

Senior A.P. Language and Composition

Rhetorical Terms Part 1

- Alliteration** repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words that are close to one another: Mickey Mouse; Donald Duck; Daffy Duck; Suzy Sells Seashells ...
- Allusion** a reference to a well-known person, place, or thing from literature, history, etc. Example: Eden, Scrooge, Prodigal Son, Catch-22, Judas, Don Quixote, Mother Theresa
- Anaphora** Repetition of a word, phrase, or clause at the beginning of two or more sentences in a row. This is a deliberate form of repetition and helps make the writer's point more coherent. Examples:
- “There was the delight I caught in seeing long straight rows. There was the faint, cool kiss of sensuality. There was the vague sense of the infinite....”
- “We shall not flag or fail. 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.” Churchill.
- “So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado....” Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Antimetabole** Repetition of words in reverse order
- “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country....” Kennedy
- Antithesis** the presentation of two contrasting images. The ideas are balanced by word, phrase, clause, or paragraphs. Examples:
- “The world will little note, nor long **remember**, what we say here, but it can never **forget** what they did here.” Lincoln
- Archaic Diction** Old-fashioned or outdated choice of words
- Argument** Writing that attempts to prove a point through reasoning. Argument presses its case by using logic and by supporting its logic with examples and evidence.
- Asyndeton** Commas used (with no conjunction) to separate a series of words. The parts are emphasized equally when the conjunction is omitted; in addition, the use of commas with no intervening conjunction speeds up the flow of the sentence. Asyndeton takes the form of X, Y, Z as opposed to X, Y, and Z.
- “We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardships, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.” John F. Kennedy
- “... and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.” Abraham Lincoln

Ethos	Greek for “character.” Speakers appeal to ethos to demonstrate that they are credible and trustworthy to speak on a given topic. Ethos is established by who you are and what you say.
Inversion	reversing the customary (subject first, then verb, then complement) order of elements in a sentence or phrase; it is used effectively in many cases, such as posing a question: “Are you going to the store?” Usually, the element that appears first is emphasized more than the subject.
Juxtaposition	The placement of two things closely together to emphasize similarities or differences.
Logos	Greek for “embodied thought.” Speakers appeal to logos, or reason, by offering clear rational ideas and using specific details, examples, facts, statistics, or expert testimony to back them up
Metaphor	a figure of speech in which one thing is referred to as another; for example, “my love is a fragile flower”
Metonymy	a figure of speech that uses the name of an object, person, or idea to represent something with which it is associated, such as using “the crown” to refer to a monarch ; Also, “The pen is mightier than the sword.”
Oxymoron	paradoxical juxtaposition of words that seem to contradict one another
Parallelism	similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses "The loss we felt was not the loss of ham but the loss of pig." (E. B. White) "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal." (T.S. Eliot)
Pathos	Greek for “suffering” or “experience.” Speakers appeal to pathos to emotionally motivate their audience. More specific appeals to pathos might play on the audience’s values, desires, and hopes, on the one hand, or fears and prejudices, on the other
Personification	the attribution of human qualities to a nonhuman or an inanimate object
Polysyndeton	The deliberate use of multiple conjunctions between coordinate phrases, clauses, or words “I paid for my plane ticket, and the taxes, and the fees, and the charge for the checked bag, and five dollars for a bottle of water.”
Rhetorical Question	one that does not expect an explicit answer. It is used to pose an idea to be considered by the speaker or audience.
Synecdoche	a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to represent a whole, such as using “boards” to mean a stage or “wheels” to mean a car – or “All hands on deck.”
Zeugma	Use of two different words in a grammatically similar way that produces different, often incongruous, meanings. Examples: "He carried a strobe light and the responsibility for the lives of his men." Tim O'Brien "[H]e was alternately cudgelling his brains and his donkey when, passing the workhouse, his eyes encountered the bill on the gate." (Charles Dickens)