

RHETORICAL DEVICES: TROPES

Stylistic devices and figurative language that alter meaning from the expected

ALLEGORY

An extended metaphor in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. It evokes a broader purpose or abstract idea.

PARABLE

An illustrative story teaching a lesson.

ALLUSION

A reference to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art.

ANALOGY

A comparison of two things, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification.

METAPHOR

An implied, implicit comparison of two things that does not use terms such as *like* or *as*.

PERSONIFICATION

Attributes of a human being are given to a nonhuman object or concept.

SIMILE

Compares two things using terms such as *like* or *as*.

SYNECDOCHE

Part of something is used to stand for the whole thing. (*Jim cruised around in his new wheels.*)

EUPHEMISM

Substituting harsh words for gentler terms, with ironic effect. (*He was spanked with the birch reminder.*)

HYPERBOLE

Deliberate exaggeration for emphasis. (*The newspaper is more hostile than a thousand bayonets.*)

OXYMORON

A contradiction; two contradictory terms or ideas used together. (*Parting is such sweet sorrow.*)

PARADOX

A statement that appears to be contradictory but, has some truth. (*He worked hard at being lazy.*)

PUN

A play on the meaning of words.

UNDERSTATEMENT

Intentional understatement for humorous or satiric effect. (*Jim is not the best student in the world.*)

RHETORICAL DEVICES: SCHEMES

Stylistic arrangement of words or phrases

ANAPHORA

The repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases or clauses.
(*We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds.*)

ANASTROPHE

Word order is reversed or rearranged. (Everything Yoda says)

ANTITHESIS

The juxtaposition of contrasting ideas. (*“Our knowledge separates as well as unites; our orders disintegrate as well as bind; our art brings us together and sets us apart.”*)

CHIASMUS

A grammatical structure, the first clause/phrase is reversed in the second, sometimes repeating the same words.
(*“Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”*)

CLIMAX

Arranging ideas in order of importance. (*I cleaned the house, read poetry, and put my life in order.*)

PARENTHESIS

The insertion of words, phrases, or a sentence that is not syntactically related to the rest of the sentence. It is set off from the rest of the sentence with either parentheses or dashes.

Dashes: *He said that it was going to rain – I could hardly disagree – before the game was over.*

Parenthesis: *He said it was going to rain (I could hardly disagree) before the game was over.*

RHETORICAL DEVICES: SOUND

Stylistic use of sounds within a paragraph or sentence. It reinforces meaning.

ALLITERATION

The repetition of the same sound at the beginning of successive words. (*We shall not flag or fail.*)

ASSONANCE

The repetition of vowel sounds. (*free and easy*)

CONSONANCE

The repetition of final consonant sounds. (*first and last – odds and ends – short and sweet*)

CACOPHONY

The harsh, unpleasant combination of sounds.

RHETORICAL DEVICES: APPEALS

LOGOS (LOGICAL APPEAL)

The use of evidence, facts and figures, references to current events, and testimony. Effective logical appeals depend upon the ability of the writer to connect the multiple examples of support to each other in meaningful ways.

- Incorporate inductive or deductive reasoning
- Allude to history, great literature, or mythology
- Provide reputable testimony
- Provide evidence, facts
- Cite authorities
- Quote research or statistics
- Theorize cause and effect
- Argue that something meets a given definition

ETHOS (ETHICAL APPEAL)

Attempts by the speaker/writer to make connections to the audience by appearing knowledgeable, reasonable, ethical, etc. A writer is able to make an effective argument when readers have no reason to doubt the writer's character on a given topic. Writers who fail to acknowledge other points of view, exaggerate, or assume a tone of disrespect have difficulty making ethical appeals.

- Make the audience believe the writer is trustworthy
- Demonstrate the writer carefully conducted research
- Demonstrate that the writer knows the audience and respects them
- Convince the audience that the writer is reliable and knowledgeable
- Use first person plural pronouns ("we" and "us") to establish a relationship with the audience

PATHOS (EMOTIONAL APPEAL)

Emotional appeals trigger the reader's emotions, often by using sensory details and imagery. Calling upon the reader's pleasant memories, nostalgia, anger, or fear are frequent emotional appeals found in argumentative texts. The use of "charged words" (such as references to religious doctrine or patriotic ideas) are also typical pathos.

- Language that involves the senses and heightens emotional responses
- Bias or prejudice
- Appeal to the audience's physical, psychological, or social needs
- Emotional anecdotes