**RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY ASSIGNMENT**

**Patrick Henry’s Speech at the Virginia Convention, March 23, 1775**

**Homework: Write an analysis essay following the red prompt . Use the additional pages to help you write the greatest essay ever. This is due Monday. This should be handwritten in blue/black pen.**

Read the following speech delivered by Patrick Henry at the Virginia Convention in 1775. Then write a well-organized essay in which you discuss the rhetorical strategies Henry employs to achieve his purpose for addressing those in attendance. In your analysis, consider such strategies as: organization, diction, syntax, and figurative language.

**St. John's Church, Richmond, Virginia  
March 23, 1775.**

MR. PRESIDENT: No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely, and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the House is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfil the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offence, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the majesty of heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and, having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves, and the House? Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with these war-like preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled, that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask, gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves. Sir, we have done everything that could be done, to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free² if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending²if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained, we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable²and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace²but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

**BRAINSTORMING and PREWRITING…**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BIG** question? | little question? |
| What is…  ? | What…  ? |
| Patrick Henry may seek to…   * criticize leaders for ignoring the reality of their situation * suggest that their past methods of diplomacy are ineffective * implore his audience to take up arms and fight for freedom * challenge the notion that the British still wish to negotiate | Henry employs…   * Organization * Diction * Syntax * Figurative language |

**WRITING YOUR THESIS STATEMENT FOR THE ENTIRE ESSAY**

*As you think of writing the essay, you will need a clear and concise thesis statement articulating the purpose for the whole passage. Writing this statement is often challenging because of the difficulty of including so many elements into one sentence. You will likely need to write a complex or compound-complex sentence. As you construct this sentence, you should make sure the independent, or main clause refers to the purpose and the subordinate clause refers to author’s technique [this keeps the BIG question BIG].*

*Consider the following template:*

**In his speech at the Virginia convention, Patrick Henry** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [identify purpose] **by/through** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [specific reference to his rhetorical strategies].

*Note the examples below of ineffective or incomplete thesis statements:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Purpose Statements needing further revision** | **Notes…** |
| In his speech at the Virginia convention, Patrick Henry uses diction, organization, and figurative language to achieve his purpose. | – does not contain a reference to purpose  – basically repeats the prompt without specificity |
| In his speech at the Virginia convention, Patrick Henry argues that it is time for Americans to fight for their freedom. | + articulates Henry’s purpose  – does not include a reference to method |
| In his speech at the Virginia convention, Patrick Henry uses diction, organization, and figurative language to argue that it is time for Americans to fight for their freedom. | + refers to both purpose and method  – “blueprints” vague devices [copied from prompt]  – purpose statement is not in the main clause |

*Now, read the following example of a well-crafted thesis statement:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Model Thesis Statement** | **Strengths…** |
| In his speech to the Virginia Convention in 1775, Patrick Henry **argues** that Americans have no choice but to take up arms against the British **by** reminding the country’s leaders of their failed attempts at securing peace and liberty in the past and by confronting them with their current position of danger in the face of the inevitable British invasion. | + begins with a reference to purpose [asserts that the time has come… to fight…]  +purpose statement is in the main clause  + makes reference to overall larger method [reminding… confronting...] stated in the subordinate clause  ­+ does not “blueprint” surface feature devices  + includes precise language |

*Once you have written a good thesis statement, you need to consider what your topic sentences will be and choose the best evidence from the passage to support your topic sentences.*

*A good thesis statement can often be subdivided into two or three parts. Note that the example at the top of this page suggests two methods by which Henry makes his argument: a) reminding the audience of past failures, and b) confronting them with present danger. These can become the topics for the body paragraphs that will follow the introduction and thesis.*

