

# Balanced Sentence

## Definition of Balanced Sentence

A balanced sentence is made up of two segments which are equal, not only in length, but also in grammatical structure and meaning. It could be a periodic or [cumulative sentence](#). A reader finds both parts equal when he goes through such a sentence.

For instance, Abraham Lincoln, in his Gettysburg speech, "... government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth," gives us an example of parallel forms. In writing, both parts are clearly parallel forms, and they appear grammatically parallel. If there are multiple parts of a balanced sentence, then they are separated by a semicolon or adjoining words, such as "but," "or," "and," etc. Since balanced sentences always have [parallelism](#), writers need to use parallelism with similar grammatical forms, structure, and word order.

## Use of Balanced Sentence in Presidential Address

"While the Inaugural Address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war, seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation" and "All dreaded it, all sought to avert it."  
[Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, 1865]

Lincoln has used balanced [syntax](#) in this address, with a combination of short and long sentences, which evokes an idea of a united and balanced nation. This difference in sentence lengths represents differences between North and South, and by combining them he emphasizes on the unity of the divided nation.

## Use of Balanced Sentence in Advertising

“Light is faster, but we are safer.” (Global Jet Airlines’ advertising slogan)

“Buy a bucket of chicken and have a barrel of fun.” (KFC’s advertising slogan)

## Examples of Balanced Sentence in Literature

---

### Example #1: *Coon Tree* (by E.B. White)

---

“On days when warmth is the most important need of the human heart, the kitchen is the place you can find it; it dries the wet socks, it cools the hot little brain.”

This is a good example of a balanced sentence. The last two clauses are parallel in this sentence, having the same length and the same grammatical structure. The two identical pieces are giving rhythmical flow to the lines.

---

### Example #2: *In Cold Blood* (by Truman Capote)

---

“Like the waters of the river, like the motorists on the highway, and like the yellow trains streaking down the Santa Fe tracks, [drama](#), in the shape of exceptional happenings, had never stopped there.”

This balanced sentence is also a periodic sentence, as the main action happens at the end. There are parallel grammatical structures in each part of this sentence which makes its rhythmic and clear to understand.

---

### Example #3: *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (by James Boswell)

---

“Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it.”

This is another very simple and clear example of a balanced sentence. Both clauses have the same length and word order, emphasizing the idea of truth

---

#### Example #4: *Pride and Prejudice* (by Jane Austen)

---

“... and though the mother was found to be intolerable, and the younger sisters noted worth speaking to, a wish of being better acquainted with them was expressed towards the two eldest.”

Austen is famous for using balanced sentences to illustrate [contrast](#) between things, people, or duality of situations. In these lines, she does the same and compares Bennet sisters and their mother.

---

#### Example #5: *The Scarlet Letter* (by Nathaniel Hawthorne)

---

“Her needle-work was seen on the ruff of the Governor; military men wore it on their scarfs, and the minister on his band; it decked the baby’s little cap; it was shut up, to be mildewed and moulder away, in the coffins of the dead.”

By using a series of parallel clauses, narrator compares members of government, military, and religion to rotting dead and infants. This balanced syntax makes a commentary on the corruption and blindness of governing bodies.

### Function of Balanced Sentence

A balanced sentence gives rhythmical flow to the text. It draws attention of the readers to the sentence and makes it stand out among the rest. Writers use balanced sentences to emphasize particular ideas to make meanings clear, as well as to create pleasing rhythms. In fact, it puts a spotlight on a series of clauses or a sentence. Hence, it helps the writers to make their work stand out from the rest of the text. On the other hand, public speakers, singers, and advertising agencies use it, because its rhythmical qualities have a good impact on the [audience](#).