

A Dickens of an Imitation

“It was the best of _____; it was the worst of _____.

(topic) (same topic as first blank)

It was the _____ of _____; it was the _____ of _____.

(noun #1) (element #1 of topic) (noun #1) (antithesis of element #1)

It was the _____ of _____; it was the _____ of _____.

(noun #2) (element #2 of topic) (noun #2) (antithesis of element #2)

It was the _____ of _____; it was the _____ of _____.

(noun #3) (element #3 of topic) (noun #3) (antithesis of element #3)

We had _____; we had _____.

(noun phrase describing the results of the “best” elements) (noun phrase that expresses the antithesis in parallel structure)

We were all going _____, we were all going direct the other way --

(where the “best” elements will lead you)

in short, the _____ was so far like the present _____,

(noun phrase describing the domain/category of the two things being compared) (synonym for previous blank OR leave blank)

that some of its noisiest _____ insisted on its being received, for good or for

(plural noun naming experts in this domain/category)

evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”

Parallelism: Sentences are balanced in equal grammatical units. For example, if the first action is a simple past tense verb, the following actions are simple past tense verbs; if the first clause contains a list of progressive participles used as adjectives, the second clause contains a list of progressive participles used as adjectives. The grammatical structure of the sentences creates rhythm.

Antithesis: the direct opposite of someone or something else

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way- in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”