Questions & Negatives

CEFR C2 · Syntax at the limits: rhythm, periodicity, style and register

WS1 Periodic vs Loose; Parataxis vs Hypotaxis · WS2 Corpus, Rhythm & Register · WS3 Deliberate Deviation & Voice · WS4 Scholarly Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Periodic vs Loose; Parataxis vs Hypotaxis

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Reference: How a Sentence Distributes Its Weight

A **periodic** sentence withholds its main point until the end, building suspense; a **loose** (cumulative) sentence states its point first, then trails modifiers. **Parataxis** coordinates clauses of equal weight (and… and…); **hypotaxis** subordinates them into a hierarchy. Mature style modulates between these for pace, emphasis and voice.

Term	Character	Example
Periodic	main clause last; suspends closure	Through storms, delays and doubt, they arrived.
Loose / cumulative	main clause first; adds detail	They arrived, tired, late, but undefeated.
Parataxis	coordination; equal clauses	I came; I saw; I conquered.
Hypotaxis	subordination; hierarchy	Because I came and saw, I conquered.

Part A – Recast the Sentence

1. Recast as **periodic**: "We signed the treaty after months of talks, despite fierce opposition." _____
2. Recast as **loose**: "Having weighed every risk and consulted every adviser, she resigned." _____
3. Recast the paratactic string as **hypotactic**: "It rained. The match stopped. We went home." _____

Part B – Analyse the Effect

For each, name the structure and state its rhetorical effect.

#	Sentence	Structure & effect
1	"That he would fail, given his talent, seemed impossible."	
2	"She spoke, and the room fell silent, and no one moved."	
3	"Not that it mattered now, of course."	
4	"Slowly, deliberately, with the whole court watching, he rose."	

Score: ____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Corpus, Rhythm & Register

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Reference: What Distinguishes Registers Syntactically

Corpora show measurable syntactic signatures: academic prose favours long noun phrases, nominalisation and subordination; conversation favours short clauses, coordination and ellipsis; legal prose favours embedding and binomials; journalism favours front-loaded, "inverted- pyramid" clauses. Sentence rhythm — the interplay of long and short, of stressed cadence — is itself a stylistic variable, exploited consciously by skilled writers.

Register	Syntactic signature
Academic / scientific	high nominalisation; dense NPs; passives; hypotaxis
Conversation	short clauses; coordination; ellipsis; dislocation
Legal	deep embedding; binomials (*null and void*); qualification
Journalism	front-loaded key facts; appositive-heavy; tight paragraphs
Literary	modulated rhythm; periodic + loose; marked fronting for cadence

Part A – Identify the Register from the Syntax

Name the likely register and cite the syntactic evidence.

#	Sentence	Register & evidence
1	"The applicant, hereinafter the Tenant, shall not sublet…"	
2	"A significant reduction in yield was observed under stress."	
3	"So I said no — well, not no exactly, but you know."	
4	"Three dead, dozens hurt: a quiet town wakes to horror."	

Part B – Recast Across Registers

Take the core proposition *The council rejected the plan because costs were too high* and rewrite it as: (a) an academic sentence; (b) a headline; (c) a line of natural conversation.

1. (a) Academic: _____
2. (b) Headline: _____
3. (c) Conversation: _____

Part C – Rhythm

Rewrite this flat sentence to end on a short, stressed clause for cadence: "The negotiations, which had dragged on for months and cost a great deal of political capital, eventually produced an agreement that satisfied nobody."

_____

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Deliberate Deviation & Voice

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Reference: Breaking Rules on Purpose

At C2, the sentence fragment, the run-on, the one-word sentence, polysyndeton (*and… and… and*) and asyndeton (omitting conjunctions) cease to be errors and become instruments of voice. What separates deviation from mistake is **intentionality and control**: the effect must be legible and the norm recoverable.

Device	Effect	Example
Fragment	emphasis; abruptness	He would not apologise. Ever.
Polysyndeton	accumulation; breathlessness	and the rain and the wind and the cold
Asyndeton	speed; compression	I came, I saw, I conquered.
One-word sentence	punch; finality	Silence.
Anacoluthon	voice; thought-in-motion	The thing is — well, it's complicated.

Part A – Name the Device and Its Effect

1. "They marched and sang and wept and would not stop." _____
2. "Gone. All of it. Overnight." _____
3. "She smiled, said nothing, left." _____
4. "And that — if we are honest — is the real question." _____

Part B – Deviate with Control

Rewrite each neutral sentence using the device named, then note the effect and the recoverable norm.

#	Neutral	Deviated version + effect
1	He refused, and he would never change his mind. (fragment)	
2	The list of losses was long and various. (polysyndeton)	
3	She entered, paused, and then spoke. (asyndeton)	

Part C – Pastiche

Write a short paragraph (4–5 sentences) that deliberately modulates rhythm: at least one long periodic sentence, one fragment, and one paratactic string. Then annotate each choice in a line beneath.

