

# Rhetorical Devices in Speech and Writing - Student Handout

*We can use the following rhetorical devices to make our speeches and writings more engaging.*

## 1. Rhetorical Questions

*Ask a question that you don't expect an answer to.*

"How can we encourage more people to recycle? Well, one way would be to..."

"How much impact do one person's habits really have on the environment? Surprisingly, ....

## 2. Personification

*Giving human actions or emotions to non-living/inanimate things.*

"I could hear the pack of cookies calling to me from the cupboard."

"The music industry chewed him up and spat him out."

"The soft bed welcomed me with open arms."

"The fear of failure chased him wherever he went."

## 3. Hyperbole

*Using exaggeration to draw attention to the severity of the matter or to make a strong point.*

"I called her a thousand times."

"I will literally die if they ask me to give a speech to the whole class."

"I'm so hungry I could eat a horse."

## 4. Litotes

*Ironic understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary*

"How did Steve look when you visited him? Not great to be honest."

"How was the film? Yeah, not bad."

"Let's just say he doesn't have the best attendance record."

## 5. Anadiplosis

*Repetition of the last word in a phrase at the beginning of the next phrase or sentence.*

"Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate and hate leads to suffering." –Yoda, Star Wars

"We ordered a pizza. A pizza that changed our lives."

"She got on the bus, and on that bus she met a man. A man who would turn out to be the love of her life. A life that would be tragically cut short at only 25 years old."

## 6. Simile

*A simile is a comparison in which something is said to figuratively be like something else. They usually contain "like" or "as".*

"It was as hot as a desert this morning."

"His heart was beating like a broken clock."

"My grandad is as blind as a bat and as deaf as a post."

## Practice

Identify the different rhetorical devices:

1. It certainly wasn't the worst school play I've ever been to.
2. I'm absolutely starving, when can we stop for lunch?
3. My little brother is as thick as two short planks, he's just not the academic type.
4. The far-off lights of the city seemed to welcome us as we got closer.
5. He spent the last of his money on an old bike. An old bike that he ended up riding for over 20 years.
6. How can we convince more people to invest in electric cars? I'll tell you how.
7. The last episode was like watching paint dry, I couldn't stand it.
8. Her brain is the size of a pea, it's like talking to a brick wall.
9. It's not the most useful application, so I'll probably delete it.
10. What can be done about the issue of short attention spans? Well, first of all, we could....
11. The leg bone's connected to the knee bone. The knee bone's connected to the thigh bone.
12. The car engine grumbled, coughed and burst into life.

## Game Cards

Cut these cards up, shuffle and deal them.

Have a conversation with your partner. The winner is the first to use all their rhetorical devices in the conversation.

<h3>Rhetorical Questions</h3> <p>"How can we encourage more people to recycle? Well, one way would be to..."</p>	<h3>Personification</h3> <p>"The soft bed welcomed me with open arms."</p>	<h3>Hyperbole</h3> <p>"I will literally die if they ask me to give a speech to the whole class."</p>
<h3>Litotes</h3> <p>"Let's just say he <u>doesn't have the best</u> attendance record."</p>	<h3>Anadiplosis</h3> <p>"Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate and hate leads to suffering." –Yoda, Star Wars</p>	<h3>Simile</h3> <p>"His heart was beating like a broken clock."</p>