

## Rhetoric/Argumentation

**Rhetoric:** The art of effective writing.

**Argument:** An attempt to convince an audience by means of careful reasoning that a specific claim is true.

**Persuasion:** Attempts to move the reader to a course of action, or reform a group's feelings, opinions, and beliefs.

**Any type of argument or persuasive writing has a claim the author is trying to convince the audience to accept:**

**Claims** – These are the assertions writer is making; they formulate/connect to the argument's central purpose.

**Claims about Meaning/Truth:** What is **X**? (Propositions that center on how we define/interpret something. i.e. *Is a defendant "sane" enough to stand trial?*)

**Claims about Value:** Is **X** good or bad, right or wrong? (Ethical evaluations based on clear/consistent criteria i.e. *Is capital punishment morally wrong?*)

**Claims about Consequences:** What will happen as a result of **X**? (Examination of the causal patterns involved in certain ideas/actions – usually an "if X, then Y format" i.e. *"If capital punishment was abolished, then more murders would be committed."*)

**Claims about Policy:** What should be done about **X**? Stated in the form of a proposal using "should and ought" i.e. *"Gun control ought to be mandatory in every state."*)

### Rhetorical/Argumentative Strategies

*Strategy* is the *approach* the writer uses in developing a persuasive argument.

**Many extended arguments depend upon a mixture of all of them.**

### Methods of Appeal

**Logos:** Appeal to the logic and good sense. (Offering a clear, reasonable central idea and developing it with appropriate reasoning, examples or details)

**Pathos:** Appeal to feelings/emotions, a nonintellectual response. (Drawing on the emotions /interests of the audience so it will be sympathetically inclined to accept the central argument. Anger, fear, frustration, contentment, patriotism, religious feelings, social acceptance, morality are often targets.)

**Ethos:** Appeal based on the speaker's personal presence, character and reputation. (Offers evidence that speaker is credible, knows important/relevant information about the topic and is a good, person who has the audience's best interest in mind.)

Extended arguments blend all three appeals.

**Reasoning** – Argument is backed up by reasoning.

**Deductive** – arguments proceed from the **general to the particular**

Ex. *"All dogs are carnivorous; Fido is a dog; therefore Fido is carnivorous.* A deductive argument leads to a necessary conclusion. Once we accept the premises as true and the connection to the conclusion, then we must accept the truth of the conclusion.

**Inductive Reasoning** – arguments proceed from the **particular to the general**. This does not yield logically necessary conclusions. Generalization is based on a limited number of instances. Ex *Fido is carnivorous, Prince is carnivorous, Spot is carnivorous, all dogs are carnivorous.*

**Organization** – the heart of the argument

**Series of Independent Reasons:** Strongest reason followed by weaker reasons and ending with a strong summarizing reason. Utilizes transition words to reconnect each independent reason to central purpose.

**Chain Structure** –A set of interdependent points not arranged according to strength but according to their logical sequence: the conclusion of one becomes the premise of the next.

## **Rhetorical/Argumentative Devices**

Devices are the tools the writer uses in developing the rhetorical/argumentative strategies and are found throughout the essay

**Observations & Anecdotes:** eyewitness accounts, or brief narrative incident.

**Facts: Statistics, Data, tests, & experiments:** offers concrete numbers and/or information about a topic.

**Graphics:** information in visual form (tables, maps, charts, photographs, etc.)

**Analogies:** Comparison of two things that are alike, drawing parallels.

**Examples/illustrations:** a model, case, or situation used to illustrate a point.

**Expert testimony:** offers insights from an authority on a topic.

**Analyses:** examine parts of a topic through thought patterns such as cause/effect, compare contrast, classification, or process.

**Predictions/Scenarios:** plausible descriptions of how the future may develop.

### **Questions:**

**Open-** Designed to cause the reader to ponder possibilities, connections and draw conclusions

**Rhetorical** – Designed to cause the reader to concur with the writer. Worded in such a way as to elicit one obvious response

**Connotative Language** - Diction (charged words) that helps to establish the writer's tone

**Syntax:** Writer's use of varied sentence structures for a purpose

**Periodic Sentence:** subject at the end of the sentence

**Multi-layered Sentence:** many dependent clauses linked to central meaning

**Emphatic Sentence:** short sentence among longer sentences used for emphasis

**Parallel Structure**

**Repetition**

**Punctuation**

**Figurative Language:** Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Figure of speech, Litote (Understatement).

**Tone:** through diction, the author implies his or her attitude toward the subject (sarcasm, anger, approval, etc.)

**Allusion:** a passing or casual reference; an incidental mention of something, either directly or by implication

**Irony:** Dramatic & Verbal

**Paradox:** a statement or proposition that seems self-contradictory or absurd but in reality expresses a possible truth.

**Narration:** a story or a recital of events, usually in chronological order.

**Dialogue:** conversation or exchange of ideas between two people

**Description/Imagery:** language that appeals to the senses (auditory, gustatory, tactile, olfactory, visual)

**Exposition/Explanation:** clarifying statements, analysis of an event, person, idea, thing, etc.