**Rhetorical Devices-** English 12

*Rhetorical devices* are tools that writers use to make their work effective and interesting.

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| **Rhetorical Device** | **Definition** | **Example** |
| Rhetorical Question | A question posed that is not intended to be answered | Will the rain ever stop? |
| Pathos | The use of emotional appeal in persuasion. Often involves evoking readers’ sympathy. |  |
| Jargon | Specialized vocabulary used by a particular group of people | Medical terminology; words known by those who participate in a certain sport (in rock climbing- jug [big hold], crimp [tiny hold]) |
| Anecdote | A narrative of a presumably true incident used to illustrate a point. |  |
| Slang | Informal language used by a particular group of people at a particular time |  |
| Allusion | Reference to something or someone that the reader is expected to recognize (literary figure, historical, mythological or Biblical reference) |  |
| Caricature | Exaggeration of the features or qualities of a person in order to make him/her appear ridiculous | *Caricature* can also be used visually, often for political cartoons. |
| Irony | The recognition of a difference between reality (what is) and appearance (what seems to be) | *Verbal irony:* a difference between what is said and what is meant.  *Situational irony:* a situation where events turn out opposite to what we have been led to expect will happen.  *Dramatic irony:* when the audience or reader knows something the character(s) do not. |
| Parody | A composition that ridicules another work by mimicking the style and language of the original |  |
| Pun | A humorous play on the sound and meaning of words | In *Romeo and Juliet*, Mercutio says to Romeo as he dies, “Ask for me tomorrow and you will find me a *grave* man.” |
| Satire | Mocking a subject with the purpose of provoking positive change in humanity or society. | *A Modest Proposal* is a satire wherein the author, Jonathan Swift, proposes that poor Irish people should eat their children. The work is actually commenting on the inhumane policies the Irish government of the time had towards its poorer population, and hopes to change that by drawing attention to it. |
| Cliché | An expression that has lost its original power through overuse |  |
| Colloquialism | Informal language used in everyday conversation, often where the literal meaning is different from the colloquial meaning. | “What’s up?” to mean “How are you doing?” or “What’s going on in your life?” |
| Contrast (antithesis) | The juxtaposition (placing side by side) of opposing ideas | Sometimes we have to be cruel to be kind. |
| Euphemism | The use of mild language to disguise a painful, unpleasant, or distasteful topic | Saying, “He has passed on” rather than “He died.” |
| Repetition | Repeating words or phrases for emphasis |  |
| Imagery | The use of descriptive language; language that appeals to the senses |  |
| Hyperbole | Over-exaggeration for effect | Until the board makes its decision, the whole school holds its breath. |
| Parallel Structure | Using similar grammatical structures to build rhythm and emphasis |  |
| Sound devices | Using the sounds of words to add to the effectiveness of writing | Alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, rhyme. |
| Emotive language | Language that evokes emotion in the reader | Imagine being cast out into the street, cold, lonely, and frightened. |
| Sarcasm | Saying one thing but meaning something else, usually with the purpose of mocking or amusing |  |

Below are examples of **figurative language:** language that is suggestive, not literal.

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| Simile | A comparison between two unlike things using the words like, as, or than in order to highlight qualities of one of them. | The witch’s voice was like thunder and her eyes flashed like lightning bolts in her fury. |
| Metaphor | A comparison between two unlike things **without** using the words like, as, or than in order to highlight qualities of one of them. | The furious witch’s voice thundered and lightning bolts flashed in her eyes. |
| Personification | Giving human qualities to non-human things. | The tall grass waved at us in the wind as we passed. |
| Oxymoron | A contradiction in terms, like a compressed paradox. | “minor crisis,” “deafening silence,” “old news” |