

Advanced Chiasm Examples

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Replacement Nesting Example

Notice how the nested chiasm “replaces” the D level:

A: Level A
B: Level B
C: Level C
 D.a: Nested first (becomes D.a)
 D.b: Nested second (becomes D.b)
 D.c: Nested third (becomes D.c)
 D.c’: Nested third returns
 D.b’: Nested second returns
 D.a’: Nested first returns
 C’: Level C returns
 B’: Level B returns
 A’: Level A returns

Multiple Nested Levels

A structure with multiple nesting levels:

A: Top level A
B: Top level B
 C.a: Second level a (B.a)
 C.b: Second level b (B.b)
 C.c.i: Third level i (B.b.i)
 C.c.ii: Third level ii (B.b.ii)
 C.c.ii’: Third level ii returns
 C.c.i’: Third level i returns
 C.b’: Second level b returns
 C.a’: Second level a returns
 B’: Top level B returns
 A’: Top level A returns

Literary Example: Psalm-like Structure

A chiastic structure common in Hebrew poetry:

A: Blessed is the man
B: who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
C: nor stands in the way of sinners,
D: nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
E: but his delight is in the law of the LORD,
D’: and on his law he meditates day and night.
C’: He is like a tree planted by streams of water

B': that yields its fruit in its season,
A': and its leaf does not wither.

Historical Narrative Example

A chiastic structure in narrative form:

A: The people gathered in the city
B: The king proclaimed a new law
C: The elders assembled to discuss
D: The prophet spoke words of warning
E.a: "Hear, O people,
E.b: the word of the Lord:
E.c: Turn from your wicked ways
E.c': and return to righteousness
E.b': before judgment comes
E.a': upon this generation."
D': The people considered the prophet's words
C': The elders debated late into the night
B': The king issued a decree of repentance
A': The people rejoiced and returned home