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Rhetorical Devices

Practice

Rhetorical devices are used in persuasive speech and writing to emphasize key points. The following are examples of rhetorical devices:

- **Restatement:** repeating the same idea in a variety of ways
- **Repetition:** repeating an idea using the same words
- **Parallelism:** repeating grammatical structures
- **Rhetorical questions:** asking a question whose answer is self-evident

Repetition and parallelism are also often used in poetry to emphasize an idea or excite an emotion.

A Read this passage below from *Speech in the Virginia Convention* by Patrick Henry. Then, answer the questions.

And what have we to oppose 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. . . . 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 the Parliament.

1. Give an example of a rhetorical question from the excerpt.

2. Give an example of restatement from the excerpt.

3. Is parallelism used in the above excerpt? Explain.

B Write a short persuasive paragraph using at least one of the rhetorical devices described above.

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Rhetorical Devices

Assess

A On the line next to each numbered rhetorical device, write the letter of the phrase that best defines it.

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| 1. ____ repetition | A. repeating an idea in different ways |
| 2. ____ restatement | B. repeating an idea in the same way |
| 3. ____ parallelism | C. asking an obvious question |
| 4. ____ rhetorical question | D. repeating grammatical structures |

B Answer the following questions.

1. What rhetorical device is used in this excerpt from “The Explorer” by Gwendolyn Brooks?

There were no bournes.
There were no quiet rooms.

2. Why might a writer or speaker use repetition?

3. Write a persuasive paragraph on one of the following topics. Use at least two rhetorical devices in your paragraph.

a change that would improve your school
on attending school all year long
why school lunches should be longer