*The next step, then, is to search through your notes on specific devices and techniques and line these up underneath the proper purpose. You may have marked 8-10 devices, but you will not have time to analyze each one in your essay, so you must choose carefully the examples that will most appropriately support Henry’s purpose in your essay. Look at the chart below containing notes from the passage of devices that could line up logically under each topic sentence.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [overall purpose]  **In his speech to the Virginia Convention in 1775, Patrick Henry asserts that**  **the time has come for Americans to take up arms against the British…** | | | |
| **…by reminding the country’s leaders of their failed attempts at securing peace and liberty in the past**  [topic for body paragraph one refers to  failed attempts in the past] | | **…and by confronting them with their current position of danger in the face of the inevitable British invasion.**  [topic for body paragraph two refers to  their current position of danger] | |
| **Allusions:** “song of that siren” *suggests that the illusion of peace will lead them to destruction*  “betrayed with a kiss” *is fitting because the audience would be aware of the biblical reference to Judas and relate it to the fact that they are being misled by the British.*  **Imagery:**“smile, snare, kiss” | **Diction:** recurring reference to hope…[illusion of hope, delusive phantom, solace of hope, no room for hope]  Recurring reference to “in vain” *conveys futility*  **Metaphor:** lamp of experience | **Diction:** recurring images and references to slavery, (chains, bind, rivet, forging, clanking, etc.) *convey an urgency to fight before their liberty is lost and fitting for an audience well aware of the practice of slavery.*  **Imagery:** “war-like preparations which cover our waters and darken our land.” *Provides evidence of the impending danger* | **Rhetorical Question and Answer organization…** [ongoing]  **Parallel Structure:**  *Communicates passion and resolve*  “Our petitions have been slighted…contempt…”  “If we wish to be free… if… and if…”  **Syntax:** exclamation points. |

**ORGANIZING THE ESSAY**

*For your timed writing, you will need to consider a structured outline that includes an introduction, at least two body paragraphs, and a conclusion or concluding statement. Body paragraphs can be arranged by purpose or device. As a general rule, those essays organized by purpose are more successful at keeping the BIG question in focus. Using the divisions you created above in the note-taking step, organize your examples accordingly.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organized by Purpose\***  I. Introduction  Provide brief context of the scene  TAG [Title, author, genre]  Thesis / Purpose Statement  II. Purpose One [topic sentence]  Example of device #1 [3-5 sentence chunk]  Example of device #2 [3-5 sentence chunk]  Concluding sentence  III. Purpose Two [topic sentence]  Example of device #1 [3-5 sentence chunk]  Example of device #2 [3-5 sentence chunk]  Concluding sentence  IV. Conclusion  Revisit the BIG question [purpose]  Provide universal insight | **Organized by Device**  I. Introduction  Provide brief context of the scene  TAG [Title, author, genre]  Thesis / Purpose Statement  II. Device One [topic sentence]  Example of device #1 + purpose [3-5 sentence chunk] Example of device #2 + purpose [3-5 sentence chunk]  Concluding sentence  III. Device Two [topic sentence]  Example of device #1 + purpose [3-5 sentence chunk]  Example of device #2 + purpose [3-5 sentence chunk]  Concluding sentence  IV. Conclusion  Revisit the BIG question [purpose]  Provide universal insight |

**PRACTICING CONNECTING DEVICE TO MEANING - WRITING A QUOTATION SANDWICH or CHUNK:**

“Because quotations do not speak for themselves, you need to build a “frame” around them in which you do the speaking for them. Quotations inserted into the text without such a frame may be called ‘hit-and-run’ quotations, likening them to car accidents in which the driver speeds away and avoids taking responsibility for the damage.”

Example of a “Hit and Run” Quotation: [a.k.a. “quote bomb”!]

Patrick Henry reveals to his audience that they are placing their hopes on an illusion of goodwill by the British. **“We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts.”** This quote shows that they have failed in their attempts at securing peace and liberty.

“To adequately frame a quotation, you need to insert it into what we like to call a ‘quotation sandwich,’ with the statement introducing it serving as the top slice of bread and the explanation following it as the bottom slice. The introduction or lead-in should explain who is speaking and set up what the quotations says; the follow-up statements should explain why the quotation illustrates the character’s claim.”

Example of a Quotation “Sandwich”: [this is how you should write it!]

