## RHETORICAL TERMS

### BASIC ARGUMENT AND RHETORIC TERMS

**Rhetoric**  
The art of using language purposefully. When trying to argue and persuade someone of something, we think carefully of how we might best achieve our goal, and we pick particular words because of their effect.

**Persuasion**  
To cause a person to believe or do something by reasoning with him or her.

**Argument**  
Expresses a position on an issue and supports that position with reasons and evidence. An argument often takes into account other points of view, anticipating and answers objects that opponents to the issue might raise.

**Counterargument**  
An argument that negates objections to a claim that the “other side” is likely to raise. A good argument anticipates opposing viewpoints and provides counterarguments to refute (disprove) or answer them.

### BASIC PERSUASIVE APPEALS

**Ethos**  
An appeal based on the **character of the speaker**. This appeal is based on whether or not the audience perceives the speaker as someone who is morally competent, trustworthy, and knowledgeable on the subject about which s/he is speaking.

**Example**  
A doctor advertising a prescription drug

**Pathos**  
An appeal to **emotions or feelings** including fear, humor, romance, compassion, etc…

**Example**  
Commercials aimed at convincing people to donate to animal rights organizations which depict suffering and injured animals

**Logos**  
An appeal to **logic or rational reasoning**. If you can explain real-life cause and effect and if/then situations, and make reasonable comparisons using **facts and figures** that can be verified, then you are using **logos**.

**Example**  
“Offshore oil drilling is a constant hazard and should be seriously reconsidered. Since 2001, over 1400 accidents involving offshore drilling platforms have occurred.”

**Kairos**  
The opportune moment; the timeliness of an argument and the most opportune ways to make it—called a “kairotic moment”

**Example**  
a documentary about an event released within a year or so of the actual event; Ronald Reagan’s “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall” speech or Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream...” speech
TYPES OF LOGICAL REASONING

Deductive Reasoning
A way of thinking in which one arrives at a conclusion by applying a general principle to a specific situation.

*Syllogism* (All A are B; All B are C; therefore, all A are C.) is one of the types of deductive reasoning.

**Example**
General Principle: Any student caught cheating will be suspended.
Specific Situation: Jeremiah was caught cheating.
Conclusion: Jeremiah will be suspended.

Inductive Reasoning
A way of thinking in which one arrives at a conclusion by looking at specific evidence and using it to form a general principle/draw a conclusion.

When dealing with inductive reasoning, be sure that
a) the evidence used is valid and provides sufficient support for the conclusion.
   b) the writer doesn't overgeneralize or draw a conclusion that is too broad

**Example**
Fact #1: Fewer than one hundred Arizona agave century plants remain in existence.
Fact #2: Over the last three generations, there has been a fifty percent reduction in the number of elephants.
Fact #3: Only fifty Hawaiian crows are left in the world.
Conclusion: Extinction is a problem facing many classes of living things.

RHETORICAL STRUCTURES AND DEVICES

Repetition
Using the same word, words, or structure more than once for emphasis.

**Example**
“Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces ancient hatreds among the nations with comity and peace. Freedom is the victor.” – Ronald Reagan

Amplification
Repeating a word or expression while adding more detail to it in order to emphasize what might otherwise be passed over.

**Example**
“Pride – boundless pride – is the bane of civilization.”
“He showed a rather simple taste, a taste for good art, good food, and good friends.”
“In my hunger after ten days of rigorous dieting I saw visions of ice cream – mountains of creamy, luscious ice cream, dripping with gooey syrup and calories.”

Parallelism (Parallel Structure)
Repetition of words, phrases, or sentences that have the same grammatical structure or that state a similar idea.

**Example:**
“Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge, to make America what it ought to be.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Chiasmus
A statement consisting of two parallel parts in which the second part is structurally reversed. Think *inverted parallelism*.

**Example:**
“It is boring to eat; to sleep is fulfilling.”
“He knowingly led, and we followed blindly.”
Antithesis A statement in which sharply contrasting words, phrases, clauses, or sentences are juxtaposed to emphasize a point. In true antithesis, both the ideas and the grammatical structures are balanced.

**Example:**
“Life can be kind and cruel, full of hope and heartache.”
“War is not fought to achieve joy, but to avoid pain.”

Anaphora The same expression (word or words) is repeated at the beginning of two or more successive clauses or sentences.

