

Rhetorical Devices

Some specific techniques to appeal to audiences

What are rhetorical devices?

We know about the rhetorical situation, but...

- Rhetoric - the art of persuasion
- Rhetorical devices - specific techniques used to persuade people



Figurative Language as Rhetorical Devices

- Hyperbole
 - A bold, deliberate overstatement
- Understatement
 - Purposely downplaying a situation
- Personification
 - Giving human-like qualities to non-human things
- Metaphor
 - A comparison between two unrelated things
- Simile
 - A comparison between two unrelated things using “like” or “as”
- Vivid imagery
 - Providing detail that appeals to the five senses
- Purposeful repetition

Other Rhetorical Devices

- Using seemingly unnecessary words to introduce an idea
 - Sounds conversational & informal
 - Ex. Right. Okay. Here goes...
- Juxtaposition of ideas
 - Putting two ideas/things next to each other to force a comparison
- Repeating a word/phrase by putting it at the end of a sentence and the beginning of the next sentence
 - Ex. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.

Other Rhetorical Devices

- Rhetorical questions
 - Questions posed to make the reader/audience think
 - May or may not be answered directly afterward
- Stating a pair of ideas, then swapping the order in the next sentence
 - Ex. Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.
- Numbering a series of ideas to consider
 - Looks organized
 - Appeals to logos

Appeals to Pathos

- Appealing to “universal” human values
 - Ex. Puppies and kittens being abused is sad
- Appealing to specific audience values
 - Ex. Parents care about their children’s education
- Personal anecdotes
 - True stories about author’s experiences
 - Help put the audience in the author’s shoes
 - Connect to audience’s memories