

## **RHETORICAL DEVICES**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### **STANDARD R3 – (F) Determine how an author uses rhetoric to advance a particular purpose.**

**Rhetoric** is defined as the skill of speaking or writing formally and effectively especially as a way to persuade or influence people. **Rhetorical Devices** use words in a certain way to convey meaning or to persuade, and can also be used to generate a particular emotional response from the reader or audience. Writers often use **Figurative Language**, words and phrases that mean more than their literal definition, as rhetorical devices. Figurative language helps readers imagine what a writer wants to express, often in a more intriguing, complex manner than a literal description.

- Metaphor:** A comparison in which one thing becomes another (without using “like” or “as”)  
Example: “But my mother’s hair...is the warm smell of bread before you bake it.”
- Simile:** A comparison between two things that are basically dissimilar using “like” or “as” to make the comparison.  
Example: “My papa’s hair is like a broom.”
- Personification:** Giving human qualities to something that is not human.  
Example: “And me, my hair is lazy.”
- Alliteration:** The repetition of similar consonant sounds within a phrase or sentence.  
Example: “the smell when she makes room for you on her side of the bed still warm...”
- Irony:** Conveys the opposite of what is meant or what would be expected (often with a twist).  
Examples: Saying “You’re so graceful!” to someone who has just tripped is **verbal irony**.  
A lifeguard drowning in a bathtub is **irony of situation**. **Dramatic irony** is when the reader (or viewer) knows something the character doesn’t.
- Hyperbole:** A bold, deliberate exaggeration not intended to be taken literally, it is used as a means of emphasizing the truth of a statement.  
Example: She had not seen him in a thousand years.
- Anaphora:** Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.  
Example: Excerpt from MLK’s “I Have a Dream” speech: “I have a dream that one day this nation ... I have a dream that one day o ...I have a dream that one day...”
- Symbolism:** Using an object or idea (a symbol) to represent something else such as ideas or emotions.  
Example: the mockingbird in *To Kill a Mockingbird* symbolizes Tom Robinson
- Imagery:** (A.K.A. Sensory Details) Images and/or details that emphasize our senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch) to recreate a scene for the reader.  
Example: “The snoring, the rain, and Mama’s hair that smells like bread.”
- Repetition:** The act of using words or phrases more than once for a specific dramatic effect.  
Example: “Cathy who is queen of cats has cats and cats and cats and cats. Baby cats. Big cats. Cats asleep like little doughnuts.”
- Allusion:** When authors refer or make reference to a historical event, famous individual, landmark, or well-known work of art/literature.  
Example: “I was surprised his nose was not growing like Pinocchio’s.”
- Oxymoron:** Deliberate combination of seemingly contradictory words.  
Examples: bittersweet; jumbo shrimp