

**PERSUASIVE**  
**LANGUAGE**  
**TECHNIQUES**

*Year 11 VCE English – Media Texts and Using Language to Persuade*

# Figurative Language (Alliteration)

## Definition of technique

It is the repetition of the first consonant sounds in several words.

or:  
the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

## Effect of technique

The effect of alliteration is used to provide emphasis in literary works such as poetry and spoken word. Alliteration enables the audience to remember the key points as long as they were alliterated. Alliteration is used at the beginning of words or syllables.

## Example of technique

One example could be:

wide-eyed and wondering while we wait for others to waken.

They can also be used as tongue twisters:

Betty bought butter but the butter was bitter, so Betty bought better butter to make the bitter butter better.

# Anecdotal Evidence

## Definition

**Anecdotal evidence** is using an anecdote (a short account of a particular incident or event, especially of an interesting or amusing nature) to support a scientific claim.

Essentially it is a conclusion drawn from casual observation or personal experiences. It may be valid, but it is not proven.

## Effects

It's often much easier for people to believe someone's testimony as opposed to understanding complex data and scientific evidence. People use them as reinforcements to shore up arguments especially when they lack scientific proof.

## Example

Jason said that that was all cool and everything, because his grandfather smoked 30 cigarettes a day and lived until he was 97.

All Labradors should be locked away because they are dangerous. I know this because when I was walking down the street the other day I saw a Labrador attack a small child.

# Ridicule/Attacks

## Definition:

The writer attacks an opponent or idea. This is an assertion of the writer's viewpoint, and is used to prove the writer's point by using **attacking** and putting down persuasion techniques against the opponent or idea.

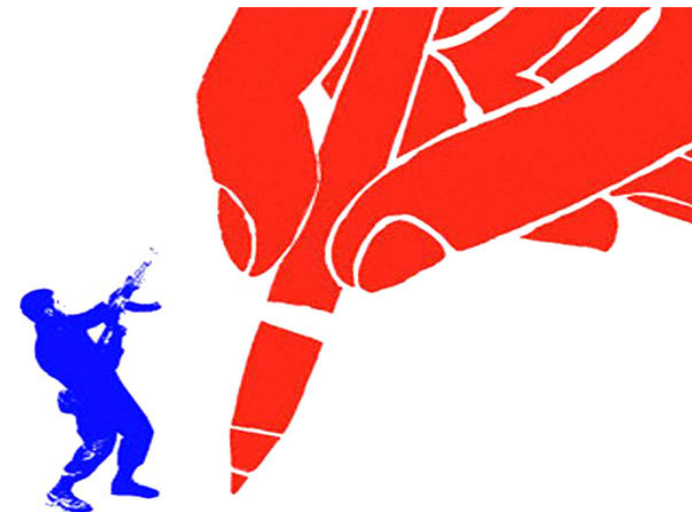
## Effect of Technique:

These methods are often effective in placing the reader in a position of agreement with the writer/speaker. This process works by forceful assertion through appropriate language and insistent claims that are not usually supported with evidence.

## Example:

"We have an enemy before us called Tony Abbott, and the Liberal Coalition government nationally, that is taking away reforms that we fought so hard for"

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/tasmania-election-greens-tony-abbott-attacked-as-labor-announces-poll-for-march-15-20140116-30wxu>



# Clichés

## **Definition:**

A cliché is a term or phrase that has been overused to the extent that they are commonly understood by society.

## **Effectiveness:**

Clichés aren't great for writing because they lack originality, which is necessary in writing. However they can be useful for conveying a point that the reader may be able to relate to. The reader would be able to relate to it because as previously stated a cliché is something that is commonly known.

## **Example:**

“It's not the destination that matters most, but the journey along the way.”

“As old as the hills.”

“Houston, we have a problem.” – Tom Hanks, [Apollo 13](#).

# Colloquial Language

**Definition:** Colloquial language is informal language that is not rude, however would not be used in a formal situation. It is language typically used in everyday speech that is easily understood.

**Effect:** Colloquial language is used as a persuasive device as it can bring an inclusive tone to the text and make the reader feel more at home as the language being used is familiar to them. The language is accessible to all and easy to understand, meaning the reader can feel like they are being treated as an equal and being told the plain truth from someone who appears to be just like them.

**Example:** She's a top sheila that Jessica Rowe. Channel Nine are stark raving to give her the boot.

# Emotive Language

## **Definition of Technique:**

Words used to deliberately create an emotional impact or response from the audience.

## **Effect of Technique:**

The effect of using emotive language as a persuasive technique is to appeal to people's emotions and trigger an emotional response.

## **Example of Technique:**

“The disappearance of the airplane is disturbing and distressing.” The words disturbing and distressing are the key to appealing to people's concern and make them feel uneasy towards the situation.

# EXCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

**DEFINITION:** *Exclusive Language* is language that leaves out or alienates a particular group of people or things for effect. It can be characterized by the use of pronouns *'they'*, *'them'* and *'those'*.

**EFFECT:** *Exclusive Language* can be used to target or accuse particular groups, as well as creating a *'them and us'* mentality. It is used as a tool of persuasion as, like *Inclusive Language*, it can generate a sense of solidarity between the particular audience who is not being excluded, and give that target audience somewhere to point their fingers.

**EXAMPLE:** "it's all their fault because they are the ones who made the decision."



# Expert Evidence

## Definition

Expert evidence refers to a person who is a specialist in a subject who may present his/her expert opinion without having been a witness to any occurrence relating to situation.

## Effect

The use of expert evidence causes the audience to have more faith and belief in what the expert is saying, as they have had prior experience in similar situations therefor have a better understanding of situations and outcomes.