Henry reveals to his audience that they are placing their hopes on an illusion of goodwill falsely communicated by the British. He alludes to the **“song of that siren,”** a reference to the irresistible, but daunting creatures in The Odysseywith the ability to **“transform [men] into beasts,”** in order to characterize the British promises as ultimately dangerous to American freedom. Through this reference, the reader connects the former promises of liberty made by the British diplomats to the alluring but lethal siren’s song and can more fully understand Henry’s purpose to reveal to his audience that in the past they have either been blind or have ignored the truth that the British ministry does not have American interests at heart.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER…WRITING THE BODY PARAGRAPH**

*Once you have a well-written thesis statement and good notes in your outline, you are ready to begin writing body paragraphs.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BODY PARAGRAPH [divided into parts]** | **Notes:** |
| To convince his reluctant audience to see his point of view, Patrick Henry, through a poignant allusion and recurring references to false and misguided hope, first reminds the country’s leaders that their attempts at reconciliation and diplomacy for the past ten years have not achieved their goal of securing peace and liberty for America. | Topic Sentence  + reference to devices  + reference to topic of this body paragraph |
| Henry reveals to his audience that they are placing their hopes on an illusion of goodwill falsely communicated by the British. He alludes to the **“song of that siren,”** a reference to irresistible, but daunting creatures in *The Odyssey* with the ability to **“transform [men] into beasts,”** in order to characterize the British and their promises as ultimately dangerous to America’s quest for freedom. Through this reference, the reader connects the former promises of liberty made by the British diplomats to the alluring but lethal siren’s song and can more fully understand Henry’s purpose to reveal to his audience that in the past they have either been blind or have ignored the truth that the British do not have American interests at heart. | Discussion of Device #1  “quotation sandwich”  + introduces the context of the examples.  +weaves short phrases from the text with grammatical fluency  +explains the examples connecting them to purpose |
| Additionally, Henry’s recurring images of lost hope confront the gentleman with the delusion that this time the result may be different in their negotiations with the British. Henry begin by conceding that it is natural to man to “indulge in the illusions of hope” and then as he continues to “justify those hopes” in order to justify his own actions. In his conclusion, however, Henry urges his audience to discontinue the chase for the “illusive phantom of hope” at a time when “there is no room for hope.” Repeating these images emphasizes the past misjudgment of the American leaders in dealing with the British ministry’s promises for American freedom. | Transition  Discussion of Device #2  “quotation sandwich”  + introduces the context of the examples.  +weaves short phrases from the text with grammatical fluency  +explains the examples connecting them to purpose |
| Henry’s emphasis on the mistakes of the past ultimately serves to force his audience to see the truth and prepare them for his message that they need to change their methods from diplomacy to action. | Concluding Sentence  +refers back to the topic sentence  +serves as a bridge to the next paragraph |

*YES, YOU HAVE TO DO THIS*

|  |
| --- |
| Underline your thesis statement in pink. |
| Underline your topic sentence in pink. |
| Underline references to strategies in blue.  Underline references to text in green.  Underline analysis and explanation in yellow. |
| Underline your concluding statement in pink. |

**PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING PAGE BECAUSE IT WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND HOW YOU WRITE ABOUT THE AUTHOR’S RHETORICAL DEVICES. I WILL EXPECT YOU TO WRITE ABOUT THE DEVICES IN SAME MANNER ON YOUR NEXT TIMED WRITING. KEEP THIS AND STUDY IT.**

**How to Connect Rhetorical Choices to Meaning**

**NOTE: In general, a connection of device to meaning should be 3-5 sentences long. The templates below are a starting place; you will eventually learn to vary them to suit your purposes. A connection must articulate the meaning a device *suggests* and HOW this suggestion is achieved.**

**Diction**

* Identify the grammatical unit (phrase, noun, verb, adjective, adverb, etc.) and provide the context in which it appears in the text. Consider connotation as well as denotation. Do NOT write: *The writer uses diction*. That’s like saying: *The writer uses words.*
* Connect the diction to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The phrase**\*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ used to describe/identify\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ conveys \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ since / because / in that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is significant because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. **\*** or the noun, verb, adjective, adverb

Example:

The phrase, “a thin beard of ivy,” used to describe Jay Gatsby’s mansion conveys both intrigue and inexperience. Since the ivy is “thin,” Fitzgerald suggests a wealth without lineage, newly formed and barely veiled; yet, the ivy as a “beard” suggests a worldly desire to conceal. This is significant because through the description of his mansion, Gatsby is portrayed as both ingénue and chameleon, alerting the reader to the protagonist’s dual and perhaps contradictory nature.

