

# Anacoluthon

## Definition of Anacoluthon

Anacoluthon is derived from the Greek word *anakolouthos*, which means “lacking sequence.” It is a stylistic device defined as a syntactic deviation, and interruption within a sentence from one structure to another. In this interruption, the expected sequence of grammar is absent. The grammatical flow of sentences is interrupted in order to begin more sentences.

## Characteristics of Anacoluthon

It is employed intentionally, unintentionally, or as a rhetorical device. In [rhetoric](#), anacoluthon is also known as a figure of disorder in which the [syntax](#) of a sentence does not correlate with whatever is expected. However, it should not to be mixed-up with [hyperbaton](#), which also involves a change in the normal position of words, phrases, and sentences.

Anacoluthon is the interruption within a sentence from one construction to another against the expected logical order of the sentence. This change can occur within a sentence or in the form of tense.

## Examples of Anacoluthon in Literature

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### Example #1: *Ulysses* (By James Joyce)

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“... I could have brought him in his breakfast in bed with a bit of toast so long as I didnt do it on the knife for bad luck or if the woman was going her rounds with the watercress and something nice and tasty there are a few olives in the kitchen he might like I never could bear the look of them in Abrines I could do the criada the room looks all right since I changed it the other way you see

something was telling me all the time I'd have to introduce  
myself not knowing me from Adam very funny wouldn't it ...”

This is one example of anacoluthon where [stream of consciousness](#) makes its use easy. Since the thoughts are not coherent, and lack grammatical sequence, it makes readers stop and think about sentence order.

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#### **Example #2: *King Lear* (By William Shakespeare)**

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“I will have such revenges on you both,  
That all the world shall—I will do such things,  
What they are, yet I know not...”

In the above example, King Lear talks about exacting revenge. However, he himself does not know how he will exact revenge because he is in a confused state of mind. This excerpt can be considered as a good anacoluthon example, as there is interruption from one sentence to another, and such interruption is done to attract the readers' attention.

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#### **Example #3: *A Portrait of Mabel Dodge* (By Gertrude Stein)**

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“A plank that was dry was not disturbing the smell of burning  
and altogether there was the best kind of sitting there could  
never be all the edging that the largest chair was having...”

In this case, Gertrude has deviated from one sentence to another. In the beginning, he talks about a plank and its smell. Then more sentences are added, and the result is that the grammatical order is changed.

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#### **Example #4: *The Walrus and the Carpenter* (By Lewis Carroll)**

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“‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,  
‘To talk of many things:  
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—

And why the sea is boiling hot—  
And whether pigs have wings.'”

Here, Walrus proclaims to all listening oysters that the time has come to speak about many things. Following his statement that “the sea is boiling hot,” there is an interruption in the grammatical flow of the sentences through a sudden change and insertion of conjunctions.

### **Function of Anacoluthon**

The common use of anacoluthon is to imitate a thought or speech, and then shift the necessary information towards the start of the sentence. It is frequently used in literary writings and in casual speeches. In casual conversation, it is used in such a way that the sentence would not be considered correct grammatically. In written works, however, it is employed to imitate ungrammatical, confused, and informal speech, and to draw the attention of readers.

Anacoluthon is used extensively in poetry, plays, and dramatic monologues. In addition, this technique is well-suited to the stream of consciousness writing [style](#) that is planned to signify thoughts in proximity to one another, because thoughts are not always consistent and hardly grammatically correct.