

14. TITLE:

3 bad - (dash) question?

SENTENCES

EXAMPLES:

- a. Greed, jealousy, hatred — which of these was John Brown's worst trait?
- b. Incompetence, arrogance, stupidity — which of these was Custer's fatal flaw?
- c. Thirst, heatstroke, exhaustion — which would kill him first?

EXPLANATION:

A *3 bad — (dash) question?* sentence begins with three negative words, the easiest form of which is three negative adjectives. The first and second negative adjectives are followed by commas. The third is followed with a dash, then a question which relates to the negative adjectives. By clustering the negatives, we include a large amount of information in a short, dramatic sentence.

TEACHING TIPS:

A description of this sentence form just ends up being convoluted! It's much easier to give several modelled examples and deconstruct these, accentuating the two commas, dash and question mark which make up the necessary punctuation.

EXTENSION:

A *3 ALTERNATIVES DASH QUESTION?* sentence is a slight variant of the form. Again, this is best taught by examples:

1. Drowning, hanging, shooting — which way would he choose to die?
2. Football, netball, basketball — which sport would be the most popular?