

## Rhetoric: The Building Blocks of Argument

<p><b>An “argument” is a subjective position expounded in any text that the communicator hopes will appeal to/influence a specific audience. The language devices selected by the communicator to construct the argument collaborate (often subliminally) to invoke the appeals, and thus, persuade.</b></p>			
Rhetorical Appeals			
Term	Definition	Effect	Example
Emotional Appeal (pathos)	the communicator’s attempt to influence by appealing to the audience’s emotions	involves the audience in the argument	For instance, a familiar type of emotional appeal is the appeal to pity or sympathy, which is used by many charities. Photographs of crippled or hungry children are shown in order to arouse one’s desire to help them, with the charity trying to motivate you to write a check.
Ethical Appeal (ethos)	the degree of credibility or trustworthiness that communicators establish with an audience	the communicator must be seen as someone who can be trusted, of sterling reputation, and competent	Martin Luther King Jr. understood the power of ethos full well. He was able to convey in writing a respect for subject and audience, an intelligence and superior degree of knowledge that combined to create for him enormous credibility.
Logical Appeal (logos)	the communicator’s attempt to influence an audience using facts, scientific research, statistics, or experts	audiences always want “proof”	95% of all households in America have 3 or more televisions
Language Devices			
Term	Definition	Effect	Example
<p><b>Diction</b> is a formal expression for the author’s choice of words in a text. The words chosen by the author contribute to the development of the purpose for a specific audience. To evaluate diction, you must hear the words and feel their effects as they reflect the author’s vision.</p>			
Connotation	the implied, suggestive meaning of a word	Intended to provoke the audience toward a specific response	The cop handcuffed the suspect after the chase.
Denotation	the literal dictionary definition	Intended to remain neutral	The policeman arrested the suspect after the pursuit.
Euphemism	an inoffensive word or expression that has replaced one that might offend an audience (many see this as “going PC”)	depends on the context – sometimes it’s done in an attempt to be sensitive; other times (as in political dialogue) it is done to disguise the nature of what they are speaking about or to make objectionable subjects easier to accept	“But in July, after another months-long debate inside the administration, Mr. Bush signed a new executive order authorizing the use of what the administration calls enhanced interrogation techniques.” ( <i>The Dallas Morning News</i> )
Colloquial (adj)/ Vernacular (noun)	language or dialect of a particular county or region  plain language of everyday use, and often includes idiomatic expressions, slang, contractions, and many simple, common words	often generates a feeling of authenticity  a major technique of characterization that reveals the social or geographic status of a character	“Sometimes God gits familiar wid us womenfolks too and talks His inside business. He told me how surprised y’all is goin’ tuh be if you ever find out you don’t know half as much ‘bout us as you think yo do. It’s so easy to make yo’self out God Almighty when you ain’t got nothin’ tuh strain against but women and chickens.” ( <i>Janie, Eyes Were Watching God</i> )  That weirdo Arnold lives in a real dump. You’d think he didn’t have enough bills to buy a busted flush from the way his pad looks. That guy’s a real turkey, y’know? His old lady was telling me he hadn’t hit the sack since Saturday. Can’t be that he’s workin’; that bozo never works. He must be just skatin’ on through.
Middle	maintains correct language usage, but is less elevated than formal diction; it reflects the way most educated people speak	targets the widest audience	Arnold is a strange person; he lives in a very rundown apartment. To look at it one would think he was too poor to buy a broken toilet. He certainly does some odd things. His wife told me he had not been to sleep since Saturday. I doubt he is working; he never works. He must be just loafing.
Elevated	dignified, impersonal, and elevated use of language; it follows the rules of syntax exactly and is often characterized by complex words and lofty tone	is often used to establish credibility with an audience	That Arnold is a singular fellow, actually. His domicile is a positively deplorable abode rather akin to a sty. Its appearance gives rise to the speculation that Arnold possesses insufficient monies to purchase even a non-functional disposal apparatus. He performs a number of indisputably unusual activities. His helpmate informed me that Arnold had not sought the sweet respite of slumber for half a fortnight. Assuredly he cannot be indulging in laborious pursuit; he has never stooped to such common practice. He must simply be luxuriating in idleness.

