

Accumulation

Definition of Accumulation

Accumulation is derived from a Latin word which means “*pile up*.” It is a stylistic device that is defined as a list of words which embody similar abstract or physical qualities or meanings, with the intention to emphasize the common qualities that words hold. It is also an act of accumulating the scattered points. Accumulation examples are found in literary pieces and in daily conversations.

Examples of Accumulation in Literature

Example #1: *Henry V* (by William Shakespeare)

“Then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.”

In this excerpt, Shakespeare has gathered similar words to describe King Harry. Henry memorizes the name and nobility of the king by mentioning: “Bedford, Exeter, Warwick, Talbot, Salisbury, and Gloucester.”

Example #2: *Ulysses* (by James Joyce)

“What syllabus of intellectual pursuits was simultaneously possible? Snapshot photography, comparative study of religions, [folklore](#) relative to various amatory and superstitious practices, contemplation of celestial constellations....”

If you are searching for examples of accumulation in literature, James Joyce is the author to check out as he is famous for using this literary device. Here, Joyce has accumulated similar and related words in the form of a list. There are options given between different intellectual careers. These include “snapshot photography, comparative study of religions, superstitious practices.”

Example #3: *The Little Virtues* (by Natalia Ginzburg)

“I don’t know how to manage my time; he does.
I don’t know how to dance and he does.
I don’t know how to type and he does.
I don’t know how to drive ... ”

The writer has used negation in the given sentences. All four lines are written in accumulated form, and the scattered points are listed together, hence contributing to the vocabulary of the readers.

Example #4: *A Modest Proposal* (by Jonathan Swift)

“... having no other motive than the public good of my country,
by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor,
and giving some pleasure to the rich ... ”

This is a very good example of accumulation wherein Swift gives suggestions on how to get rid of poverty. He has listed various motives and ways to resolve the problems, adding and contributing to the meaning of the sentences.

Example #5: *When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops* (by George Carlin)

I’m a modern man, digital and smoke-free;
a man for the millennium.

A diversified, multi-cultural, post-modern deconstructionist;
politically, anatomically and ecologically incorrect.

I've been uplinked and downloaded,
I've been inputted and outsourced.
I know the upside of downsizing,
I know the downside of upgrading."

Here, George Carlin has used three [categories](#) of accumulation. In the first two lines, "a modern man" is described as "digital and smoke-free," and as "a man for the millennium." In the following two lines, he added, "a diversified, multi-cultural ... politically ... incorrect."

Example #6: *Holy Thursday* (by William Blake)

"Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are filled with thorns."

Here is the accumulation of three questions that induce a resentful response. Similarly, three assertions come in the third [stanza](#) in a similar grammatical pattern. These are: "And their son does never shine," "And their fields are bleak and bare," and "And their ways are filled ..."

Example #7: *Ulysses* (by James Joyce)

"Rangoon beans, strikes of tomatoes, drums of figs, drills of
Swedes, spherical potatoes and tallies of iridescent kale, York and
Savoy, and trays of onions, pearls of the earth, and punnets of

yellow brown russet sweet big bitter ripe pomellated apples and
chips of strawberries and sieves of gooseberries, pulpy and
pelurious, and strawberries fit for princes and raspberries from
their canes... “

This excerpt is a perfect example of accumulation. In the beginning, there is a listing of flowers and vegetables. These include “Rangoon beans, strikes of tomatoes, drums of figs,” and again an accumulation of different colors, such as “red green yellow brown russet.”

Function of Accumulation

Accumulation is used in literature, poetry and all types of rhetorical writing. The basic function is to make language livelier and contribute to the meanings of the words. Also, it describes the qualities of an object through different explanations, if otherwise it would be left vague or ambiguous.