**Example:**
“But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground.” – Abraham Lincoln

Epistrophe Repetition of a word, phrase, or clause at the end of successive phrases, clauses, or sentences (the counterpart to anaphora).

**Example**
“In our old age we laugh at our past, sigh for our past, cry out over our past.”

Asyndeton A construction in which elements are presented in a series without conjunctions.

**Example**
“Jockeying for room on the table were turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, pies, rolls, butter, cranberry sauce, a cornucopia of vegetables.”

Polysyndeton The use, for rhetorical effect, of more conjunctions than are necessary or natural.

**Example**
“His hair and face and eyes and mouth combined to form an image of absolute power.”

Rhetorical Question A question posed for its persuasive effect without the expectation of a reply.

**Examples:**
“Do we then submit to our oppressor?”

Hypophora Raising one or more questions and then proceeding to answer them, usually at some length. A common usage is to ask the question at the beginning of a paragraph and then use that paragraph to answer it.

**Example**
“How do we know this to be true? We have observed it in the lab.”
“Why should you vote for me? I’ll give you five good reasons…”

**SYNTAX TERMS**

Loose Sentence A sentence which makes complete sense if brought to a close before its actual ending. Avoid many loose sentences in a paragraph or endlessly stringing clauses together with conjunctions.

**Example:**
“He rode where he would always choose to ride, out where the western fork of the old Comanche road coming out of the Kiowa country to the north passed through the westernmost section of the ranch.” – Cormac McCarthy

Periodic Sentence A sentence which makes complete sense only once the end of the sentence is reached.

**Example:**
“No man of common humanity, no man who had any value for his character, could be capable of it.” – Jane Austen
Balanced Sentence  A sentence in which the phrases and clauses balance each other by virtue of their likeness of structure, meaning, or length.

**Example:**
"He wasn't being nervous; he was being prevented." – Toni Morrison

Natural Order  A sentence in which the subject comes before the predicate.

**Example:** *Oranges grow in California.*

Inverted Order  A sentence in which the predicate comes before the subject.

**Example:** *In California grow oranges.*

Split Order  A sentence in which the subject divides the predicate into two parts.

**Example:** *In California, oranges grow.*

**LITERARY TERMS FREQUENTLY FOUND IN NONFICTION**

**Simile**  A *direct* comparison between two dissimilar objects which usually uses "like" or "as" to make the comparison.

**Example:**
"The Roman road runs straight and bare / As the pale parting-line in hair." – Thomas Hardy

**Metaphor**  An *indirect* comparison between two dissimilar objects without using "like" or "as" to make the comparison.

**Example:**
"Truth is a hard deer to hunt."

**Personification**  The giving of human qualities or characteristics to non-human things.

**Example:**
"The trees are undressing, and fling in many places - / On the gray road, the roof, the window sill - / Their radiant robes and ribbons and yellow laces.” – Thomas Hardy

**Hyperbole**  Overstatement; the exaggeration of truth for emphasis or humorous effect.

**Example:**
"That limousine is as long as an ocean liner!"

**Litotes**  A type of understatement in which an idea is expressed by negating its opposite.

**Example:**
Using "She was not unmindful" to mean "She gave careful attention."

**Mythological Allusion**  A brief, indirect reference to a character or event in mythology.

**Example:**
"Galveston had become Atlantis." (an allusion to the lost city of Atlantis)

**Literary Allusion**  A brief, indirect reference to a work of literature or a part of that work of literature.

**Example:**
"In all of her dealings, she was a regular Madame Defarge." (an allusion to *A Tale of Two Cities*)
**Historical Allusion**  A brief, indirect reference to an historical event, person, place, or object.

*Example:*

“Our business is doing so very poorly that I feel like, no matter what we try to do to make it better, we’re just rearranging furniture on the *Titanic.*” (an allusion to the sinking of the *Titanic*)

**Biblical Allusion**  A brief, indirect reference to a story, figure, or passage from the Bible.

*Example:*

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.” (an allusion to the story of Babylon in the Bible from people who are NOT in Babylon)

**Anecdote**  A short narrative detailing particulars of an interesting episode or event. Unlike a short story, it lacks complications of plot and subtleties of character.

**Pun**  A play on the multiple meanings of a word or on two words that sound alike but have different meanings.

*Example: When is a doctor most annoyed? When he runs out of patients.*