

# *Rhetorical Devices*

**Rhetoric**- Rhetoric is the study of effective speaking and writing. And the art of persuasion. For most of its history, it has maintained its fundamental character as a discipline for training students 1) to perceive how language is at work orally and in writing, and 2) to become proficient in applying the resources of language in their own speaking and writing.

1. **Allusion**- an indirect reference to a mythological, historical or literary person, place, thing or event with which the reader is assumed to be familiar.

2. **Analogy**- An analogy, like a simile, compares two different things by identifying points of similarity. The difference is that an analogy usually identifies several points of similarity and is created for the purpose of conceptual clarity.  
Example: Flash memory chips work like a chalkboard, in that, when information is written on it, the information remains present even when the power is turned off. Only when the information is deliberately erased will it disappear. And like the chalkboard, flash memory can be written on and erased many times.

3. **Anecdote**- An anecdote is a brief story that focuses on a single episode or event in a person's life and that is used to illustrate a particular point.

4. **Aphorism** (also called a Maxim)- An aphorism is a brief statement, usually one sentence long that expresses a general principle or truth about life.  
Ex: "The truth shall set you free."

5. **Chiasmus**- A grammatical figure by which the order of words in one of two of parallel clauses is inverted in the other. Ex: Home is where the great are small and the small are great.  
"Love makes time pass, time makes love pass."

6. **Connotation**- The emotional response evoked by a word.  
"regime" might evoke thoughts of Hitler (negative to an American)  
"American" may have a different connotation depending on the part of the world you are in.  
**Denotation**- The dictionary definition of a word

6. **Diction**- a writer's or speaker's choice of words. This includes both vocabulary and syntax (arrangement of the words).  
-Is a person "slim" or "skinny"? Is an oil spill an "incident" or an "accident"? Is a government expenditure an "investment" or a "waste"? Writers tend to reinforce their arguments by choosing words which will influence their reader's perception of an item or issue. Diction may also help to establish a writer's "Voice" or "Tone".

7. **Euphemism**: substitution of an agreeable or at least non-offensive expression for one whose plainer meaning might be harsh or unpleasant.  
We might say that someone short is "vertically challenged".

7. **Figurative Language**: The Understood Meaning  
Holy Cow-                      Figuratively- "WOW"                      Literally- A cow that has been blessed

8. **Hyperbole**: exaggeration for emphasis or for rhetorical effect.  
"If you call me that name again, I'm going to explode!"  
"While we await your decision, the whole school holds its breath."

9. **Metaphor:** Comparing two things by saying they are the same  
 “Love is a battlefield”
10. **Oxymoron:** Words in a sentence or phrase that seem to contradict one another.  
 \*I must be cruel only to be kind." **Shakespeare**, Hamlet  
 "Jumbo Shrimp"  
 “We spend our time envying people who we wouldn’t like to be.” –Jean Rostand
11. **Parallelism (Parallel Structure)-** Parallelism refers to repetition in grammatical structure.  
 When used as a rhetorical device, parallelism expresses two or more ideas of equal worth using the same grammatical form.
12. **Personification:** Giving something that is not human humanlike characteristics.  
 \*England expects every man to do his duty." **Lord Nelson**
13. **Rhetorical Question:** A question that does not expect an answer.  
 “What were you thinking?” (a question your mom may ask when you’re in trouble)
14. **Simile:** Comparing two things by saying they are similar  
 “Love is as painful as a wound to the heart”
15. **Symbols-** A symbol is a person, place, or object that has a concrete meaning in itself and also stands for something beyond itself, a deeper idea or feeling.  
 The Statue of Liberty as a symbol of freedom and America.
16. **Sound Devices**
- A. **Repetition:** Repeating words or phrases for emphasis  
 Evil minds will use evil means.
  - B. **Onomatopoeia:** Sound Words  
 “Moo” “Clank” “Tinkle”
  - C. **Assonance:** repetition of the same vowel sounds in words close to each other.  
 "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." - The Lord's Prayer
  - D. **Consonance-** Repetition of two or more consonants within words in a sequence.  
 All mammals named Sam are clammy
  - E. **Alliteration-** repetition of the initial consonant sounds beginning several words in sequence.  
 "...we shall not falter, we shall not fail."  
 -President **G.W. Bush** Address to Congress following 9-11-01 Terrorist Attacks.  
 "Let us go forth to lead the land we love." -President **J. F. Kennedy**, Inaugural 1961  
 "Veni, vidi, vici." -**Julius Caesar** (I came, I saw, I conquered)
  - F. **Anaphora-** The repetition of a word or group of words in successive clauses.  
 For example, in Emily Dickinson’s “Because I could not stop for Death”:  
 “We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain-  
 We passed the setting sun-”
  - G. **Rhyme-** Correspondence of end sounds of words  
 Hop on Pop, Sam I Am

## *Persuasive Techniques*

1. **Appeal to Emotion-** Rhetorical technique in which an author/speaker will choose words and phrases to appeal to the emotion of the audience rather than their sense of logic or common sense.
2. **Appeal to authority-** A writer may mention an important event or person in an essay to lend importance or credibility to his/her argument. (Also called “testimonial”)
3. **Generalities-** Offering information without proof.
4. **Oversimplification-** Making it seem that there are only two solutions to a problem.