

# PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE FEATURES

An effective orator or essay writer will make use of a variety of the following persuasive language techniques to involve the audience and emphasise the message.

To involve the audience, impress them and persuade them to share their point of view:

- Personal pronouns: Used instead of nouns. E.g. I, you, us, we, ours
- Rhetorical questions: Questions that don't expect a verbal answer. Manipulate and make audiences think a certain way. E.g. "Do you want to die from too much pollution?"
- Emotional words/ Emotive language. Appeals to the emotions or feelings of the audience... "We all have a right to freedom!" These can have positive or negative connotations.
- Statistics: Pertains to numbers and %. "50 % of smokers will die of a smoking-related disease."
- Examples: Helps explain the point(s) or idea(s). "For example,..." It is evidence.
- Logic: Needs to make sense.
- Facts: Can be proved right or wrong. Strengthens argument. An opinion is what we think, feel or believe about an issue.
- Anecdotes: Personal stories. They illustrate a point in a personable way.
- Humour: Makes the ideas/points more enjoyable. Therefore they'll be better received. Creates *positive connotations*.
- Rebuttal: Recognising a point in the opposition's argument to present oneself as being open-minded, before delivering the final blow!
- Jargon. Technical and scientific terminology particular to a certain thing. "Turbocharged, twin-cam, fuel-injected..."
- Cliché: An overused expression that has lost some of the impact of its meaning. E.g. "It was good as gold." Advertisers sometimes work it in with puns.
- Euphemism: A nicer way of stating a harder truth. E.g. "They passed away."
- Slang: informal language. E.g. 'Bro' 'Mate' 'Sup'
- Colloquial language: informal language particular to a certain place or country. E.g. "She'll be right mate!" or "Bugger!"

To help emphasise ideas and points:

- Repetition of words: Adds emphasis E.g. Save! Save! Save!"
- Simple sentences: Gets the point across quickly and effectively. Adds impact
- Imperative sentences: Sentences that start with a verb "**Be** quiet!"
- Figures of speech: An imaginative or creative way of expressing something E.g. "They drove me up the wall!" For example, metaphor, simile, personification.
- Alliteration: Repeated initial consonants. For example, "**S**uper **s**pecial **s**avings this **S**aturday and **S**unday!"
- Hyperbole: Exaggerated statements. "A thousand times worse."
- Understatement: Opposite of hyperbole. This is a typical feature in New Zealand's style of sense of humour. E.g. "There's a bit of a breeze out there." For a full force gale wind.
- Irony: Where something said goes against what is meant. E.g. A meth addict talking about the harms of pot smoking.
- Allusions: References to well know events, films, TV programmes that the audience can relate to. "He used his lightsaber and the force to teach the students."
- Pun: A play on words with two meanings. E.g. "Teachers have a lot of class!"
- Oxymoron: When contradictory terms or ideas are placed next to one another. E.g. 'A clever idiot' 'A clever politician' 'A happy Mr. Aitken'
- Portmanteau: A new word made by combining two other words. E.g. smoke and fog = smog

*The following language features (or figures of speech) are taken from the book 'The Elements of Eloquence' by Mark Forsyth and have been adapted by some of the wonderful English teachers at Cashmere High School.*

**ANAPHORA** (an-AFF-or-a): *is starting each sentence with the same words as the ones before.* It's so preposterously easy to use anaphora. It's so preposterously easy to pick some words. It's so preposterously easy to repeat them.

**EPISTROPHE** *is when you end each sentence with the same word*, that's epistrophe. When each clause has the same words at the end, that's epistrophe. When you finish each paragraph with the same word, that's epistrophe. Shylock says *I'll have my bond! Speak not against my bond! / I have sworn on oath that it will have my bond.*

**CHIASMUS** Chiasmus *is when the words are deliberately turned back to front and then repeated*, like Alexander Dumas' heroes The Three Musketeers often shouted the warcry "All for one and one for all" as they went into battle. John F Kennedy used chiasmus a lot; "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country."

**ISOCOLON** Isocolon *is two clauses that are grammatically identical, or two sentences that are structurally the same.* Usually, they're short and snappy. *Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.* Isocolon can be an antithesis (like the old proverb *marry in haste, repent at leisure*) or it can be a restatement for emphasis (as in The Lord's Prayer *thy kingdom come, thy will be done*).

**ANTITHESIS**, Antithesis, in essence, is simple: *first, you mention one thing: then you contrast it with another.* Why just say that life is sweet when you can add that death is sour? A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted etc.

**TRICOLON** - Tricolon *is a rhetorical term that consists of three parallel clauses, phrases, or words, which happen to come in quick succession without any interruption.* Three is the magic number of writing, but to explain why that is you have to look at the much more boring number two. Whenever the average human sees two things together, they connect those two things. So if I say the words *eat and drink*, you will notice that those are the two main ways we feed ourselves. But add another item to the list and they're tricolons. *Eat, drink and be merry. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Truth, Justice and the American Way.* With the tricolon, you can sometimes set up a pattern and then deliberately break it.

**EPIZEUXIS** Epizeuxis (pronounced ep-ee-ZOOX-is) *is repeating a word immediately using exactly the same meaning.* Simple. Simple. Simple. Be warned, though: epizeuxis is like a nuclear bomb. It really works, but it's overkill if you do it more than once.

**EPANALEPSIS** Epanalepsis *is when the beginning of a clause or sentence is repeated at the end of that same clause or sentence, with words intervening.* It gives the impression of going nowhere, and it gives the impression of moving inevitably on. Shakespeare used epanalepsis, not because of its circularity, but because of the pure emphasis on repetition. *Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!*

**ANADIPLOSIS** Anadiplosis *is the repetition of the last word of one clause as the first word of the next*, that gives both lines their power, whether they're written by a saint or spoken by a small, green, fictional alien. Yoda announces that *fear leads to anger*. He then takes the last word of that sentence and repeats it as the first word of the next: *anger leads to hatred*. He then takes the last word of that sentence and repeats it as the first word of the next: *hatred leads to suffering*.

**LISTS** Lists *is when you make a list to give specific details and/or save time when making a point.* Lists were loved by Shakespeare, especially when he was insulting people. "... you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stock-fish! O for breath to utter what is like thee! You tailor's-yard, you sheath, you bowcase, you vile standing-tuck ... Lists are so unlike the way we usually talk that they really stand out.

LISTS

ANADIPLOSI

EPANALEPSIS

EPIZEUXIS

TRICOLON

ANTITHESIS

ISOCOLON

CHIASMUS

EPISTROPHE

ANAPHORA

The Adverb Start

Very Short Sentence

The Em-Dash

The -ING Start

The Semi-Colon

Red, White, & Blue

The Power Sentence

The W-Start Sentence

Begin with a preposition

The -ED Start

Explore the Subject

Simple Sentence

Preposition