

## Persuasive Strategies and Rhetorical Devices

There are three types of **persuasive strategies**; a good argument will use the combination of all 3.

**Logos** – logical argument; an appeal to logic or reason

**Ethos** – appeals based on the reliability, credibility, or expertise of the writer

**Pathos** – appeals to the audience's needs, values or emotions

A **rhetorical device** is a technique of using language that will increase the persuasiveness of a piece of writing.

1. Questions
  - a. Rhetorical question: thoughtful questions that aren't meant to be answered.
    - i. Can we really expect the school to keep paying from its limited resources?
  - b. Hypophora: asking a question and answering it.
    - i. But what was the result of this move on the steel industry? The annual reports for that year clearly indicate. . . .
2. Description and Imagery
  - a. Imagine being cast out into the cold street, lonely and frightened.
3. Parallel structures
  - a. To show kindness is praiseworthy; to show hatred is evil.
4. Figurative Language (i.e. using metaphor, simile and personification)
  - a. While we wait and do nothing, we must not forget that the fuse is already burning.
5. The 'rule of three'
  - a. I ask you, is this fair, is it right, is it just?
6. Anaphora: the intentional repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of a line for emphasis.
  - a. Will he read the book? Will he learn what it has to teach him? Will he live according to what he has learned?
  - b. Not time, not money, not laws, but willing diligence will get this done.
7. Hyperbole (using exaggeration for effect)
  - a. While we await your decision, the whole school holds its breath.

8. Anecdote
  - a. An anecdote is a short and interesting story taken from your past experience - or that of someone you know or have heard about. Audiences love anecdotes.
  
9. Euphemisms and connotation
  - a. overweight vs. fat
  - b. issue vs. problem
  
10. Downplaying and understating
  - a. Using key words to make important things seem unimportant
    - i. Mere, merely, so-called, however, although, despite
  - b. Expressing things in such a way as to understate it's importance
    - i. The earthquake interrupted business somewhat in the downtown area.
  
11. Distinctio
  - a. The intentional reference or definition of a word in order to remove confusion, misunderstanding or ambiguity
    - i. By "impossible" I mean currently beyond our technological capabilities
  
12. Apophasis
  - a. The raising of an issue by claiming not to mention it
    - i. We won't even talk about his criminal record...
  
13. Loaded Language
  - a. Wording that attempts to influence an audience by using appeal to emotion or stereotypes. Such wording is also known as high-inference **language** or **language** persuasive techniques.

#### Loaded Language Examples

The term "[loaded language](#)" refers to words, phrases, and overall verbal and written communication that is intended to inspire [emotion](#) in the reader or listener. This usage of language to appeal to emotion is used in everyday conversation and is often used by politicians, public figures, advertisers and corporations.

## *Defining Loaded Language*

Loaded language is considered a persuasive technique and has also been called emotive language, high-inference language, or loaded terms. It is often used in order to:

- Gain support
- Sway opinions
- Degrade others (such as in a political campaign)
- Gain a political foothold
- Push an agenda

Some have even claimed that the use of loaded language is a brainwashing technique.

The noted writer George Orwell in discussion of using loaded language had this to say:

"The word [Fascism](#) has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable.' The words democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using that word if it were tied down to any one meaning."

## *Loaded Language Examples*

Often, loaded language exists as a substitute for other words or phrases, one more negative or positive than the other depending on circumstance.

Some examples include:

- Bureaucrat vs. public servant
- Pro-death vs. pro-choice
- Regime vs. government
- Elitist vs. expert
- Infanticide or child murder vs. abortion
- Put up with vs. tolerate
- Put at a loss vs. bewilder

Loaded language can create an emotional image that is different in each person, based on their experiences and beliefs. Some examples include:

- Christmas
- Holiday
- Abortion
- Evolution
- Peace
- Justice
- Death
- Divorce
- Disease

Some other words that could be considered persuasive and therefore loaded include:

- Accurate
- Phenomenon
- Advantage
- Always/Never
- Categorical
- Effective
- Virtual
- Best
- Certain
- Confident
- Constitute
- Eliminate
- Convenient

- Definitely
- Effective
- Emphasize
- Expect
- Interesting
- Magnificent
- Most
- Exploit
- Epoch-making
- Most Important
- Popular
- Profitable
- Should
- Strongly Recommend
- Superb
- Historic
- Triumphant
- Superior
- Tremendous
- Truly
- Trustworthy
- Age-old
- Workable
- Worthwhile
- Aggravate
- Agony
- Veritable
- Atrocious
- Choice
- Confusing
- Cruel
- Inexorable
- Damaging
- Disadvantages
- Displeased
- Dreadful
- Harmful
- Harsh
- Horrible
- Inconsiderate
- Inferior
- Irritate
- Offend
- Ordeal
- Outrageousness
- Provoke
- Repulsive
- Severe
- Shameful

- Shocking
- Terrible
- Unreliable
- Unstable

### Loaded Foreign Words

Foreign words are also often used as loaded language in order to give an air of knowledge, culture or pretense. Some common examples include:

- Status quo
- Gleichshaltung
- Weltanschauung
- Schadenfreude
- Ancien Regime
- Deus ex machina
- Mutatis mutandis

### Loaded Metaphorical Words

Some metaphorical phrases are considered to be loaded. Often this is because their wordiness replaces simple verbs that may not evoke as much explanation.

Some examples are:

- Toe the line
- Ride roughshod over
- Stand shoulder to shoulder with
- Play into the hands of
- No axe to grind
- Fishing in troubled waters
- On the order of the day
- In the hotbed
- Render inoperative
- Be subjected to
- Play a leading role in

Loaded language is widely used and is very effective in gaining emotion. Watch for loaded language any time you hear a politician speak- you are sure to hear lots of it!