

Palindrome

Definition of Palindrome

The term palindrome is derived from two Greek words, *palin*, which means “again,” and *dromos*, which means “way,” or “direction.” It is defined as a number, a word, a sentence, a [symbol](#), or even signs that can be read forward as well as backward, or in reverse order with the same effects and meanings.

In English, Ben Jonson was the first writer to introduce this term in the middle of the 17th century. There are two types of palindrome: word-unit palindrome, and one-line palindrome. Some words, such as civic, radar, level, rotor, and noon are word-unit palindromes, while the sentence, “Was it a car or a cat I saw?” is an example of one-line palindrome.

Categories of Palindrome

Palindromes are of many [Categories](#), depending upon the requirements of the subject. The most commonly used Categories of palindrome are given here:

- [Character](#) by Character
- Name Palindrome
- Word Palindrome
- Number Palindrome
- Line-unit Palindrome
- Word-unit Palindrome

Examples of Palindrome in Literature

There are many examples of Palindrome in [prose](#), poetry, and criticism. Let us take a look at some examples:

Example #1: *The Funny Side of English* (By O. A. Booty)

“Lewd did I live & evil I did dwel.”

This is the first sentence using a palindrome that appeared in the English language, back in 1614. In this sentence, the words read the same forward and backward.

Example #2: *The Life of a Poet* (By W. H. Auden)

“T. Eliot, top bard, notes putrid tang emanating, is sad. I’d assign
it a name: gnat dirt upset on drab pot-toilet.”

Palindrome can be seen in this sentence where the same names are given to T. Eliot in the beginning, “putrid tang,” and also at the end of the sentence “gnat dirt upset on drab pot-toilet.”

Example #3: *Unknown writing* (Credited to W. H. Auden)

“Norma is as selfless as I am, Ron.”

Palindrome is used as the author says that Norma and he both are unselfish.

Example #4: *Doppelgänger* (By James A. Lindon)

“Entering the lonely house with my wife
I saw him for the first time
Peering furtively from behind a bush ...

Blackness that moved,
A shape amid the shadows,
A momentary glimpse of gleaming eyes
Revealed in the ragged moon ...

A closer look (he seemed to turn) might have
Revealed in the ragged moon

A shape amid the shadows,
Blackness that moved.

Peering furtively from behind a bush,
I saw him, for the first time
Entering the lonely house with my wife.”

The above poem gives the perfect example of a palindrome, as it reads in the same manner from the first to the last line, as it does from the last line to the first line.

Example #5: *Inspiration* (By Memory Trace)

“Open floodgates,
once restrained tightly,
suddenly form rippled waters,
expressive thoughts flowing freely,
by frightful heart attending faithfully
INSPIRATION
faithfully attending heart frightful by
freely flowing expressive thoughts,
waters rippled form suddenly,
tightly restrained once,
floodgates open.”

This type of poetry is also called “mirrored poetry,” where palindrome sentences are used, each of which read backward as well as forward – not by the letter, but by the word.

Example #6: Famous Names

Some famous names as fine palindromes:

Lon Nol was a Prime Minister of Cambodia
Nisio Isin was a Japanese novelist
Robert Trebor was an actor
Stanley Yelnats is a character of the movie *Holes*

The purpose of using palindromes in writing, words, numbers, and sentences is to create light entertainment and fun. However, some supporters have taken great initiatives in finding long palindromes that cover many sentences and in poetry. In ancient times palindromes appeared in magic spells, and many have taken this reversibility as a convention.

Palindromes can be traced in classical and modern music poetry for rhythmical effect, in acoustics, and in dates as well. Even several religious texts are full of palindromes. It is not just a chance that, biologically, our genes are also palindromes – that their order is the same, forward and backward. A further interesting point is that numbers also fall in order to create palindromes, such as 88, 99, 101, 111, 121, 131, 141, 151, 161, and 171 which can be read backward and forward in the same way.