

INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 9

TASK 9 CLOSE READING: *Rhetorical Devices*

Part of analyzing an author's effectiveness in choice of words, phrases or text structure is understanding a variety of rhetorical devices. When students closely read a text for examples of rhetorical devices they are also examining how an author uses and refines key terms to create a compelling argument or explanation. This task can be used with any text but might be best used when studying the content and style of political speeches. Also, the consider student knowledge of rhetorical devices; if this is the first time they are encountering these it might be beneficial to limit the list to a teacher selected set and expand the list as student familiarity with rhetorical devices improves.

Steps Outlined:

1. Select a text for student analysis. Review this text prior to student use, looking for rhetorical devices. Based on the text review, students and goals, edit the attached AP Rhetorical Terms and Glossary to reflect the your selection and lesson focus.
2. Students read through the selected text without stopping.
3. Provide students with a list of teacher selected items from the AP Rhetorical Terms and Glossary with students, below. Review the terminology with students, modeling close reading with examples they are familiar with.
4. Students then re-read the text and annotate (with notes/bubble clouds/stars/highlighter etc) pointing out phrases and passages that serve as examples of the rhetorical devices selected by the teacher.
5. Discuss the effectiveness of the devices with the class, determining which passages/devices are the most and least powerful, effective, and/or engaging.

Sources:

"A.P. Language and Composition Rhetorical Terms & Glossary." Accessed April 19, 2013.

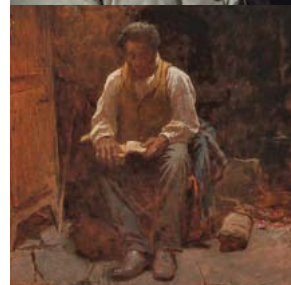
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INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 9 (continued)

RHETORICAL TERMS & GLOSSARY

Abstract

refers to language that describes concepts rather than concrete images (ideas and qualities rather than observable or specific things, people, or places). The observable or “physical” is usually described in concrete language.

Allegory

an extended narrative in prose or verse in which characters, events, and settings represent abstract qualities and in which the writer intends a second meaning to be read beneath the surface of the story; the underlying meaning may be moral, religious, political, social, or satiric.

Ambiguity

use of language in which multiple meanings are possible, can be unintentional through insufficient focus of the writer. Ambiguity can frequently be intentional in the form of multiple connotative meanings.

Anaphora

regular repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases. For example “we shall fight in the trenches, we shall fight on the oceans, we shall fight in the sky”

Anecdote

a short, simple narrative of an incident; often used for humorous effect or to make a point.

Annotation

Explanatory notes added to a text to explain, cite sources, or give bibliographical data.

Antithesis

the presentation of two contrasting images. The ideas are balanced by word, phrase, clause, or paragraphs. “To be or not to be...” “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country....”

Aphorism

a short, often witty statement of a principle or a truth about life: “Early bird gets the worm.”

Argumentation

writing that attempts to prove the validity of a point of view or an idea by presenting reasoned arguments; persuasive writing is a form of argumentation

Caricature

descriptive writing that greatly exaggerates a specific feature of a person’s appearance or a facet of personality.

Colloquialism

a word or phrase (including slang) used in everyday conversation and informal writing but that is often inappropriate in formal writing (y’all, ain’t)

Coherence; Unity

quality of a piece of writing in which all the parts contribute to the development of the central idea, theme, or organizing principle

Concrete Language

Language that describes specific, observable things, people, or places, rather than ideas or qualities.

Connotation

implied or suggested meaning of a word because of its association in the reader’s mind.

Conundrum

a riddle whose answer is or involves a pun; it may also be a paradox or difficult problem

Deduction

the process of moving from a general rule to a specific example

Denotation

literal meaning of a word as defined

Description

the picturing in words of something or some one through detailed observation of color, motion, sound, taste, smell, and touch; one of the four modes of discourse

Diction

word choice, an element of style; Diction creates tone, attitude, and style, as well as meaning. Different types and arrangements of words have significant effects on meaning. An essay written in academic diction would be much less colorful, but perhaps more precise than street slang.