**Syntax**

* Identify the syntactical choice the author has made and provide the context in which it appears in the text. Do NOT write: *The writer uses syntax.* Since syntax refers to the order and structure of words, phrases, etc, it always exists – even if you do not find it noteworthy.
* Connect the syntax to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ function(s) to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This structure supports the author’s purpose to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Example:

Gatsby’s interrupted sentences dramatize his nervousness and hesitation as he discusses his upcoming meeting with Daisy at Nick’s bungalow. Stuttering, “Why, I thought – why, look here, old sport, you don’t make very much money, do you,” Gatsby reveals his true vulnerability and weakness showing a stark contrast to the “greatness” that has been established in the early chapters of the novel. Fitzgerald continues to reveal chinks in Gatsby’s armor as the novel progresses preparing the reader for protagonist’s ultimate fall.

Helpful hint: (syntax continued)

Some other examples of purposeful syntactical choices an author might make: **parallelism, anaphora, rhetorical question, appositives, polysyndeton, asyndeton, prepositional phrases**, etc. According to Jeff Sommers and Max Morenberg, authors of *The Writer’s Options*, **appositives** define, summarize, and clarify. **Prepositional phrases** may elaborate and clarify by indicating how, where, when, why.

**Imagery**

(word pictures appealing to one of the 6 senses (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, kinesthetic) – if you can’t identify which one, it isn’t a valid example of imagery)

* Identify the image and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
* Connect the image to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The image of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ depicts a (picture, sense, state, etc.) of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because the reader (sees, envisions, realizes) that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is significant because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Example:

The image of an “argument . . . pull[ing]” Nick back to the party “as if with ropes” conveys his helpless struggle to get away from the gathering in Tom and Myrtle’s apartment at the same time that it dramatizes his fascination with the inebriated and adulterous events that are occurring. The reader can see that much as ropes confine, restrain, and render one helpless, Nick, due perhaps to a lack of experience or a flawed moral code, remains discomfited yet seems unable to confront or reject the lies and pretenses of the party guests. This is significant because the reader must question Nick’s declaration that he is tolerant and honest.

**Figurative Language: Metaphor or Simile**

* Identify the metaphor or simile and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
* Connect the metaphor or simile to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The subject of (x) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is compared to (y) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is fitting because (x) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and (y) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ share these characteristics: (a) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and (b) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This is significant because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Example: (Metaphor/Simile continued)

In his “I Have a Dream” speech, Martin Luther King, Jr. compares the condition of poverty to a “lonely island.” This is a fitting comparison because poverty and a lonely island share these characteristics: (a) isolation and alienation from the “vast ocean of material prosperity” which surrounds them and (b) both are small, singled out, vulnerable, and surrounded by something they don’t possess. This comparison causes the audience to consider the tangible social barriers created by an invisible financial limitation to feel sympathy for the isolated poor.

**Figurative Language: Personification**

(a figure of speech in which animals, abstract ideas, or inanimate things are referred to as if they were human)

* Identify the animal, abstract idea, or inanimate thing and provide the context in which it appears in the text. Identify the human characteristic that is ascribed to it.
* Connect the effect of the personification to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is personified as possessing the human characteristic(s) of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The author employs

personification in order to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Example:

"Today, we begin a new chapter in the history of Louisiana. I've said throughout the campaign that there are two entities that have the most to fear from us winning this election. One is **corruption** and the other is **incompetence**. **If you happen to see either of them, let them know the party is over**."

-- Bobby Jindal, *Louisiana Governor-Elect victory Speech (as posted on americanrhetoric.com)*

In Bobby Jindal’s victory speech, the abstract ideas of corruption and incompetence are personified as possessing human form and consciousness. The governor-elect suggests that members of his audience might encounter or “see” them and should inform them that their “party” is over. Through this characterization, Jindal simultaneously emphasizes his strength as a leader and sends a strong message, without naming specific perpetrators, that those who may possess those qualities will be driven out of the state’s government.

**Figurative Language: Hyperbole**

(deliberate exaggeration used to heighten effect or create humor – remember that this is a figure of speech not meant to be interpreted literally – e.g., I’m so hungry I could eat a horse.)

