Sentence Structures

Pattern 1:
Compound Sentence: two short, related sentences, joined by a semicolon.

   Examples:
   Hard work is only one side of the equation; talent is the other.
   Some people dream of being something; others stay awake and are.
   Forget defensive driving; practice paranoid driving.

Pattern 1a:
Conjunctive adverb follows semicolon connectors (e.g. however, hence, therefore, thus, then, moreover, nevertheless, likewise, consequently, accordingly)

   Example:
   This gadget won’t work; therefore, there is no sense in buying it.

Pattern 1b:
A coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS: For And Nor But Or Yet So) is used in one of the independent clauses.

   Example:
   The squirrel in our front yard is a playful sort; he mocks us from his tree, but I can entice him from his treetop home with a few crusts of bread.

Pattern 1c:
Three independent clauses joined by semicolons

   Example:
   They begged to be taken in; they promised they would help with the housework; they tugged mercilessly at her heart.

Pattern 2:
Compound sentence with elliptical construction. This pattern is used to avoid using the same verb in the second clause. Listen to ensure that the sentence is rhythmic and balanced.

   Examples:
   The artist’s instinct is intuitive, not rational; aesthetic, not pragmatic.
   A red light means stop; a green light, go.

Pattern 3:
Compound sentence with explanatory statement. The colon signals an explanation or expansion of the first clause.

   Examples:
   Remember what the old saying prudently advises: Be careful what you wish for because you may actually get it.
   No one would deny that Patton did what generals were primarily expected to do: he won battles.

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**Pattern 4:**
A series without a conjunction

Examples:
The couch is loud, profane, demonstrative.

With wisdom, patience, virtue, Queen Victoria directed the course of 19th century England.

The United States has a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

**Pattern 5:**
A series of balanced pairs. This pattern is used with even sets of pairs, creating a balanced rhythm. It should move in a progression or to a climax.

Examples:
The actual herbs in special vinegars—thyme and basis, rosemary and garlic, hot pepper and chive—float in beautifully designed bottles.

Antony and Cleopatra, Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde, Lancelot and Guinevere—all were famous lovers in literature.

**Pattern 6:**
An introductory series of appositives followed by a dash, a summarizing word that may be the subject, and a verb.

Examples:
Vanity, greed, corruption—which serves as the novel’s source of conflict?

Bull riding, camel races, bronco riding, and roping—these events mean “rodeo” to many people.

The Mona Lisa, Michelangelo’s David, the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel—many are the wonders of the Renaissance in Italy.

**Pattern 7:**
An internal series of appositives or modifiers enclosed by a pair of dashes or parentheses.

Examples:
The necessary qualities for political life—guile, ruthlessness, and garrulity he has learned from his father.

The much-despised predators—mountain lions, timber wolves, and grizzly bears—have been shot trapped, and poisoned so relentlessly for so long that they have nearly vanished from their old haunts.

The basic fencing moves (the advance, the retreat, the lunge) demand careful balance by both fencers.
Pattern 8:
Dependent clauses in a pair or a series that occur at the beginning or at the end of a sentence. All dependent clauses must relate to the main clause and must be parallel in structure. This construction works well at the end of a paragraph for summary, in a thesis with multiple points, and in an introduction or conclusion of an essay to bring the points together.

Examples:
Whether one needs fantasy or whether one needs stark realism, the theater can become a mirror of life.

Since he had little imagination and since he displayed even less talent, he wasn’t hired for the job.

If your clothes are made of cotton or wool, if you wash them with soap instead of detergent, and if you hang them on the line to dry, you may not need fabric softener.

Pattern 9:
Repetition of a key term. Repetition can be used to emphasize and unify elements between sentences (transitions). Be sure the repetition is not meaningless, signaling laziness, or an inadequate vocabulary. Be sure the phrase with the repetition is not a complete sentence.

Examples:
We all inhabit a mysterious world—an inner world, the world of the mind.

In “The Lottery” Shirley Jackson mocks community worship of outworn customs, customs that no longer have meaning, costumes that deny man his inherent dignity and link him with the uncivilized world of beasts.

Pattern 9a:
Repetition of a word in a parallel structure.

Examples:
His greatest discoveries, his greatest successes, his greatest influence upon the world’s daily life came to Edison only after repeated failure.

Audrey appeared very chic, very classic, very blasé.

