

Jane Austen Style Sheet

Understatements (litotes): use of a lesser expression than expected; often with the “not un—” construction

Examples: “I am not entirely devoid of taste.”
“An egg boiled very soft is not unwholesome.”

Superlatives: the form of a word that indicates superiority over others of its kind; often signaled by the word “most” or by the “—est” ending

Examples: “best guests,” “dearest papa,” “most fortunate circumstances,” “most insufferable woman,” “my greatest danger in housekeeping,” “the most amiable, affable, delightful woman”

Full character descriptions: physical, financial, home-place, personality, age, and so forth

Example: “The Frank Churchill so long talked of, so high in interest, was actually before her—he was presented to her, and she did not think too much had been said in his praise; he was a very good looking young man; height, air, address, all were unexceptionable, and his countenance had a great deal of the spirit and liveliness of his father’s; he looked quick and sensible.”

Italics: use of italic typeface to distinguish words or phrases from a block of text

Examples: “*she* would notice,” “*half* a glass of wine, a *small* half-glass”

Compound objects: direct objects or objects of prepositions that have more than one component

Example: “He had the chosen and the best to dine with him” (direct object); “for the elegancies and societies of Mr. W’s drawing room” (objects of a preposition)

Appositives: renaming of a noun immediately following the noun

Example: “Mr. Knightley, a sensible man of seven or eight-and thirty, was not only an old and intimate friend...”

Compound sentences: a sentence made up of two or more independent clauses joined by a conjunction

Example: “They had been speaking of it as they walked about Highbury they day before, and Frank Churchill had most earnestly lamented her absence.”

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Complex sentences: a sentence containing an independent clause and at least one dependent clause

Example: "She had great pleasure in hearing Frank Churchill talked of; and, for sake, greater pleasure than ever in seeing Mr. and Mrs. Weston; she was very often thinking of him, and quite impatient for a letter, that she might know how he was, how were his spirits, how was his aunt, and what was the chance of his coming to Randalls again this spring."

Favorite vocabulary: words (particularly adjectives and adverbs) that are used frequently in the text

Examples: artless, unexceptionable, tolerably, warmly, amiable, sentiment, elegant

Parentheticals: phrases set aside by parentheses or dashes

Examples: "And have you never known the pleasure and triumph of a lucky guess?—I pity you—I thought you cleverer—for dependent upon it a lucky guess is never merely luck."

"'No' (in an accent not meant to be insinuating).

Antithesis: an assertion immediately followed by a negation of its opposite

Example: "But Mr. Elton had only drunk wine enough to elevate his spirits, not at all to confuse his intellects."

Quoted indirect discourse: quotation marks around non-spoken thoughts in narration; though not spoken aloud, thoughts may suddenly be quoted to intensify the point of view.

Example: "Why she did not like Jane Fairfax might be a difficult question to answer; Mr. Knightley had one told her it was because she saw in her the really accomplished young woman she wanted to be...But 'she could never get acquainted with her...; there was such coldness and reserve;...because their ages were the same, everybody had supposed they must be so fond of each other.' These were her reason. She had no better."

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