

Another Brief Exercise on Form

Ideas are wonderful things, but in and of themselves they have little impact, unless married to the proper form. This is the second in a series of exercises designed to have you practice some good writing habits by practicing and learning through repetition and variation the power of incorporating a knowledge of form into your writing. As with the previous exercise, this one is inspired by Stanley Fish in his work *How to Write a Sentence*. Again, the focus is not on content but on form.

Below you will find a list of similar and somewhat repetitive sentence beginnings. Your task is to complete each sentence with your own unique ending. Notice that we are inverting the normal arrangement subject and verb. Do you see a difference in the overall effect by doing so?

1. Had I tried _____
2. Had I remembered _____
3. Had I listened _____
4. Had I offered _____
5. Had I _____

What does a sentence that begins this way suggest about content and meaning? Think about how it forces you as a reader to see contemplation with in the sentence. Something happened before which, in a certain way, seems to need to be remembered because of something happening now.