The South Pacific island is an isolated community, isolated from the values of the West, isolated from the spiritual heritage of the East.

Pattern 10:
The emphatic appositive (usually longer) at the end of a sentence, after a colon

Examples:
Airport thieves have a common target: the unwary traveler

Atop the back of the lobster is a collection of trash: tiny starfish, moss, sea conchs, crabs, pieces of kelp.
Pattern 10a:
An appositive (usually shorter) after a dash

Examples:
Many traditional philosophies echo the ideas of one man—Plato.

The Greeks defeated by Alexander could have been averted if they had listened to their most astute statesman—Demosthenes, the brilliant advisor of the Athenians.

Pattern 11:
Interrupting modifier (not an appositive) between subject and verb

Examples:
Rare meat, even though containing more natural juices than well-done meat, is chewier.

Mule deer (once common throughout North America) are now almost extinct.

American fist food has certainly taken hold, especially among young people of Singapore, and steakhouses (not to mention McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken) are familiar sights along Orchard Road.

Pattern 11a:
A full sentence as an interrupting modifier

Examples:
Although the young models were standing on the rolling slopes wearing their new $500 parkas, they were pretending to know how to ski—not one of them dared to venture down the giant slalom.

Juliet’s famous question—early in the balcony scene she asks, “Wherefore art thou, Romeo?—is often misunderstood; she meant not “where,” but “why.”

Pattern 12:
Introductory or concluding participles (-ing or –ed or irregular)

Examples:
Overwhelmed by the tear gas, the rioters groped their way toward the fountain to wash their eyes.

The sun pushes through the early morning fog over the New York skyline and the Brooklyn Bridge, inspiring people with a desire to invent and create.

Printed in Old English and bound in red leather, the new edition of Beowulf was too expensive for the family to buy.

Pattern 13:
A single modifier out of place for emphasis

Examples:
Frantically, the young mother called for help.

All afternoon the aficionados sweltered on the sunny side of the corrida, watching the matador from Mexico City, their latest idol.

The general demanded absolute obedience, instant and unquestioning.
Pattern 14:
Prepositional phrase before the subject-verb

Examples:
With slow and stately cadence, the honor guard entered the Windsor Castle grounds.

In all the forest, no creature stirred.

Pattern 15:
Object or complement before subject-verb

Examples:
Content he can remain with his money, true friends he will never have.

Up went the steps, bang went the door, round whirled the wheels, and off they rattled.

Pattern 15a:
Complete inversion of the normal pattern

Examples:
Down the street and through the mist stumbled the familiar figure.

Even more significant have been the criticisms about the quality of life in our affluent society.

Pattern 16:
Paired constructions; what follows the conjunctions must be parallel pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>not only/but also</th>
<th>both/and</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>just as/so too</td>
<td>as/as</td>
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<tr>
<td>the former/the latter</td>
<td>if not/at least</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whether/or</td>
<td>such/that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither/nor</td>
<td>so/that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
American tourists must realize that violations of laws in China are serious not only because they flaunt traditional codes of behavior but also because they reflect contempt for Asian culture.

Just as slavery divided the North and South, so too the Indian Wars of the nineteenth Century divided East and West.

Every dieter looks for a favorable verdict from the bathroom scale; if not a pound less, at least not an ounce more.

The prisoner was found guilty not only of robbery but also of murder.

Pattern 16a:
A paired construction for contrast only

Examples:
Genius, not stupidity, has limits.

The judge asked for acquittal—not conviction.

I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail.
Pattern 17:
Dependent clause as the subject—or object or complement (noun clauses). Noun clauses begin with one of the following: who, whom, which, that, what, why, where, when, how.

Examples:
How he could fail is a mystery to me.

He became what he had long aspired to be.

Man cannot create what he cannot imagine.

Pattern 18
A noun plus a participle anywhere in the sentence

Examples:
All things considered, the situation seems favorable.

Buffalo abounding, the pioneers often killed many more than they needed for food.

She sat back on the bed, her head bowed.

Pattern 19:
A short, simple sentence for relief or dramatic effect

Examples:
All efforts failed.

Everything changed.

Pattern 19a:
A short question for dramatic effect

Examples:
What comes next?

What caused the change?

Pattern 20:
The deliberate fragment.

Examples:
So much for that

And why not?

Never!

All to no avail.