Rhetorical Devices

How to Persuade Your Audience

Persuasive Appeals: 3 Ways to Be Persuasive

* Ethos
  + The credibility or character (ethic) of the speaker
    - Speaker’s own expertise, pedigree, objectivity, intelligence, etc.
  + The appeal to authority
    - Credibility of expert sources as support
* Pathos
  + The emotional appeal
    - Striking an emotional chord with audience (e.g., empathy, indignation, etc.)
    - storytelling, evocative examples, analogies, choice of language
* Logos
  + The appeal to logic & listeners’ rational side
    - Statistics, facts and analogous examples (e.g., historical, literal) as support

Rhetorical Devices (You must use **at least 2** **of these** in your essay)

**Structural Devices**

* Epigraph
  + Quote set at the beginning of a work or section of a work to set a tone or suggest a theme
    - May also take the form of a rhetorical question or statement
* Theme
  + Central or dominant idea or concern of a work
    - Your core message (e.g., impact, benefit, paradigm shift)
* Foreshadowing
  + Hinting at or presenting things to come in a story
    - Various forms of the recommendation first approach
* Juxtaposition
  + Placing two items side by side for effect

**Linguistic Devices**

* Anaphora
  + regular repetition of the same word of phrase at the beginning of successive sentences or clauses
    - e.g., We are thorough. We are driven. We are right.
* Alliteration
  + repetition of same initial consonant (or any vowel) in proximal words
    - e.g., this solution is practical, principled and profitable
* Asyndeton
  + removing conjunctions (often replaced with pauses)
    - This man was negligent, thoughtless, unethical.
* Parallel structure
  + Using syntactically similar grammatical structure
    - e.g., “I once was lost, but now I’m found”, the costs far outweigh the benefits

**Substantive Devices**

* Analogy
  + A comparison of two different things to make a point about their similarity (can include metaphor and simile)
  + Used to communicate new, complex or controversial ideas
    - e.g., business and war, “band-aid” solutions, throwing a monkey wrench in the system
* Personification/animism
  + Giving something inanimate human or animal characteristics
    - e.g., numbers don’t lie, profits will soar
* Axiom
  + Statement that is regarded as true or self evident
    - e.g., “He who fails to plan, plans to fail”
* Aphorism
  + Short memorable philosophical statements designed to illustrate a commonly held belief
    - e.g., “Hire slowly, fire quickly”, “A business that makes nothing but money is a poor kind of business”
  + Adage: an aphorism that has gained credibility through longevity
    - e.g., “Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched”

Other Suggestions for Being Persuasive

**Vocabulary & Phrasing**

* Maintain an appropriate level of formality to be taken seriously
  + You or your firm instead of you guys
* Enunciate clearly and finish all words
  + Going to instead of gonna
* Use strong language
  + Recommend, demonstrate and prove instead of feel
  + Will do instead of kinda, maybe, sorta, like
* Use active voice
  + Somebody killed him instead of he was killed