**Rhetorical Strategies Cheat Sheet - AP Language**

**RHETORIC:**

*Language carefully chosen and arranged for maximum effect*

**Key Elements from The Rhetorical Framework**

* exigence
* audience
* purpose
* persuasive appeals:
  + ethos: the character and credibility of the writer; the establishment of authority; the “why you should trust me” factor
  + logos: logic; facts or objective information; appealing to one’s intellect
  + pathos: emotion; appealing to one’s feelings
* organization (arrangement; structure; in what order are things presented?)
* style: diction, figurative language, syntax, etc.
  + diction: analyze **only** **unusual word choice** such as archaic language or especially evocative choices that contain powerful connotations

**Figurative Language**

* metaphor: an implied comparison between two unlike things: *“Everyday is a winding road.”*
* simile: an explicit comparison between two unlike things with the use of “like” or “as”: *“You are like a hurricane, there’s a calm in your eye.”*
* personification: attributing human qualities to an abstract idea or and inanimate object*: “I hear the mutter of the battlefield.”*
* imagery: language that makes strong appeal to the five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, smell - imagery allows the reader to more fully participate in the work with images and experiences that they can tie to directly or indirectly: *“…to be a book of magic; and once when a chambermaid had lifted it, merely to brush away the dust, the skeleton had rattled in its closet, the picture of the young lady had stepped one foot upon the floor, and several ghastly faces had peeped forth from the mirror…”*
* syntax: the intentional emphasis on word order/structure of a sentence or phrase; to analyze syntax one can consider sentence form and structure, repetition, and/or punctuation.
* pun: a play on the meaning of words that relies on a word having more than one meaning or sounding like another word; “a mender of soles”
* irony: the speaker means something other than what is said; the unexpected; a difference between what is stated to be literally true and what the reader knows to be true
* hyperbole: exaggeration; deliberate exaggeration for emphasis; *“I’m so hungry I could eat a horse!”*
* litotes: opposite of hyperbole, intensifies an idea by understatement; *“Oh, it was nothing.”*

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* synecdoche: one word that makes the reader think of all things in the class, so *“all hands on deck”* refers to all helpers
* metonymy: designation of one thing with something closely associated with it. Thus we call the head of the committee the *“chair,” “crown”* when referring to royalty, or *“the man”* when referring to government.
* oxymoron: contradiction; two contradictory terms or ideas used together: *“Parting is such sweet sorrow, ” “jumbo shrimp”*
* paradox: a statement that appears to be contradictory but, in fact, has some truth*: “He worked hard at being lazy.”* *“Absolute seriousness is never without a dash of humor.”*
* onomatopoeia: refers to the use of words whose sound reinforces their meaning: “*cackle,” “bang,” or “pop.”* An auditory stimulus.
* alliteration: repetition of the same sound at the beginning of successive words; effect: to increase memory retention, add emphasis and/or to create a rhythm: *“ Vessels were searched, seized and sunk.*.”
* euphemism: an inoffensive expression that is substituted for one that is considered offensive or harsh: *“We put our dog to sleep.”*
* allusion: a reference to another text or assumed knowledge of a reference; an allusion references and draws on the authority of the alluded work and connects the reader with the author by assuming common knowledge; *“If I’m such a bad kid, why don’t you just put a scarlet letter on my chest?”*
* anadiplosis: repeats the last word of one phrase, clause, or sentence at or very near the beginning of the next. it can be generated in series for the sake of beauty or to give a sense of logical progression: *“This treatment plant has a record of uncommon reliability, a reliability envied by every other water treatment facility on the coast.”*
* chiasmus: grammatical structure when the first clause or phrase is reversed in the second, sometimes repeating the same words. Reversing the syntactical order emphasizes the reversal in meaning and thus reinforces the contrast. Such a device is useful in writing to emphasize differences or contrast in meaning: “*And so, my fellow Americans, ask now what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”*

**Matters of Syntax**

* parallelism: a set of similarly structured words, phrases, or clauses: *“He walked to the store; he walked to the library; he walked to the apartment.”*
* juxtaposition: the placing of contrasting settings, characters, or other literary elements in opposition between paragraphs or between sections of text to highlight an intended disparity. Example: *In Cold Blood* is written not with typical chapter formation but as an intended juxtaposition of the events in the Clutter home in juxtaposition to the activities of the two misfits. The effect is to highlight the disparity in an effort to heighten the sense of terror, panic, and an ominous foreboding in the reader.
* antithesis: the placing of opposing or contrasting ideas and/or words within the same sentence or very close together to emphasize their disparity: *“It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.”*
* asyndeton: conjunctions are omitted, producing fast-paced and rapid prose to speed up the reader so as to have the reader experience the events along with the persona in a rapid succession: *“I woke up, got out of bed, pulled on my clothes, rushed out the door.”*
* polysyndeton: the use of many conjunctions has the opposite effect of asyndeton; it slows the pace of the reader but the effect is to possibly overwhelm the reader with details thus connecting the reader and the persona to the same experience – may also be called cataloging: *“My mother cooked roast turkey and cornbread stuffing and sweet potatoes and peas and apple pie.”*
* *anaphora: -* a form of a regular repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases or strategically placed paragraphs: *“I have a dream…”*
* repetition in general: repeated use of words, phrases, or clauses to emphasize its meaning
* loose or periodic sentences: placing the subject at the end of the sentence: *“Walking down the street, I saw the cat.”* Emphasis here is on the subject and not the verb or action. The opposite may also happen with a cumulative sentence where the emphasis is on the action of the sentence and not the subject.

