Language of argument

What Is a Rhetorical Feature?

"Rhetoric" means "persuasion," and a rhetorical feature is any characteristic of a text that helps convince readers of a certain point of view. Writers use a host of strategies to construct texts that are logically ordered, that establish their credibility and that appeal to their target audience.

- A beginning with a clear, main statement.
- Evidence - facts, statistics etc. to prove their point
- A structure that is planned and logical. It is coherent.
- Formal language - avoid emotion
- A conclusion that draws together the main points for the argument

Found in speeches, debates, opinion pieces, articles, newspapers, scientific journals, legal documents

Techniques

1. **Quotations**: are an instrument to prove your point of view is correct. They lend another voice, support and opinion to your point. They can give the impression that the writer is just one of many people who feel this way and can imply that the writer's opinion is shared by independent, learned individuals. A quote can be an effective way to begin or end a piece written in the language of argument. "'*Some say the world will end in fire; some say in ice' neither will be our fate".* From al Gore's Nobel Prize acceptance speech He uses the apt quote to support his view that climate action is needed immediately.

2. **Personal pronoun** moves to **collective pronoun:** beginning with the personal to connect with the audience and moves to include the audience and attempts to include the audience in the same point of view

3. **Addresses the audience directly**: this can be achieved through using the second person 'YOU' or the **imperative**. Both engage the audience and establish a connect and help to sustain attention.

4. **Epigrammatic language**: An epigram is a short but insightful statement, often in verse form, which communicates a thought in a witty, paradoxical, or funny way. Epigrams show that the truth can be conveyed concisely and wittily.

   a. *I can resist everything but temptation -* Oscar Wilde This brief epigram by Oscar Wilde is remarkably witty: temptation, is by definition, something we attempt to resist. By saying he can resist everything but temptation, the speaker is also saying he can resist nothing.

   b. *There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.* This statement illustrates the [paradoxical] side of many epigrams.

   c. Consider the quote *by the actress Audrey Hepburn:*

      1. *The best thing to hold onto in life is each other.*

      ii.

5. **Definitions:** the formal statement of the meaning or significance of a word which makes a topic clear and distinct.

6. **Lists:** a neat and organised approach to provided detailed evidence.

7. **Varying sentence lengths:** provide a tempo to the writing, making it more engaging.

8. **Poetic, descriptive or metaphorical language:** adds to the beauty of the language and make it more absorbing and creative.

9. **Punctuation:** provides order, tempo and clarity to a piece.

10. **Alliterative language:** adds a musical quality to the language, making it memorable.

11. **Parallelism:** is the use of components in a [sentence] that are grammatically the same; or similar in their construction, sound, meaning, or [meter]. Parallelism examples are found in literary works as well as in ordinary conversations:

    a. Like father, like son.

b. Easy come, easy go.

c. Whether in class, at work, or at home, Shasta was always busy.

d. Flying is fast, comfortable, and safe.

e.

12. **Repetition** - triads - often words repeated in three for emphasis

13. **Hyperbole**: Hyperbole, derived from a Greek word meaning "over-casting," is a [figure of speech](#) that involves an [exaggeration](#) of ideas for the sake of emphasis.

14. **Imperative**: Definition of **Imperative** Sentence An **imperative** sentence is a type of sentence that gives instructions or advice, and expresses a command, an order, a direction, or a request.

15. **Facts and figures** are given, but they are carefully chosen to support the point the writer is making. Using statistics can make the writer's case seem well researched and therefore more credible. " Repeated polling has found that a majority of Americans believe that they have a right to own a gun while at the same time a majority also believes that there is a need for stricter firearm law enforcement. Relative to enacting new gun laws, however, the support drops to a minority; only 43 percent believe new laws would be more effective in reducing gun violence in the United States than the better enforcement of existing laws."

16. **'Persuader' words and phrases** can be used to good effect:

- Clearly
- Plainly
- Surely
- Undoubtedly
- Obviously
- As we all know...
- Everybody is fully aware that...

These words and phrases make the reader feel that they, and everybody else, has always agreed with the statement being made. The information now takes on the appearance of being a well-known, established fact. The reader feels that if he or she does not agree with the statement, then he or she is in a minority.

Logos, Ethos, Pathos

The rhetorical features of a text can be broken down into three main categories: logos, pathos and ethos. Often referred to as the "rhetorical triangle," these three elements intertwine to create persuasive arguments for a specific audience. Logos deals with a text's content, structure and reasoning. Pathos deals with the audience's sympathy toward certain kinds of perspectives. Ethos deals with the author's expertise or ability to draw on authoritative sources. The ways in which writers create and appeal to logos, pathos and ethos involves certain uses of language, such as precise organization, word play and figurative language.