#	Line
1	
2	

3	
4	
5	
6	

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Scholarly Analysis & Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C2 (CEFR)

Part A – Critical Text Analysis

> Style is not ornament added to sense; it is the shape sense takes. Consider the periodic sentence, that most architectural of forms, which holds its meaning in suspension — subordinating, qualifying, delaying — until, at the last possible moment, it closes. Against it stands the loose sentence: frank, additive, unpretentious, saying its piece and then elaborating at leisure. Neither is superior. What matters, rather, is fit — the marriage of syntax to occasion. A eulogy periodically wrought; a warning, blunt and paratactic; an argument, hypotactic, its logic visible in its very subordination: each borrows authority from its form. To write well, then, is to know not merely what to say but how the saying should be built.

1. The first sentence uses a semicolon and a metaphor ("the shape sense takes"). Analyse how its syntax enacts its claim.
2. Identify the periodic sentence and mark the point of closure. What is suspended, and to what effect?
3. The passage uses asyndeton and elliptical parallelism ("A eulogy periodically wrought; a warning, blunt and paratactic…"). Reconstruct the full clauses and assess what the compression buys.
4. Evaluate the closing sentence as a piece of rhetoric: how do its structure and rhythm reinforce its argument?

Part B – Extended Scholarly Writing

Write the opening two paragraphs (220–260 words) of a scholarly essay on: "Syntax is not the servant of meaning but its co-author."

Requirements — include and underline: (1) one **periodic sentence** constructed for effect; (2) one deliberate **fragment or asyndeton** with recoverable norm; (3) one **cleft or fronting with inversion**; (4) one **metalinguistic/rhetorical term** (parataxis, hypotaxis, end-focus, periodicity, nominalisation) used correctly; (5) two **epistemic hedges** calibrated to each claim; (6) one **conjunct** that maps the argument's logic precisely.

#	Line
1	
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8	

Features: _____ / 6 Word count: _____ Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C2 Level, Sentence Structures

Worksheet 1 – Part A (model)

1 After months of talks, and despite fierce opposition, we signed the treaty. (main clause withheld to the end) · 2 She resigned, having weighed every risk and consulted every adviser. (main clause first, modifiers trailing) · 3 Because it rained, the match was stopped, so we went home. / When the rain stopped play, we went home. (subordinated hierarchy)

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model)

1 Periodic (subject-clause + interruption + delayed predicate) — suspense; the judgement "impossible" lands last. · 2 Polysyndetic parataxis — cumulative, incantatory build; equal weight enacts inexorability. · 3 Elliptical fragment — dismissive afterthought; the omission mimics a throwaway aside. · 4 Loose/cumulative with fronted adverbials — the trailing "he rose" gains weight from the deferral; theatrical slow-motion.

Worksheet 2 – Part A (model)

1 Legal — archaic *hereinafter*, defined term, modal *shall*, embedding. · 2 Academic/ scientific — nominalisation (*reduction*), agentless passive (*was observed*), dense NP. · 3 Conversation — dysfluency, dislocation, ellipsis, discourse marker *you know*. · 4 Journalism — verbless headline, appositive counts, front-loaded facts, colon structure.

Worksheet 2 – Part B (model)

(a) The council's rejection of the plan was attributable to excessive costs. (b) Council rejects plan over cost. (c) Yeah, the council said no — too expensive, apparently.

Worksheet 2 – Part C (model)

After months of dragging on, at great political cost, the negotiations produced an agreement — and it satisfied nobody. (Reward any recast ending on a short, stressed clause.)

Worksheet 3 – Part A

1 polysyndeton — accumulation, relentlessness. · 2 fragments / asyndeton — shock, finality. · 3 asyndeton — speed, coolness. · 4 fronting + parenthetical (anacoluthic aside) — buttonholing, conversational authority.

Worksheet 3 – Part B (model)

1 He refused. And he would never change his mind. (fragment isolates the finality) · 2 The losses were long and various and many and irreparable. (polysyndeton — piling up) · 3 She entered, paused, spoke. (asyndeton — clipped speed)

Assess intentionality: the deviation must produce a legible effect and the standard form must be recoverable. A fragment that merely looks like an error scores nothing.

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 The semicolon balances two clauses in apposition, its very poise enacting the claim that style and sense are inseparable; the metaphor completes the equation form = meaning. · 2 "Consider the periodic sentence … until, at the last possible moment, it closes." Closure falls on "it closes"; everything before is suspended, so the sentence performs periodicity while describing it. · 3 Full: "A eulogy [is] periodically wrought; a warning [is] blunt and paratactic; an argument [is] hypotactic…" — the ellipsis of the copula yields aphoristic compression and parallel force. · 4 The

closing sentence pairs a nominal contrast ("not merely what to say but how the saying should be built") with a rising rhythm; the deferral of "built" gives the maxim its click of closure.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor at C2	Marks
Periodicity	Periodic sentence built for demonstrable effect	0–6
Controlled deviation	Fragment/asyndeton with recoverable norm	0–5
Marked syntax	Cleft or fronting with correct inversion	0–5
Metalinguistic accuracy	Term used correctly, no overclaiming	0–5
Epistemic calibration	Two hedges matched to claim strength	0–5
Argument & length	220–260 words; contestable claim developed	0–5

The C2 benchmark is conscious orchestration: a student who writes a periodic sentence and can explain, in a footnote, why suspension suits the point has demonstrated mastery. Naturalness of rhythm — syntax a native reader would not notice straining — is the final target.