

Rhetorical Terms

Rhetoric: The art of using language effectively.

1. Writer's purpose
2. Writer's consideration of audience
3. Exploration of subject
4. Arrangement and organization of ideas
5. Style and tone of expression
6. Form

Diction: Word choice

Syntax: Sentence Structure

Tone: The attitude of the author toward the subject, characters, and/or audience

Term	Definition	Example
Imagery	Using words and phrases to appeal to the five senses	He whiffed the aroma of the freshly brewed coffee.
Simile	Comparison between 2 different things using "like" or "as"	She is as slow as a snail.
Metaphor	One thing is referred to as another (no like or as)	He is the black sheep of the family.
Personification	Attributing human qualities to non-human things	The flowers danced in the breeze.
Anecdote	Short, simple narrative of an incident; often used for humorous effect or to make a point	Varied.
Hyperbole	Overstatement; exaggeration for effect	It's a million degrees in here!
Understatement	Minimizing something for effect	(When the temperature is -20) "It was a bit cold today."
Irony	When the actual outcome/meaning of something is opposite to what is expected	I posted a video on YouTube about how boring and useless YouTube is.
Antithesis	Balancing contrasting ideas	Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice.
Paradox	Seemingly contradictory statement with underlying truth	I can resist anything but temptation. – Oscar Wilde
Allusion	Reference to another work or famous figure well-known enough to be recognized by the reader	"Don't unlock that Pandora's box!"
Colloquialism	The use of informal words, phrases, or even slang	"Gonna;" "wanna;" "ya'll"
Parallelism	Technique of using words (phrases/clauses/sentences) by placing them side by side and making them <i>similar in structure</i> (also referred to as parallel structure)	Like father, like son. To err is human; to forgive divine.
Repetition	Repeating the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer	Because I do not hope to turn again Because I do not hope Because I do not hope to turn... --"Ash Wednesday" by T.S. Eliot
Asyndeton	Omission of conjunctions between words/phrases	He eats, sleeps, drinks.
Polysyndeton	Use of conjunctions rather than commas to connect words/phrases	He eats and sleeps and drinks.
Metonymy	Substitute symbol for whole	The pen is mightier than the sword.
Synecdoche	A part of something use to represent the whole	"Nice wheels!" "All hands on deck!"
Litotes	(a form of understatement); Saying the opposite of what we mean; often ironic or affirmation by using the negative	"Hey Stretch!" (to a short person) "I'm not entirely without appetite."
Denotation	Dictionary definition of a word	Wall: physical barrier
Connotation	Implied or suggested meaning of a word because of its association in a reader's mind	Wall: emotional barrier
Logos	When a writer uses logic to persuade an audience	Facts; statistics; comparison/contrast
Ethos	When a writer uses credibility to persuade an audience	Citing experience, educational background, reputable sources, etc.
Pathos	When a writer appeals to an audience's emotions	Evoking pain, pity, sympathy, love, etc.

Tone Words

Angry	Condescending	Dramatic	Tired
Sharp	Sympathetic	Objective	Sentimental
Upset	Contemptuous	Sad	Detached
Silly	Sympathetic	Mocking	Bitter
Boring	Apologetic	Accusatory	Giddy
Afraid	Humorous	Cold	Shocking
Happy	Horrific	Peaceful	Restrained
Hollow	Sarcastic	Urgent	Somber
Joyful	Seductive	Confused	Proud
Sweet	Pitiful	Joking	Provocative
Allusive	Fanciful	Childish	Zealous
Irreverent	Complimentary	Nostalgic	Poignant
Vibrant	Benevolent	Vexed	Candid
Didactic	Frivolous	Audacious	Callous