## Example

Teenagers are becoming more rebellious as they enter childhood, says child psychologist Jean Marie.

# Formal Language

Chris Burgess

## What is the technique?

Formal Language is a more extensive and sophisticated use of language and the development of points in a 'proper' method. Used in many persuasive texts.

## Why is it used?

Formal Language is used in texts to give an assumed level of credibility. It leaves the reader thinking the piece is more sophisticated due to its authoritative and commanding tone. The piece is also used to command the respect of the readers.

## How is it used?

'The Norwegian real estate market is currently the main benefactor in causing much distress in the inhabitants of Norway's lives'

This example shows us how the use of language is key in creating that authoritative tone. It aims so baffle the reader into blindly accepting the contention of the piece due to the fact 'it must be true considering the big words and smartness of it'

# Generalisations

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Generalisations go hand in hand with stereotypes. They are a statement or concept obtained from specific cases.

Generalisations are something that are exploited and often used in media texts to persuade people to believing a certain point of view. An audience will usually be aware of most generalisations at the least, if not agree with them. They are a great tool for convincing your case, due to the fact that they are frequently used in conversations when describing things and people.

An example of a generalisation is "I know two men who had meat pies for lunch, they are both builders. That must mean all builders eat meat pies for lunch".

# HYPERBOLE

## What is a hyperbole?

A hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration used to make a point for emphasis or humor. They are not meant to be taken literally.

## What effects do hyperboles create?

By using a hyperbole, a boring story can quickly become interesting or comical. This concept applies to media and advertising as a hyperbole can be an effective way to encourage consumers to buy products.

Hyperboles are similar to metaphors and similes as they are comparisons, but are even more exaggerated and ridiculous.

## Examples of hyperboles:

“I’ve told you a million times”

“I am so hungry I could eat a horse”

“I had a ton of homework”

“He is as skinny as a toothpick”

“Her brain is the size of a pea”

“It was so cold, I saw polar bears wearing jackets”

# Hypothetical Evidence

**Definition:** Hypothetical Evidence is based on claims typically based on a “what if” statement.

**Effectiveness:** Hypothetical evidence/examples are most effective when explaining a complicated topic which makes most sense when it is put into more relatable terms. A hypothetical example helps the audience to better visualise a topic and relate to the point of view more effectively.

**Examples:** What if you get pulled over by the police for drink driving and get your license taken away?

What if the world ends tomorrow?"

# Inclusive Language

**Definition of technique:** Language which does not belittle, exclude, stereotype or trivialise people on the basis of their race, gender or disability.

**Effect of technique:** Using this technique can create a sense of togetherness and which gives us the impression that it is representing a wide range of opinions. This technique can be very inclusive and therefore avoid any prejudice or exclusion.

**Example of technique:** Instead of saying “*We need someone to man the desk,*” you could say, “*We need someone to staff the desk.*” This is an example of inclusive language, specifically focusing on the trivialisation of gender.

# Logic and Reasoning

**Definition:** The use of a valid argument developed step by step with reasoning and evidence (with justification) to support each main point, to sway an audience.

**Effect:** Helps establish the strength of one side, or the weakness of another. It is persuasive by reinforcing reason to an argument. Sound logic is hard to rebut and also lends more credibility than emotions.

**Example:** Research has shown that children growing up in places with high pollution are slower to establish basic motor skills. QED children should not grow up near high polluting factories and plants to give them the best start to life.

# Metaphors and Similes

**Metaphors:** a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. A direct comparison is drawn between the two things – one becomes the other.

**Simile:** a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid. The comparison uses the words ‘as’ or ‘like’

**Effect of techniques:** When using figurative language, the writer allows all readers to come up with many different meanings for the words. It also gives the reader a clearer understanding of the situation. It adds emphasis, the readers can get a clearer image in their heads and it makes the phrase more interesting. It creates an easier visual for the reader.

**Example of Metaphor:** “He was on roller coaster of emotions”

**Example of Simile:** “She was as snug as a bug in a rug”



# Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

**Definition of technique:** Repetition is the act of saying or writing something that has already been said or written more than once.

**Effect of technique:** Many people in the media industry use this technique as it draws attention to the repeated words, phrase image or sound. This means that the audience is more likely to remember it.

## **Example of technique: Coles 'Down Down'**

In the new Coles ad campaign, they are promising to have the lowest prices and best quality produce. As a marketing technique they use the repetition of the phrase 'down, down' to catch our attention. By repeating this multiple times along with a catchy tune and many big red hands pointing down, it gets stuck in our head. The aim of the campaign is that people might choose to shop there instead of at Woolworths or other competitors because prices are 'down, down and staying down'.

# Rhetorical Questions

**Definition:** A question with an no expected answer. They are used to make a point or deliver a message.

**Effect:** Rhetorical questions make the audience think about and consider the message behind the question. Although there is no intended answer they can be used to start a discussion.

**Example:** If you prick us, do we not bleed?

If you tickle us, do we not laugh?

If you poison us, do we not die?

And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? #shylock

# Sensationalism

**Definition:** The presentation of stories in a way that is intended to provoke public interest or excitement, at the expense of accuracy.

**Effects:** It leads the audience to believe it is more important, dramatic and extreme than it really is. Uses fear, anger, excitement and crude thrill undertaken by the media to increase the viewership, ratings and lastly profits.

**Example:** It is used a lot in headlines for newspaper for example; one exciting headline that's good is ..... "Aspirin May Kill You" ...in giant, bold, black letters. Yet in the article, we find that the word "may" shows that aspirin "may" kill you ...if you take 400 tons of it in one gulp.