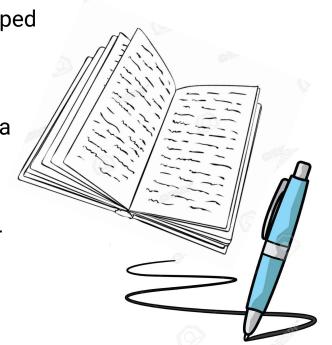
Congratulations! If you completed the bell work, you've helped demonstrate the importance of **syntax in writing style**.

Syntax is a fancy term for the order of words and phrases a writer chooses to use in a speech or piece of writing.

Writing style is a series of techniques and choices a writer tends to make in their writing to form a particular "voice" unique to them.

How does syntax impact writing style and authorship?

Writers also have consistent tendencies in the patterns they use when putting their words together.

Some writers use short sentences. Other writers may use much much longer sentences that combine many many ideas and although their sentences are longer they often have redundant words that could ultimately be taken out of the sentence without losing any real meaning.

Some writers might insert, frequently, parenthetical adverbs where a Valley Girl might insert, like, y'know, mallspeak.

Now that we have reviewed syntax and its impact on style, let's practice by looking at the same five anonymous poems from yesterday.

Use the information from slides 4-6 to determine whether these five poems are authored by **one, two, or three different writers** based on syntax. The five poems are linked **here**.

As you read and evaluate the texts, fill out the chart to the right. Include the number of words in the shortest and longest sentence in each poem as well as any unusual order or omissions.

Text #	Syntax (Sentence Structure)
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

PRACTICE ANSWER KEY *(Answers will vary)*

Text #	Syntax **(Sentence Structure)**
1	**Longest: 57 words. Shortest: 11 words. Average: 35 words. Uses a lot of parenthetical phrases to increase sentence length (6 total).**
2	**Longest: 17 words. Shortest: 5 words. Average: 12 words. Uses a couple fronted subordinate clauses and parenthetical adverbs.**
3	**Longest 27 words. Shortest: 3 words. Average: 12 words. Uses a couple fronted subordinate clauses.**
4	**Longest: 47 words: Shortest: 6 words. Drastic differences in sentence length within the same poem. Omits "of" once and "I" twice from certain sentences.**
5	**Longest: 54 words. Shortest: 30 words. Average: 40 words. Uses a couple of parenthetical phrases to increase sentence length (2 total)**

Literary Forensics

- **Forensic Linguistic Profiling & What Your Language Reveals About You | Harry Bradford | TEDxStoke**

REFLECTION

Today's learning targets are listed below:

1. **I can analyze the impact of sentence structure on meaning, tone, and the overall writing style of the author.**

On a scale of 1-5, how confident do you feel with each of today's learning targets? What did you struggle on? What did you understand the best?

1 = I still need to work on it
5 = I know I've mastered it!