



Aposiopesis

Aposiopesis is a figure of speech in which the speaker or writer leaves a statement incomplete. The use of aposiopesis suggests that the speaker is unable or unwilling to finish speaking due to being overcome by a powerful emotion such as anger, excitement, or fear. The intent is for readers to use their imaginations to fill in what is left unsaid, and the device is most effective when readers can figure out what was intended. Aposiopesis is used to create dramatic or comic effect.

The following example is a famous passage from Shakespeare's play *King Lear*. The aposiopeses are in bold:

"I will have revenges on you both
That all **the world shall – I will do such things –**
What they are yet, I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth!"

In this passage, Lear is so overcome with anger against his daughter's that he can't specify exactly what he intends to do.

DIRECTION: Read the assigned passage. Find the aposiopesis and write it on the lines below. What is the effect of the device?
