**Persuasive language techniques**

Language techniques reference list

**Emotional Appeal:** Writers may appeal to fear, anger or joy to sway their readers.

**Word Choice (vocabulary):** Is a person "slim" or "skinny"? Is an oil spill an "incident" or an "accident"? Writers tend to reinforce their arguments by choosing words which will influence their reader's perception of an item or issue.

**Repetition:** Can reinforce the writer's message. Writers may repeat a word, a phrase or an entire sentence for emphasis

**Analogy:** Essay writers often use figures of speech or comparisons (simile, metaphor, personification) for desired emphasis.

**Appeal to Authority (association):** A writer may mention an important event or person to lend importance or credibility to his/her argument.

**Hyperbole:** completely overstating and exaggerating your point for effect. Eg: “I’ve told you millions of times!”

**Irony:** Irony is present if the writer’s words contain more than one meaning. This may be in the form of sarcasm, gentle irony, or a pun (play on words).

**Imperative:** an order or command eg. “Go now!” “Get in quick!”

**Personal pronoun:** using words such as we, us, I, you, them. Often used to make the audience feel included.

**Statistics:** Factual information used to provide evidence to support opinions.

**Rhetorical question:** The writer is asking questions to make us think but doesn’t necessarily want an answer.

**Interrogative questions:** The writer wants us to formulate answers in our minds – they are often who, what, when, how, why questions.

**Anaphora:** The writer has used repetition, but there is a change in the phrasing – usually the last time the phrase has been used.

**Euphemism:** The writer could say something considered really negative or harsh is a nicer way eg. “passed away”.

**Listing:** Using a wide variety of examples to convey a specific point.

**Sentence structure:** Sentences made deliberately short or long for a particular purpose.

**Allusion:** A specific reference to a biblical or historical event or person (can also look like a metaphor “he is Herculean”).

**Figurative language techniques**

**Colloquialism**: informal language, conversational language.

**Cliche:** An overused term or phrase. Eg: Don’t worry be happy”

**Pun:** A play on words or a phrase with a double meaning.

**Simile:** A comparison between two things using like or as.

**Metaphor:** Transferring the qualities of one thing to another. Saying something IS something else.

**Alliteration:** Repetition of sounds at the start of a group of words.Eg: “slimy, sludgy, squishy mud.”

**Assonance:** Repetition of sounds within a group of words. Eg: “h**ow** n**ow** br**ow**n c**ow**?”

**Personification:** Giving non human things human qualities.

**Hyperbole:** Extreme exaggeration for effect.

**Onomatopoeia:** Words that sound like the sound they make.

**Rhyme:** Words that sound the same.

**Rhythm:** Pattern of beats or syllables in poetry.

**Stanza:** The way a poem is divided. Sometimes called a verse.

**Synesthesia:** An attempt to fuse different senses by describing one kind of sense impression in words normally used to describe another. Eg: a loud aroma, a sweet voice, a velvety smile.

**Connotation:** A suggested meaning connected with a word beyond its literal meaning.

**Denotation:** The literal, dictionary meaning of a word.

**Euphemism:** Using a vague or nicer term to describe something considered too harsh or offensive: eg: “He passed away”.

**Contrast:** Two different ideas are next to, or near to, each other, highlighting the differences to increase figurative meaning. Eg: past and present, different opinions, moods or emotions.

**Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which a person or thing is described using something closely associated with it. eg: “The White House” in place of the president, “The crown” in place of a king.

**Oxymoron:** A combination of two words which appear to contradict each other eg: “A pointless point of view” “bittersweet”.

**Emotive language:** words or phrases specifically chosen to create an emotional reaction. Eg: The barbaric practice of beating defenceless children.”

**Paradox:** A statement in which an apparent contradiction exposes an unexpected truth eg: “The faster I go; the more behind I get.” “The more I learn, the less I know.”

**Juxtaposition:** Laying opposite things side by side.

**Adverbs/adjectives:** Carefully chosen words to describe nouns or verbs to create a strong picture in the reader’s mind.

**Enjambment:** The flow of meaningbetween lines in poetry. The reader’s eye is forced to go on to the next sentence. It can also make the reader feel uncomfortable or the poem feel like [“flow-of-thought”](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Train_of_thought) with a sensation of urgency or disorder. Eg:

*I am not prone to weeping, as our sex,*

*Commonly are; the want of which vain dew*