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<p><b>Syntax</b> is a formal expression for the communicator's arrangement of words within a phrase, clause, or sentence. The sentence structures chosen by the author contribute to the development of the purpose for a specific audience. To evaluate syntax, you must hear the rhythm and feel their effects as they reflect the author's vision.</p>			
Anaphora	Repeating words at the beginning of clauses	Adds emphasis and strength to ideas	"We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." (Winston Churchill)
Epistrophe	Repeating words at the end of clauses	Adds emphasis and strength to ideas	"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as child." (1 Corinthians 13.11)
Antithesis	The rhetorical contrast of ideas by means of parallel arrangements of words, clauses, or sentences	Adds emphasis and strength to ideas	"Money is the root of all evils: poverty is the fruit of all goodness"  "Give me liberty, or give me death."
Chiasmus	Two phrases in which the syntax is reversed	Adds emphasis and strength to ideas	"Never let a fool kiss you--or a kiss fool you."  "I am stuck on Band-Aid, and Band-Aid's stuck on me."  "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." (John F. Kennedy)
Loose / Cumulative Sentence	An independent clause followed by a series of subordinate constructions (phrases or clauses) that gather details about a person, place, event, or idea	May make a word seem informal, relaxed, and conversational  very useful for setting a scene or for panning, as with a camera, a place or critical moment  your goal is clarity	"I see it now — the wide sweep of the bay, the glittering sands, the wealth of green infinite and varied, the sea blue like the sea of a dream, the crowd of attentive faces, the blaze of vivid colour — the water reflecting it all, the curve of the shore, the jetty, the high-sterned outlandish craft floating still, and the three boats with the tired men from the West sleeping, unconscious of the land and the people and of the violence of sunshine." (Joseph Conrad, "Youth: A Narrative")
Periodic Sentence	A sentence that is not grammatically complete until the final period  A gradual unfolding of the sentence	Delays completion of its meaning for rhetorical effect (suspense or amplification)	"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." (The King James Bible, 1 Corinthians 13)
Fragment	A group of words that begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation point but is grammatically incomplete	usually adds emphasis	"I'm home, but the house is gone. <i>Not a sandbag, not a nail or a scrap of wire.</i> (Tim O'Brien, "LZ Gator, Vietnam.")
Rhetorical Question	Strategic questions that aren't meant to be answered	Provokes thought; coerces readers into taking your side	"If practice makes perfect, and no one's perfect, then why practice?"
Passive Voice	A sentence where the verb expresses what is done to the subject rather than what the subject does.	takes away agency from the subject	Her latest book was completed in four months.  Mistakes were made.
Active Voice	A sentence where the subject performs the action.	gives agency to the subject	She completed her latest book in four months.  I made mistakes.
<p><b>Figures of speech (figurative language)</b> are expressions that stretch words beyond their literal meanings. By connecting or juxtaposing different sounds and thoughts, figures of speech increase the breadth and subtlety of expression.</p>			
Alliteration	Repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in close proximity	Adds emphasis to the words; often creates rhythm	"The soul selects her own society." (Emily Dickinson)
Aposiopesis	A breaking off of speech	Shows rising emotion or excitement	"I won't sleep in the same bed with a woman who thinks I'm lazy! I'm going right downstairs, unfold the couch, unroll the sleeping ba--uh, goodnight." (Homer Simpson)

