

Syntax

Consider:

The impact of poetry is so hard and direct that for the moment there is no other sensation except that of the poem itself. What profound depths we visit then – how sudden and complete is our immersion! There is nothing here to catch hold of; nothing to stay us in our flight. . . . The poet is always our contemporary. Our being for the moment is centered and constricted, as in any violent shock of personal emotion.

— Virginia Woolf, “How Should One Read a Book?”

Discuss:

1. Woolf uses a variety of sentence types in this selection. Among them is the exclamatory sentence. Identify the exclamatory sentence and explain its effect.

2. Classify each sentence as to length: short, medium, or long. How is the meaning of the passage reinforced and clarified by sentence length?

Apply:

Write a declarative sentence about college entrance examinations. Then write an exclamatory sentence which amplifies or clarifies the declarative sentence. Share your sentences with the class.