RHETORICAL DEVICES

RHETORIC is defined as the “art of persuasion”. Rhetorical devices are writing techniques that add energy and interest to writing.

ALLUSION – A reference to a well known person, place, thing, or event that the writer assumes the reader will be familiar with. For example, The Bible or Shakespeare.

ALLITERATION – The repetition of consonants in quick succession to create mood. For example, repetition of “s” often creates a sinister or threatening feeling while “l” often creates a sing-song youthfulness.

ANALOGY – A comparison of similar objects. An analogy suggests that since the objects are alike in some ways, they will be alike on other ways.

For example, “Dogs are like computers. They are not always user-friendly” but they can also be man’s best friend.

ANECDOTE – A brief story about a single humorous or interesting event.

COLLOQUIALISM – Words, phrases, and expressions used in everyday conversation.

IMAGERY – images are words or combinations of words that help the reader form a mental picture.

JARGON – The technical language of a particular group (musicians, computer programmers, etc.)

RHETORICAL QUESTION - A question posed for effect and to promote thought and reflection, not to elicit an answer.

IRONY- The use of words to suggest a meaning opposite to the one stated. Often, irony is used to suggest the stark contrast of the literal meaning being put forth. Sarcasm is a low form of irony.

REPETITION – Repetition of a word, phrase or idea.

METAPHOR – A direct comparison between two unlike objects. For example, “My alarm clock is the atom bomb of my bedroom”.

PERSONIFICATION – non-human things, animals and ideas that are given human qualities. For example, “leaves dancing” or “the sky weeping”.

HYBERBOLE – Intended exaggeration, a device often used to create irony, humour, or dramatic effect.

SIMILE – Things that are not alike are compared using ‘like’ or ‘as’. “The rain hit the pavement like white angry bees”.

SATIRE – To ridicule or criticize with the intent to reform.

SYMBOL - Using an object or action that means something more than its literal meaning. For example, waves can = cleansing of something or, in contrast, as a destructive and violent force. Dove=peace

FORESHADOWING – The author hints at what is to come.

PUN – A phrase that uses words that often sound the same but have a different effect.

LOCAL COLOUR – The use of details that are common in a certain place (a local area). A story taking place on a seacoast would probably contain details about the water and the life and people near it.

SENSORY DETAILS – Specific details that are usually perceived through the senses. Sensory details help readers to see, feel, smell, taste, and/or hear what is being described.