

A chiasm (also called a chiasmus) is a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated *in reverse order*.

The result is a “**mirror**” effect as the ideas are “**reflected**” back in a passage. Each idea is connected to its “reflection” by a repeated word, often in a related form.

The term *chiasm* comes from the Greek letter *chi*, which looks like our letter X. Chiastic pattern is also called “ring structure.”

The structure of a chiasm is usually expressed through a series of letters, each letter representing a new idea. For example, the structure ABBA refers to two ideas (A and B) repeated in reverse order (B and A).

Often, a chiasm includes another idea in the middle of the repetition: ABXBA.

In this structure, the two ideas (A and B) are repeated in reverse order, but a third idea is inserted before the repetition (X).

By virtue of its position, the insertion is emphasized.

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