Rhetorical Devices

Sentence Lengths: The Five Types

Staccato

By far the shortest of the sentence types: it's a sentence consisting of one to two words.

- Ex. "Do you like the Twilight Series?" - "Absolutely not."

Commonly used by writers to break up the text of a piece of writing to disrupt an event or emphasize the importance of a previous statement.

- Ex. "The tree that John gazed upon was tall. Very. Very. Tall."

- These sentences are grammatically unorthodox as they do not fulfill the requirements of a complete sentence (subject, verb, etc.)
- Staccato is Italian for "detached"

Telegraphic

- A sentence containing less than five words
 - Ex. "Don't drop the ball."
- Typical in journalistic writing, states the facts outright with no 'fluff' in the sentence providing all of the essential elements without extra words.
 - Ex. "The president is speaking. He is very tall. People cheer for him. His words are concise."
- The primary function is to report the facts of a story or event directly.

Short

- Sentence containing between five and ten words
 - Ex. "That pink cat is really cool!"
- Whether you realize it or not, short sentences are most commonly used in daily speech. Next time you say a sentence, count your words; chances are it will be between five and ten.
- Short sentences are also very straightforward and concise, but usually with more descriptive words than a telegraphic sentence.
 - Ex. "That guy is tall." vs. "The charming fellow in the chair is very tall."

Medium

- A sentence containing between fifteen and twenty words.
 - Ex. "While tigers may be beautiful, majestic creatures of the jungle, they are also very deadly."
- Medium length sentences are typically the most effective in terms of content and descriptiveness, giving the reader more detail to build an idea off of.
 - Depending on the style of the writer, these sentences are not <u>always</u> the best, but can be quite useful

Long

- As stated by the name, long sentences are pretty long; holding thirty words or more.
 - Ex. "While some people may accuse others of being lazy, I look at it as a more passive lifestyle; one which a person gets to relax and enjoy the little things in life rather than rushing through every event that passes through your life."
- User beware when using long sentences: it may create a run-on sentence so boring that the reader just may fall asleep while reading your monotonous, excruciatingly long sentence filled with gigantic words that may stray the reader away from the point of your writing.
- Typically extended by many conjunctions (FANBOYS) or colons/ semicolons, long sentences often tire out a reader in a sense.

Extra Examples!

- "I'm bored." Staccato
- Let's go running today." Telegraphic
- "Angry Birds is lots of fun to play." Short
- "Whenever I see a Volkswagen, I make sure that I yell 'slug bug!' and punch the person nearest me." – Medium
- "I'm not sure if this presentation will reach ten minutes, but I sure hope it does; I need all the points I can get in all of my classes because my school schedule this year sure is a lot of tedious work!" – Long