Zeugma

English

What is Zeugma?

- **Zeugma is a _figure of speech_ in which a single word joins two (or more) parts of a sentence. Sometimes, zeugma creates a mistake, and sometimes it doesn't. Zeugma is often used to create a literary effect.**

Zeugma

when a single word is used with two (or more)
parts of a sentence

Zeugma (Example 1)

I **held** her hand and my tongue.

"held" applies twice

Zeugma (Example 2)

Lust **conquered** shame; audacity, fear; madness, reason.

"conquered" applies three times

Easy Examples of Zeugma

- Here are some examples of zeugma used for literary effect.

- **Tommy lost his wallet and his head.**
(The verb <u>lost</u> is acting with <u>wallet</u> and <u>head</u>. In this example, <u>lost</u> is used in two different senses. It is used in a literal sense with <u>wallet</u> and a figurative sense with <u>head</u>. This can be a useful literary technique.)
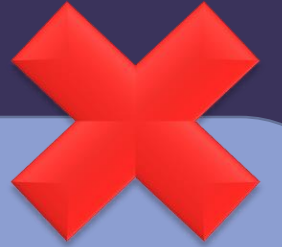- **The skeptic opened the door and his mind.**
(It is a good practice when using this technique to put the most literal element first.)

Easy Examples of Zeugma

- Here are some examples of zeugma that are mistakes:

- **Wage neither war nor peace.**
(There's a term to <u>wage war</u> but not to <u>wage peace</u>.)
- **We watched the luminescence of the lightning and the thumps of the thunder.**
(<u>Watch</u> is appropriate for <u>lightning</u> but not <u>thunder</u>.)

Why Should We Care about Zeugma?

- It's rare to find an error involving a zeugma that creates a logical or grammatical mistake. Nevertheless, it's worth checking that any word that relates to two or more parts of your sentence is appropriate for all parts, especially when writing long sentences.

Key Points

- Employ a clown or zeugma to entertain.

- Use your grey matter and then zeugma to inspire deeper thinking.

- To shock your readers, use zeugma or a cattle prod.

Let's check!
Exercise

- **Question 1. True or false?**

Zeugma is a figure of speech in which a single word joins two (or more) parts of a sentence.

Exercise

- **Question 1. Answer:**

  True

Exercise

- **Question 2. Choose the correct example of zeugma:**

A: Did you lose your marbles as well as your homework?

B: Can you take the dog out before you do your homework?

Exercise

- **Question 2. Answer:**

  The correct answer is A

Exercise

- **Question 3. Choose the correct example of zeugma:**

A: Petrol will damage the seams, and water will damage the cogs.

B: Petrol will damage the seams, and water the cogs.

Exercise

- **Question 3. Answer:**

    The correct answer is B