



Chiasmus

The word “chiasmus” comes from a Greek word that means “crossed.” Chiasmus is a literary device in which the grammar of one phrase is inverted in the phrase that follows, so two key **concepts** from the original phrase reappear in the second phrase in inverted order.

By day the frolic, and the dance by night. (Samuel Johnson)

Chiasmus uses parallel structure, and is very symmetrical. In the most common type of chiasmus, antimetabole, the same words are repeated in inverse order in both sides of the grammatical structure.

Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.
(John F. Kennedy)

To create a chiasmus:

1. Say something
2. Use different words to say something very close to what you already said, in reverse order of how you said it the first time.

DIRECTION: Explain the meaning and effect of each chiasmus.

1. “It is not the oath that makes us believe the man, but the man the oath.” (Aeschylus)

2. “Despised, if ugly; if she's fair, betrayed.” (Mary Leapor)