Didactic

writing whose purpose is to instruct or to teach. A didactic work is usually formal and focuses on moral or ethical concerns. Didactic writing may be fiction or nonfiction that teaches a specific lesson or moral or provides a model of correct behavior or thinking.

Discourse

spoken or written language, including literary works; the four traditionally classified modes of discourse are description, exposition, narration, and persuasion.

Emotional Appeal; Pathos

When a writer appeals to readers’ emotions (often through pathos) to excite and involve them in the argument.

Epigraph

the use of a quotation at the beginning of a work that hints at its theme. Hemingway begins *The Sun Also Rises* with two epigraphs. One of them is “You are all a lost generation” by Gertrude Stein.

Ethical Appeal; Ethos

When a writer tries to persuade the audience to respect and believe him or her based on a presentation of image of self through the text. Reputation is sometimes a factor in ethical appeal, but in all cases the aim is to gain the audience’s confidence.

Euphemism

a more acceptable and usually more pleasant way of saying something that might be inappropriate or uncomfortable. “He went to his final reward” is a common euphemism for “he died.” Euphemisms are also often used to obscure the reality of a situation. The military uses “collateral damage” to indicate civilian deaths in a military operation.

INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 9 (continued)

Example

An individual instance taken to be representative of a general pattern. Arguing by example is considered reliable if examples are demonstrable true or factual as well as relevant.

Explication

The art of interpreting or discovering the meaning of a text. Explication usually involves close reading and special attention to figurative language.

Exposition

the immediate revelation to the audience of the setting and other background information necessary for understanding the plot; also, explanation; one of the four modes of discourse

Generalization

When a writer bases a claim upon an isolated example or asserts that a claim is certain rather than probable. Sweeping generalizations occur when a writer asserts that a claim applies to all instances instead of some.

Humor

anything that causes laughter or amusement; up until the end of the Renaissance, humor meant a person's temperament

Hyperbole

deliberate exaggeration in order to create humor or emphasis (Example: He was so hungry he could have eaten a horse.)

Image

A word or words, either figurative or literal, used to describe a sensory experience or an object perceived by the sense. An image is always a concrete representation.

Imagery

words or phrases that use a collection of images to appeal to one or more of the five senses in order to create a mental picture

Induction

the process that moves from a given series of specifics to a generalization

Inference

a conclusion one can draw from the presented details

Invective

a verbally abusive attack

Jargon

The special language of a profession or group. The term jargon usually has pejorative associations with the implication that jargon is evasive, tedious, and unintelligible to outsiders. The writings of the lawyer and the literary critic are both susceptible to jargon.

Juxtaposition

The placing of two items/ideas side by side to create a certain effect, reveal an attitude, or accomplish some other purpose

Logical Appeal; Logos

When a writer tries to persuade the audience based on statistics, facts, and reasons. The process of reasoning

Mode

the method or form of a literary work; the manner in which a work of literature is written

Mood

similar to tone, mood is the primary emotional attitude of a work (the feeling of the work; the atmosphere). Syntax is also a determiner of mood because sentence strength, length, and complexity affect pacing.

Narration

the telling of a story in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or drama; one of the four modes of discourse

Nostalgia

the desire to return in thought or fact to a former time

Objectivity

an impersonal presentation of events and characters. It is a writer's attempt to remove himself or herself from any subjective, personal involvement in a story. Hard news journalism is frequently prized for its objectivity, although even fictional stories can be told without a writer rendering personal judgment.

Oversimplification

When a writer obscures or denies the complexity of the issues in an argument

Oxymoron

a figure of speech composed of contradictory words or phrases, such as "wise fool," bitter-sweet, "pretty ugly," "jumbo shrimp," "cold fire"

Pacing

the movement of a literary piece from one point or one section to another

Parable

a short tale that teaches a moral; similar to but shorter than an allegory

Paradox

a statement that seems to contradict itself but that turns out to have a rational meaning, as in this quotation from Henry David Thoreau; "I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude."