* Identify what is being exaggerated and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
* Connect the effect of the hyperbole to the meaning of *this* text. Avoid generic commentary.
* Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The deliberate exaggeration of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ serves to express \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Through this heightened image, the reader\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Example: (Hyperbole continued)

From Robert Frost’s poem, “After Apple-Picking”

For I have had too much

Of apple-picking: I am overtired

Of the great harvest I myself desired.

There were ten thousand fruit to touch,

Cherish in hand, lift sown, and not let fall.

In Frost’s poem, “After Apple-Picking,” the speaker deliberately exaggerates the number of apples in order to emphasize his shift from excitement and desire to his extreme weariness during the harvest. The speaker has had “too much” as a result of the “ten thousand” fruit to touch. Through this image, the reader comes to understand that the speaker is not only weary of body, but is also “overtired” in spirit as well.

[Example taken from *A Contemporary Guide to Literary Terms* by Edwin J. Barton and Glenda A. Hudson (Houghton Mifflin, 2004)]

**Symbol**

* Identify both the concrete and abstract meanings of the symbol and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
* Connect the symbol to specific characters in this text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*concrete* *abstract*

for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because it represents \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Through this symbol, the author \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Example:

The pearls Daisy Buchanan rescues from the trash and subsequently wears “around her neck” symbolize her ultimate choice of money over love because they represent Tom’s vast wealth (they were “valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars”) in contrast to Gatsby’s avowal of love, symbolized by the letter she “wouldn’t let go of.” By highlighting Daisy’s donning of the pearls, Fitzgerald comments on the shallow and misguided values of the 20th Century American, one who pursues the elusive “dream” instead of concrete relationships.

**Detail**

* Identify the detail and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
* Describe the function of the inclusion of that detail in *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The detail of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ conveys \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ since/because/in that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The author wants the reader to see \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because/so that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

Example: (detail continued)

The detail of the string of polo ponies Tom Buchanan brought east with him from Chicago conveys his vast wealth and hedonism. Moving the ponies is expensive and unnecessary, suggesting that Tom does not need to concern himself with cost but does concern himself with appearing more powerful than his peers. Fitzgerald wants the reader to see Tom as spoiled and self-indulgent so that Tom will appear distasteful even before the reader learns of his current affair.

**Allusion**

* Identify the allusion (*indirect* reference by an author to another text, historical occurrence, or to myths and legends) and provide the context in which it appears in the text.
* Describe the function of the allusion in *this* text. Avoid generic commentary. Provide an original insight. Pay attention to *your own diction*. It enhances your analysis.

Model:

The author or speaker alludes to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in order to

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Through this reference, the reader connects \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and can more fully understands the author’s purpose to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Example:

“For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn.”

Barack Obama

Obama’s allusions to Concord, Gettysburg, Normandy, and Khe Sahn offer examples of struggles that Americans have faced in the past which parallel the unique struggles Americans believe they are currently facing with our economy, environment, and world conflict. Even though the references are meant to show these struggles, the president’s desired effect is to provide hope and resolve to the listener since these battles resulted in victories for America. Citizens are reminded that they can be victorious in our modern struggles.

Examples of “generic” commentary: *gets the reader’s attention, draws the reader in, connects to the author’s purpose, makes the point, drives the point home…etc*.

Sample Connecting Device to Meaning Chart with additional devices…

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Device** | **Example** | **Explanation** |
| allusion | “For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sahn.” | The allusions to Concord, Gettysburg, Normandy, and Khe Sahn offer examples of struggles that Americans have faced in the past which parallel the unique struggles Americans believe they are currently facing with our economy, environment, and world conflict. Even though the references are meant to show these struggles, the desired effect is to provide hope and resolve to the listener since these battles resulted in victories for America. Citizens are reminded that they can be victorious in our modern struggles. |
| Pathos  From shame to pride… | This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed -- why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent mall, and why a man whose father less than sixty years ago might not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred Oath. | The image of a man sixty years ago denied service warrants a number of emotional responses from the audience from bitterness and anger to shame and embarrassment for American citizens as they contemplate the country’s past struggles with civil rights. However, the image that follows of the man’s son taking the “most sacred Oath” contrasts those negative emotions and replaces them with pride and joy by allowing the audience to witness how the nation is overcoming its past and to concentrate on the promise of hope and change for the future.. |