

## ***RHETORICAL DEVICES***

**ANECDOTE:** a short narrative giving particulars of an interesting episode or event

*When I was in Mike's Mart the other day I noticed a sign saying only three students allowed at a time. The sign made me realize that adults are often guilty of painting all teenagers with the same brush.*

**ALLUSION:** (historical, literary, Biblical, popular) a figure of speech that refers to an historical, Biblical, pop culture or literary figure, event or object  
-it is a short way of making a point and relies on the reader knowing what you are referring to

*He's no Brad Pitt.  
The teacher was like another Stalin.*

**STATISTICS:** quantitative data pertaining to a subject or group

*40% of all high school students drop out before they are 16 years old.*

**HUMOUR:** the quality of anything that is funny or appeals to the comic sense

**SARCASM:** a form of verbal irony which, disguised as praise, is a bitter expression of personal disapproval

*Oh, good job.*

**CITING AUTHORITY:** attempting to prove something by the endorsement of a high power

*A.C. Bradley, renown Shakespearian critic, states that Macbeth's tragic flaw is ambition.*

**IRONY:** the recognition that reality is different than appearance

**EXAGGERATION:** to make something seem greater than it actually is

*Bela Lugosi became so famous as Dracula that blood banks locked their doors when they saw him coming.*

**PARALLELISM:** the arrangement of parts of a sentence, sentences, and paragraphs so that one element of equal importance with another is similarly developed and phrased.

*Co-ordinate ideas have co-ordinate presentation.*

*Raymond Burr left B.C. to become a star in Hollywood; he returned to B.C. to become a real estate agent in T.V. commercials.*

**RHETORICAL QUESTION:** a question used for effect and not requiring a reply - used in persuasion - the question is obvious and only one answer is possible

*Do Canadian actors have to leave home to make their fortune?*

*Should children be allowed to play with guns?*

**SENTENCE VARIETY:** using short and long sentences for effect - use a short sentence after a series of long sentences for effect

*A soft breath fluttered on his lips as John looked at his beloved wife. His eyes slowly closed and his body became still. He was dead.*

**SENTENCE STRUCTURE:** using abnormal words order

*Normal: Bob and Doug, the outrageous McKenzie brothers, came fro the Great White North to American television screens.*

*Abnormal: From the Great White North to American television screens came Bob and Doug, the outrageous McKenzie brothers.*

**PERIODIC SENTENCE:** a sentence not grammatically complete before its end - holds the idea in suspense before the final revelation

*Not only was Chief Dan George a longshoreman, a logger, a fisherman, honorary chief of the Squamish Indians, but, in his sixties, he received an Academy Award nomination as a movie star.*

**DIRECT ADDRESS:** directing comments to the reader

*I'm sure you will agree that there is nothing lovelier than a fresh snowfall.*

**PUN:** a play on words; a word with two meaning, one of which is humourous

*Michael Sarrazin was murdered twice in The Reincarnation of Peter Proud. Now that's overkill!*

**COLLOQUIALISM:** an expression used in formal conversation but accepted universally in formal speech or writing (between formal and slang)

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:**      Simile- a comparison using “like” or “as”  
   Metaphor - a comparison not using “like” or “as”  
   Personification - giving human qualities to animals,  
   ideas or inanimate objects

**UNDERSTATEMENT:** a figure of speech in which the literal sense of what is said falls detectably short (or “under”) the magnitude of what is being talked about.

*Arnold Schwarzenegger has had some success as a movie actor; he starred in Terminator and True Lies.*

**CONNOTATIVE LANGUAGE:** language with emotional implications

*The paper ball arced gracefully through the air only to bounce lightly off the surprised teacher’s nose.*

*Launched with deadly accuracy, the paper ball sliced rocket-like across the classroom hitting the shocked teacher full in the face.*

**REPETITION:** the repeating of a word or phrase to emphasize a point or to create flow

*When I was a child, I understood as a child, and I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put childish things away.*

**NON-SENTENCE FRAGMENT:** the use of a sentence fragment to provide emphasis or answer a question.

*Who co-starred in Superman? Canada’s Margot Kidder.  
Lights! Camera! Action!*