

**The Art of Rhetoric**

Rhetoric, whether spoken or written, is the art of using language effectively to inform and persuade. It includes the use of three types of appeal to the audience and can be divided into five categories or canons. Most analysis is focused on style. However, it is important to be aware of the other four canons as well as the writer or speaker’s use of appeals.

<b>Rhetorical Appeals</b>				
<p><i>Ethos</i> One’s credibility as a speaker and writer.</p>	<p><i>Logos</i> The intellectual power of one’s speech or writing.</p>	<p><i>Pathos</i> The emotional power of one’s speech or writing.</p>		
<b>The Five Rhetorical Canons</b>				
<p><i>Invention</i> Selection of the best pattern for one’s purpose: ~analogy ~cause and effect ~classification or division ~comparison and contrast ~definition ~example or illustration ~process analysis</p>	<p><i>Arrangement</i> Organization of writing or speech: ~cause and effect ~chronological ~comparison and contrast ~flash back or flash forward ~general to specific (or specific to general) ~least to most important (or most to least) ~spatial</p>	<p><i>Style</i> Artful expression of ideas: ~detail ~diction ~figures of speech ~imagery ~syntax ~tone</p>	<p><i>Memory</i> Devices that make speech or writing memorable: ~acronym ~pattern of three ~repetition</p>	<p><i>Delivery</i> Conscious use of gesture, expression, and pacing.</p>

<b>Common Figures of Speech</b>	
<p><i>Figures of Speech: Tropes</i> Artful deviation from ordinary or principal <u>signification</u> of a word.</p>	<p><i>Figures of Speech: Schemes</i> Artful deviation from the ordinary <u>arrangement</u> of words.</p>
<p>Reference to one thing as another</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metaphor</li> <li>• Simile</li> <li>• Synecdoche</li> <li>• Metonymy</li> </ul> <p>Word play/puns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personification</li> <li>• Syllepsis (zeugma)</li> <li>• Onomatopoeia</li> </ul> <p>Overstatement/understatement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyperbole</li> <li>• Litotes</li> </ul> <p>Semantic Inversions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhetorical question</li> <li>• Irony</li> <li>• Oxymoron</li> <li>• Paradox</li> </ul>	<p>Structures of balance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parallelism</li> <li>• Antithesis</li> </ul> <p>Omission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ellipsis</li> <li>• Asyndeton (polysyndeton)</li> </ul> <p>Repetition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alliteration</li> <li>• Assonance</li> <li>• Anaphora</li> <li>• Chiasmus</li> </ul>

### The Traditional Four Modes of Discourse

*Exposition* is the most commonly used of the traditional modes of discourse. Expository writing sets out to present ideas in a clear, straightforward, objective manner. The most commonly used methods of development in expository writing are analogy, cause and effect, classification, comparison and contrast, definition, illustration, and process analysis.

*Argument* attempts to persuade a reader to accept the writer's viewpoint or position. Logical argument appeals to the reason or intellect of the reader while persuasive argument appeals primarily to the reader's emotions and often elicits a call to action or a change in a reader's belief. Logical argument uses three methods to develop a position: induction, deduction, and analogy.

*Narration* tells a story or presents a sequence of events which occurred over a period of time. If the story is significant in itself, it is narration. If a story illustrates a point in exposition or argument, it may be called illustrative narration. If a story outlines a process step-by-step, it is designated as expository narration.

*Description* presents factual information about an object or experience (objective description) or reports an impression or evaluation of an object or experience (subjective description). Most description combines two purposes. *It was a frightening night.* (An evaluation with which others might disagree.) *The wind blew the shingles off the north side of the house and drove the rain under the door.* (Two facts about which there can be little disagreement).

### The Range of Exposition

Expository writing includes writing as familiar and as ephemeral as daily newspaper stories and magazine articles and as monumental as the philosophical works of Aristotle, the history of Gibbon, or the science of Darwin. Exposition also includes technical writing such as is found in an encyclopedia and in business and engineering reports.

Expository writing also includes non-fiction personal writing such as journals, diaries, and essays of individual experience and opinion, of which Montaigne, Thoreau, Orwell, E.B. White, James Baldwin, Joan Didion, and Virginia Woolf are notable practitioners. It is this branch of exposition, the personal experience essay, sometimes also called "Creative NonFiction," with which we are mainly concerned in this course.

This kind of personal essay naturally transforms itself into the higher-level journalism characteristic of such a publication as *The New York Times Magazine*. The essential difference between "expository" writing and fictional short stories is that everything narrated in a piece of "expository" writing must be absolutely and literally true. The events **MUST** have actually happened and have happened where you say they happened and how you say they happened and when you say they happened. Nothing can be "made up." But otherwise, the techniques needed for good fiction are the same as those needed for good creative non-fiction---vivid storytelling, suspense, pace, scene setting, characterization, organic structure, sound themes, irony, figurative language, style and the fundamental secret of superior expository creative non-fiction writing, what I call "literal symbolism," where a real event is made into a symbol for an entire class of events. All the resources of verbal and literary expression you will be practicing for expository writing are identical to those you might use in writing a good short story, except that exposition claims to be literally true whereas short stories do not. A good many of the devices are also applicable to poetry, though, of course, exposition is in prose, not verse.

--Harlan Underhill, adapted from *Modern Rhetoric*

**"If fiction is *a* world, nonfiction is *the* world. In the end all writing is about the business of being human."**

--William Sloan, *The Craft of Writing*

### Methods of Exposition

*Analogy* is a method of development that explains something abstract or difficult to understand by comparing it to something simpler and more concrete, with which the reader is likely to be familiar.

*Cause and Effect* is a seemingly simple method of development in which either the cause of a particular effect or the effects of a particular cause are investigated. However, because of the philosophical difficulties surrounding causality, the writer should be cautious in ascribing causes.

*Classification/Division* is the division of a whole into the classes that comprise it; or the placement of a subject into the whole of which it is a part.

*Comparison and Contrast* is the presentation of a subject by indicating similarities between two or more things (comparison); by indicating differences (contrast). The basic elements in a comparative process, then, are (1) the terms of the comparison, or the various objects compared, and (2) the points of likeness or difference between the objects compared. Often comparison and contrast are used in definition and other methods of exposition.

*Definition*, in logic, is the placing of the word to be defined in a general class and then showing how it differs from other members of the class; in rhetoric, it is the meaningful extension (usually enriched by the use of detail, concrete illustration, anecdote, metaphor) of a logical definition in order to answer fully, clearly, and often implicitly the question, "What is \_\_\_\_\_?"

*Example/Illustration* is the use of a particular member of a class to explain or dramatize a class, a type, a thing, a person, a method, an idea, or a condition. The idea explained may be either stated or implied. For purposes of illustration, the individual member of a class must be a fair representation of the distinctive qualities of the class. The use of illustrations, examples, and specific instances adds to the concreteness and vividness of writing.

*Process Analysis* is a method of exposition by logical sequence, applicable to any process, from mining coal to writing a poem. Processes may be described technically and factually or impressionistically and selectively. In the latter method the steps in the sequence are organized in relation to a single governing idea so that the mutually supporting function of each of the components in the total structure becomes clear to the reader. Processes may be explained in terms of their characteristic function. Analysis may also be concerned with the connection of events; given this condition or series of conditions, what effects will follow.

--Adapted from *The Essay* by Michael F. Shugrue (1981)