

## What is a Rhetorical Strategy?

-----Anything that a writer does consciously can be a rhetorical strategy. -----

Some common strategies that have to do with words, phrases, expressions, images, or figurative language:

- **Diction**--The use of words with significant connotations (what the word implies) or denotations (how the word would be defined in a dictionary)
- **Details** – What the author chooses to include or leave out.
- **Imagery** – language that evokes one or all of the five senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching.
- **Metaphor and symbolism** – Non-literal, imaginative substitutions in which, for instance, a tree becomes a metaphor for family, or springtime symbolizes rebirth
- **Metonymy**—The use of a concrete image to represent a more abstract concept (such as the use of “the press” to represent journalists and the work they do)
- **Synecdoche**—A figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole, the whole for a part, the specific for the general, the general for the specific, or the material for the thing made from it (If I say, “Use your head,” I’ve used synecdoche because I’m really telling you to use your brain, which is part of your head.)
- **Point of View/ Narrator**— Usually first or third person. First person tends to be more subjective. Third person tends to be more objective. Sometimes, first, third, or even second person (you) is a significant strategy.
- **Anecdote**—A short account of a particular incident or event.
- **Analogy**— The comparison of two pairs that have the same relationship. The key is to ascertain the relationship between the first so you can choose the correct second pair.
- **Hyperbole**—Exaggeration or overstatement.
- **Personification**—giving human qualities to non-human subjects
- **Allusion**—An indirect reference to something (without directly stating it) real or fictional, to someone, some event, or something in the Bible, history, literature, or any phase of culture.
- **Irony (verbal)**—An expression, often humorous or sarcastic, that expresses what is not expected, and often, the opposite of what is expected
- **Oxymoron**--- A statement or situation that reveals a kind of truth, which at first seems contradictory

Strategies that have to do with the artful arrangement of words:

- **Conscious choices in syntax** (variations in sentence complexity or length)
- **Juxtaposition**—Placement of two ideas closely together to emphasize comparison or contrast.  
*Example: Beauty catches the attention, but character catches the heart.*
- **Antithesis**—Placement of opposing or contrasting ideas in a parallel construction for the purpose of emphasis.  
*Example: That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind. --Neil Armstrong*

- **Parallelism**—Repetition of similar grammatical constructions in successive clauses/sentences.

Example: *The winds all feel it and know it and tell it.* – J. Muir

Specific forms of parallelism:

- **Anadiplosis**—Using the word (s) from the end of one clause/sentence to start the next:

Example:

*Things were tough all over, but it was better that way. That way you could tell the other guy was human too.* – S.E. Hinton

- **Anaphora**—Using the same word (s) at beginning of successive (in a row) clauses/sentences:

Example:

*He could feel the dark air like water; he could feel the dew under his feet.*—W.Faulkner

- **Epistrophe**—Using the same word (s) at the end of successive clauses/sentence:

Example: *The wagon has not stopped; time has not stopped.* – W. Faulkner

- **Isocolon**—Precisely parallel structures (same number, types, and pattern of words in each phrase/clause):

Example:

*Every nation has its own traditions, its own values, its own aspirations.* – J. Kennedy

- **Chiasmus**— Inverting the second of two parallel phrases:

Example:

*Mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind.* –J. Kennedy

# Aristotelian Appeals

The goal of argumentative writing is to persuade your audience that your ideas are valid, or more valid than someone else's.

More than two thousand years ago, Greek philosopher Aristotle identified three types of appeals that a speaker or writer might use to persuade an audience.

Aristotle's "ingredients for persuasion" – otherwise known as "appeals" – are known by the names of "ethos," "pathos," and "logos." They are all means of persuading others to take a particular point of view.

## **Logos**

Appeals to the head using logic, numbers, explanations, and facts. Through Logos, a writer aims at a person's intellect. The idea is that if you are logical, you will understand.

## **Ethos**

Appeals to the conscience, ethics, morals, standards, values, principles. Often based on the credibility or qualifications of the speaker/writer.

## **Pathos**

Appeals to the heart, emotions, sympathy, passions, sentimentality.