Parallelism

the technique of arranging words, phrases, clauses, or larger structures by placing them side by side and making them similar in form. Parallel structure may be as simple as listing two or three modifiers in a row to describe the same noun or verb; it may take the form of two or more of the same type of phrases (prepositional, participial, gerund, appositive) that modify the same noun or verb; it may also take the form of two or more subordinate clauses that modify the same noun or verb. Or, parallel structure may be a complex bend of single-word, phrase, and clause parallelism all

Parallelism (continued)

in the same sentence. *Example (from Churchill): "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields."*

Parody

a work that ridicules the style of another work by imitating and exaggerating its elements. It can be utterly mocking or gently humorous. It depends on allusion and exaggerates and distorts the original style and content.

INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 9 (continued)

Pathetic Appeal; Pathos

When a writer tries to persuade the audience by appealing to their emotions. The aspects of a literary work that elicit sorrow or pity from the audience. An appeal to emotion that can be used as a means to persuade. Over-emotionalism can be the result of an excess of pathos.

Pedantic

a term used to describe writing that borders on lecturing. It is scholarly and academic and often overly difficult and distant

Persuasion

a form of argumentation, one of the four modes of discourse; language intended to convince through appeals to reason or emotion.

Propaganda

information or rumor deliberately spread to help or harm a person, group, or institution

Repetition

Word or phrase used two or more times in close proximity

Rhetorical modes

exposition, description, narration, argumentation

Rhetorical Question

one that does not expect an explicit answer. It is used to pose an idea to be considered by the speaker or audience.

Sarcasm

harsh, caustic personal remarks to or about someone; less subtle than irony

Satire

A work that reveals a critical attitude toward some element of human behavior by portraying it in an extreme way. Satire doesn't simply abuse (as in invective) or get personal (as in sarcasm). Satire targets groups or large concepts rather than individuals.

Speaker

the voice of a work; an author may speak as himself or herself or as a fictitious persona

Stereotype

a character who represents a trait that is usually attributed to a particular social or racial group and who lacks individuality; a conventional pattern, expression or idea.

Style

an author's characteristic manner of expression – his or her diction, syntax, imagery, structure, and content all contribute to style

Subjectivity

a personal presentation of events and characters, influenced by the author's feelings and opinions

Syllogism

A form of reasoning in which two statements are made and a conclusion is drawn from them. A syllogism is the format of a formal argument that consists of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Example:

Major Premise: All tragedies end unhappily.

Minor Premise: Hamlet is a tragedy.

Conclusion: Therefore, Hamlet ends unhappily.

Synecdoche

a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to represent a whole, such as using "boards" to mean a stage or "wheels" to mean a car – or "All hands on deck."

Syntactic Fluency

Ability to create a variety of sentence structures, appropriately complex and/or simple and varied in length.

Syntactic Permutation

Sentence structures that are extraordinarily complex and involved. They are often difficult for a reader to follow.

Syntax

The grammatical structure of a sentence; the arrangement of words in a sentence. Syntax includes length of sentence, kinds of sentences (questions, exclamations, declarative sentences, rhetorical questions, simple, complex, or compound).

Thesis

the main idea of a piece of writing. It presents the author's assertion or claim. The effectiveness of a presentation is often based on how well the writer presents, develops, and supports the thesis.

Tone

the characteristic emotion or attitude of an author toward the characters, subject, and audience (anger, sarcastic, loving, didactic, emotional, etc.)

Transition

a word or phrase that links one idea to the next and carries the reader from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph.

Understatement

the opposite of exaggeration. It is a technique for developing irony and/or humor where one writes or says less than intended.

Voice

refers to two different areas of writing. One refers to the relationship between a sentence's subject and verb (active and passive voice). The second refers to the total "sound" of a writer's style.