Form and Organization

Textual form and organization are rhetorical features that create a text's logos, and they can also affect a text's pathos and ethos. For all textual forms — such as plays, novels, speeches, letters, essays, poems — composers need to decide which organizational option will work best for a specific audience. For example, if you're writing a persuasive letter and worry that your busy audience might not read the whole thing, you might want to lead with the point you think will most strongly affect the readers (pathos) while establishing your authority (ethos) right away. If you are certain your audience will read to the end, a rhetorical strategy of building from the least to most crucial points might have a more lasting effect, since readers often best remember the last point they read.

Word Play

Rhetorical features on the level of sentences and phrases include a vast array of rhetorical figures, including repetition of initial phrases (anaphora), parallelism, chiasmus and alliteration. A passage from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech uses all four of these features in a strong appeal to pathos: "Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee! Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi! From every mountainside, let freedom ring." Anaphora occurs with the

repeated initial phrase, "Let freedom ring." Parallelism, the repetition of syntactic structures, occurs in the first two sentences, since both begin with the phrase "Let freedom ring" and end with the phrase "from [a place]." In the final sentence, we see chiasmus, which is the opposite of parallelism. It inverts the syntactic structure we just saw: First, we get "From [a place]," then "let freedom ring." Finally, alliteration, the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of nearby words, occurs with the "m" sounds in "molehill," "Mississippi" and "mountainside."

Figurative Language

A host of rhetorical appeals to logos, pathos and ethos rely on figurative language, or language that communicates something other than its literal sense. These include figures of comparison (metaphor, simile and analogy), figures that describe something by its associations (metonymy and synecdoche) and figures of irony (verbal, situational and dramatic irony; sarcasm; hyperbole and litotes). Figurative language can operate at any scale from the sentence level to the entire composition. For example, Shakespeare uses analogy in a pithy quotation from "Romeo and Juliet": "What's in a name? that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet; / So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd, / Retain that dear perfection which he owes / Without that title." According to Juliet, the best attributes of Romeo and roses have nothing to do with their arbitrary names. John Donne, in contrast, takes an entire 36-line poem ("A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning") to compare separated lovers to the legs of a compass.

Sample texts: 2019 comprehension Text1: "What is art for"

https://www.examinations.ie/tmp/1567502707_7040983.pdf

Language of Persuasion

- The language of persuasion is similar in many ways to the language of argument. Both **outline a case** for or against a particular point of view.
- The difference is that the language of persuasion deliberately tries to **influence** the reader by appealing to his or her emotions, not reason.
- **Manipulation** can be a major part of the language of persuasion.
- It often plays on the reader's conscience, making him or her feel guilty or pressurised into agreeing with the case being made.
- It can also **flatter** the reader into agreeing; this is a common technique in advertising, 'As a discerning customer, we know you want nothing but the best', etc. Strong, emotive language can be used to win the reader over.
- The word **'We'** is often used instead of 'I' to draw the reader in and make him or her feel on the same side as the writer.

Found in advertising, speeches, articles, newspapers

Techniques

1. **Anecdotes:** Anecdotes and humorous pieces are not only jokes, but exquisite [literary devices](#) as well. Their primary purpose is to stir up laughter, to disclose a truth in a general way, or to describe a feature of a character in such a way that it becomes humorous, and at the same time gives us a better understanding of the character. Anecdotes may also serve as cautions. Writers tell their readers about the possibilities of future happenings, in case they do not follow particular processes and techniques.
1. **Adjectives** and **adverbs** are used freely and they are often quite extreme.
2. The writer's **opinion** is usually crystal clear from the opening sentence.
3. **Facts and figures** may be given but they may be vague or exaggerated, 'The vast majority of people', 'Almost every student in the country', etc. This can aid the manipulative effect of persuasive writing, the implication is often there that if you don't agree, you are going against popular opinion and you don't fit in. Obviously, this is very useful in advertising. Generalisations are used without the support of a source – watch out for 'All' or 'Every'.

4. **Rhetorical questions,** an argument framed in the form of a question to which there can be only one possible answer, may be used. 'Why should we allow our parents to rule every aspect of our lives?' (Answer expected – we shouldn't.) Aoife O'Driscoll 2011 Page 10 of 14

5. **'Persuader' words** can be used to good effect: Clearly Plainly Surely Undoubtedly Obviously

6. **Superlatives**: utmost degree of something - biggest, brightest

7. **Imperatives:** Definition of **Imperative** Sentence An **imperative** sentence is a type of sentence that gives instructions or advice, and expresses a command, an order, a direction, or a request.

8. **Alliteration**:adds a musical quality to the language, making it memorable

9. **Personal opinion and anecdotes** are often used.

10. **Humour**

11. **Emotional Language**