**More to Know**

* rhetorical questions: a question posed by the speaker which has an obvious answer, no answer, or is the argument the speaker or writer intends to answer in an effort to further prove their argument. Rhetorical questions are leading questions asked by the speaker. If the answer is obvious the speaker already knows the answer and is intending to lead the audience to his/her point of view or conclusion. If there is no answer, the speaker is aware of the lack of an answer and uses that lack to highlight the flaw in the opposing viewpoint. Obvious answer to a rhetorical question: “Do any of you want higher taxes?” The obvious answer is, “No,” because no one wants to pay more in taxes. No answer to a rhetorical question: “Why can’t we all just get along?” The speaker/writer will probably offer an antidote to the issue.
* tone: the accumulated and implied attitude toward the subject reached by analyzing diction, detail, syntax, and all other figurative language elements.
* tone shift: because tone radiates from the author, through a speaker(s) or narrator(s) and then to the reader, a tone shift indicates a shift in attitude about the subject. A tone shift may be the result of a change in speaker, subject, audience, or intention. The shift may indicate irony, a deeper and more complex understanding of the topic, a new way of addressing the topic, etc. Notice how and why the tone shift occurs and utilize two contrasting tone words to express the change and its effect. This will tie to the argument or point of view perhaps highlighting a change in position.
* subject: other than the general topic identify the central thesis of the work in one clear declarative thesis statement.
* writer or speaker: persona of the work; address historical and/or cultural contexts and their effect or influence.
* occasion: formal, informal, etc. and any details that would affect the purpose
* audience: direct and indirect or primary and secondary (analyze both because they are usually there!)
* purpose or intention: to persuade, entertain, inform, etc. or usually a combination

## Logical Fallacies

Fallacies are common errors in reasoning that will undermine the logic of your argument. Fallacies can be either illegitimate arguments or irrelevant points, and are often identified because they lack evidence that supports their claim. Avoid these common fallacies in your own arguments and watch for them in the arguments of others.

**Slippery slope:** This is a conclusion based on the premise that if A happens, then eventually through a series of small steps, through B, C,..., X, Y, Z will happen, too, basically equating A and Z. So, if we don't want Z to occur, A must not be allowed to occur either. Example:

If we ban Hummers because they are bad for the environment eventually the government will ban all cars, so we should not ban Hummers.

In this example the author is equating banning Hummers with banning all cars, which is not the same thing.

**Hasty Generalization:** This is a conclusion based on insufficient or biased evidence. In other words, you are rushing to a conclusion before you have all the relevant facts. Example:

Even though it's only the first day, I can tell this is going to be a boring course.

In this example the author is basing their evaluation of the entire course on only one class, and on the first day which is notoriously boring and full of housekeeping tasks for most courses. To make a fair and reasonable evaluation the author must attend several classes, and possibly even examine the textbook, talk to the professor, or talk to others who have previously finished the course in order to have sufficient evidence to base a conclusion on.

**Post hoc ergo propter hoc:** This is a conclusion that assumes that if 'A' occurred after 'B' then 'B' must have caused 'A.' Example:

I drank bottled water and now I am sick, so the water must have made me sick.

In this example the author assumes that if one event chronologically follows another the first event must have caused the second. But the illness could have been caused by the burrito the night before, a flu bug that had been working on the body for days, or a chemical spill across campus. There is no reason, without more evidence, to assume the water caused the person to be sick.

**Non-sequitur:** Latin for “it does not follow.” When one statement isn’t logically connected to another.

"Racism is wrong. Therefore, we need affirmative action."

**Begging the Claim:** The conclusion that the writer should prove is validated within the claim. Example:

Filthy and polluting coal should be banned.

Arguing that coal pollutes the earth and thus should be banned would be logical. But the very conclusion that should be proved, that coal causes enough pollution to warrant banning its use, is already assumed in the claim by referring to it as "filthy and polluting."

**Circular Argument:** This restates the argument rather than actually proving it. Example:

George Bush is a good communicator because he speaks effectively.

In this example the conclusion that Bush is a "good communicator" and the evidence used to prove it "he speaks effectively" are basically the same idea. Specific evidence such as using everyday language, breaking down complex problems, or illustrating his points with humorous stories would be needed to prove either half of the sentence.

**Either/or:** This is a conclusion that oversimplifies the argument by reducing it to only two sides or choices. Example:

We can either stop using cars or destroy the earth.

In this example where two choices are presented as the only options, yet the author ignores a range of choices in between such as developing cleaner technology, car sharing systems for necessities and emergencies, or better community planning to discourage daily driving.

**Ad hominem:** This is an attack on the character of a person rather than their opinions or arguments. Example:

Green Peace's strategies aren't effective because they are all dirty, lazy hippies.

In this example the author doesn't even name particular strategies Green Peace has suggested, much less evaluate those strategies on their merits. Instead, the author attacks the characters of the individuals in the group.

**Red Herring:** This is a diversionary tactic that avoids the key issues, often by avoiding opposing arguments rather than addressing them. Example:

The level of mercury in seafood may be unsafe, but what will fishers do to support their families?

In this example the author switches the discussion away from the safety of the food and talks instead about an economic issue, the livelihood of those catching fish. While one issue may affect the other it does not mean we should ignore possible safety issues because of possible economic consequences to a few individuals.

**Straw Man:** This move oversimplifies an opponent's viewpoint and then attacks that hollow argument.

People who don't support the proposed state minimum wage increase hate the poor.

In this example the author attributes the worst possible motive to an opponent's position. In reality, however, the opposition probably has more complex and sympathetic arguments to support their point. By not addressing those arguments, the author is not treating the opposition with respect or refuting their position.