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Assonance	Repetition of similar vowel sounds in close proximity	Adds emphasis to the words; often creates a rhythm	"That solitude which suits abstruser musings." (Samuel Taylor Coleridge)
Cacophony	Combining sharp, harsh, hissing, or unmelodious sounds	Often used in conjunction with imagery; requires a staccato, explosive delivery; vitalizes the content of the imagery	"'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves Did gyre and gimble in the wabe; All mimsy were the borogoves, And the mome raths outgrabe." (Lewis Carroll)
Euphony	A pleasing arrangement of sounds	Often used in conjunction with imagery; creates a feeling of serenity or somberness	"The voice of the sea is seductive; never ceasing, whispering, clearing, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander for a spell in the abysses of solitude; to lose itself in mazes of inward contemplation. The voice of the sea speaks to the soul." (Kate Chopin)
Hyperbole	Conscious exaggeration	Used for emphasis or humorous effect; an author makes a point by overstating it	There did not seem to be brains enough in the entire nursery, so to speak, to bait a fishhook with. (Mark Twain, <i>A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court</i> )
Metaphor	An implied comparison	To describe the indescribable	"But my heart is a lonely hunter that hunts on a lonely hill." (William Sharp, "The Lonely Hunter")
Metonymy	one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated	a method of naming or identifying something by mentioning something else which is a component part or symbolically linked	referring to the ruling royalty as "the crown" "The White House makes several policy decisions in a week's time" "The suits on Wall Street walked off with most of our savings."
Onomatopoeia	A figure of speech in which natural sounds are imitated in the sounds of the words	directly conveys the idea	murmur, gurgle, roar, buzz
Oxymoron	a paradox reduced to two words	often used for effect, complexity, emphasis, or wit	eloquent silence, inertly strong
Personification	An inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities or abilities	To describe the indescribable in human terms	"The operation is over. On the table, the knife lies spent, on its side, the bloody meal smear-dried upon its flanks. The knife rests." (Richard Selzer, "The Knife")
Simile	Comparison using 'like' or 'as'	To describe the indescribable	"Life is like an onion: You peel it off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep." (Carl Sandburg)
Synecdoche	a part is used to represent the whole	invites or expects the viewer to 'fill in the gaps'	"Sara needs to learn her ABCs." "All hands on deck" "In the 2010 Winter Olympics, Canada won 14 gold medals."
Zeugma	Use of a word to modify or govern two or more words although its use may be grammatically or logically correct with only one	Used for emphasis	"He carried a strobe light and the responsibility for the lives of his men." (Tim O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> )
<b>Literary Techniques</b> – Whereas figures of speech work on the level of individual words or sentences, writers also use a variety of techniques to add clarity or intensity to a larger passage, advance the plot in a particular way, or suggest connections between elements in the plot.			
Allegory	a narrative that serves as an extended metaphor	to tell a story that has characters, a setting, as well as other types of symbols, that have both literal and figurative meanings	<i>The Wizard of Oz, The Divine Comedy by Dante'</i>
Allusion	a brief, usually indirect reference to a person, place, or event--real or fictional	Creates a link to a previous text or historical event that increases the range of meaning	"I violated the Noah rule: predicting rain doesn't count; building arks does." (Warren Buffett)
Foreshadowing	a device that provides clues for the reader to be able to predict what might occur later on in the story	Usually creates suspense	"The villagers kept their distance, leaving a space between themselves and the stool, and when Mr. Summers said, 'Some of you fellows want to give me a hand?' there was a hesitation." (Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery")
Parody	exaggerated imitation of a serious work or idea	usually for humor; sometimes for social criticism	Saturday Night Live; The Simpsons often do parodies of Shakespeare plays

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Satire	A manner of writing that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humor	Attempts to improve that which is being criticized	
Irony – dramatic	when the audience of a drama, play, movie knows something that the character doesn't and would be surprised to find out	emphasizes the limited nature of human understanding and causes the reader to pause or reflect on a certain moment	often used in scary movies
Irony – situational	found in a book, story, or movie	recognizing the oddness or unfairness of a given situation, be it positive or negative	Johnny spends two hours planning to sneak into the movie theater and missed the movie. When he finally did manage to sneak inside, he found out that kids were admitted free that day.
<b>Verbal Irony</b> – a mode of expression through words (as opposed to events – situational irony) that conveys a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation			
Litotes	Intentional understatement	the tempered appearance of emotion actually emphasizes the underlying emotion of the speaker	"I have to have this operation. It isn't very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain." (Holden Caulfield in <i>The Catcher In The Rye</i> by J. D. Salinger)
Paralipsis	Drawing attention to something by claiming not to mention it	adds emphasis	"I will not stoop to mentioning the occasion last winter when our esteemed opponent was found asleep in an alleyway with an empty bottle of vodka still pressed to his lips."
Pun	A play on words	Intent is usually humor	"A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption."
Sarcasm	It is obvious from tone and context that the speaker means the opposite of what he/she says	usually intends to mock or ridicule something	"History teaches us that men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives."
<b>Composition patterns of development</b> - With any given group of ideas and details, an author might use any of a number of principles of organization, and any one of them would help the author and the reader. Some will be better than others, of course. Using the patterns is like putting together the pieces of a puzzle: most major paragraphs use at least one pattern, and most papers use several.			
Cause & Effect	start with a subject (an event, person, or object) and then show the causes (reasons) for it, and/or the effects (results) of it	establish connections	
Classification	break a large subject into categories	analysis	
Comparison/Contrast	process of showing how things are alike and different	frequently (but not always) demonstrates a preference for one thing over another - the trick is to allow the preference to grow out of the comparison without actually stating the obvious	
Definition	explain what something is	share an author's special understanding about some idea or thing	
Descriptive	tells what something is like	Let nouns and verbs do the work of description for you. With nouns, your readers will see; with verbs, they will feel.  Usually combined with other patterns	"When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick—one never does when a shot goes home—but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. (George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant")
Narrative	tells a story	the aim is to make some statement of significance – somewhere in the story there is a "so what?"	
Process	explains how something works or how something came to be as it is	leads the reader to a planned or otherwise expected outcome	