

Style and Rhetorical Appeals Graphic Organizer

Thesis	The sentence or group of sentences that directly expresses the author's opinion, purpose, meaning, or proposition.	
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Structure of Essay • Length/Order of Paragraphs <i>Types of Writing (Rhetorical Modes)</i> • Description • Narrative • Persuasion • Exposition (Example, Definition) Classification/Division, Process Analysis, Compare/Contrast, Cause/Effect) 	
Syntax	<p><i>Syntax refers to the arrangement of words within a phrase, clause, or sentence.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type/Length of Sentence (refer to Ch. 19 of <i>Oxford Essential Guide to Writing</i>): segregating, freight-train, parataxis, triadic, cumulative, parallelism, balanced, loose, periodic, convoluted, centered, fragment) • Active/Passive Voice • Antithesis • Aphorism • Chiasmus • Juxtaposition • Punctuation Use • Repetition/Alliteration 	
Diction	<p><i>Diction refers to a writer's word choice</i> (Ch. 24-25 of <i>Oxford Essential Guide to Writing</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstract/Concrete • Ambiguity • Colloquial/Slang/Pretensions • Clichés/ Euphemism/Jargon • Denotation/Connotation of a word • Formal v. Informal/ Levels of Usage • Hyperbole • Idiom • Onomatopoeia • Tone of a word (emotional charge of word) 	
Figurative Language	Similes, Metaphors, Personification, Allusion, Irony, Overstatement/Understatement, Puns, Imagery, Allegory, Analogy, Apostrophe, Conceit, Extended Metaphor, Metonymy, Oxymoron, Paradox, Symbolism	
Rhetorical Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ethos</i>: Establishes credibility of speaker. • <i>Logos</i>: Employs logical reasoning and clear examples. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pathos</i>: Plays on reader's emotions and interests. 	
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Thesis:

thesis – In expository writing, the thesis statement is the sentence or group of sentences that directly expresses the author's opinion, purpose, meaning, or position. Expository writing is usually judged by analyzing how accurately, effectively, and thoroughly a writer has proven the thesis.

Structure:

rhetorical modes – This flexible term describes the variety, the conventions, and the purposes of the major kinds of writing. The four most common rhetorical modes (often referred to as “modes of discourse”) are as follows:

- (1) The purpose of *exposition* (or expository writing) is to explain and analyze information by presenting an idea, relevant evidence, and appropriate discussion. The AP language exam essay questions are frequently expository topics.
- (2) The purpose of *argumentation* is to prove the validity of an idea, or point of view, by presenting sound reasoning, discussion, and argument that thoroughly convince the reader. *Persuasive* writing is a type of argumentation having an additional aim of urging some form of action.
- (3) The purpose of *description* is to recreate, invent, or visually present a person, place, event or action so that the reader can picture that being described. Sometimes an author engages all five senses in description; good descriptive writing can be sensuous and picturesque. Descriptive writing may be straightforward and objective or highly emotional and subjective.
- (4) The purpose of *narration* is to tell a story or narrate an event or series of events. This writing mode frequently uses the tools of descriptive writing.

Syntax:

syntax – The way an author chooses to join words into phrases, clauses, and sentences. Syntax is similar to diction, but you can differentiate them by thinking of syntax as groups of words, while diction refers to the individual words. In the multiple choice section of the AP exam, expect to be asked some questions about how an author manipulates syntax. In the essay section, you will need to analyze how syntax produces effects.

type/length of sentence

segregating: A segregating style consists of relatively short, uncomplicated sentences. Short sentences are strong, repetitive, and emphatic. (“He writes, at most 750 words a day. He writes and rewrites. He polishes and repolishes. He works in solitude. He works with agony. He works with sweat.”)

freight-train: The freight-train style couples short independent clauses to make longer sequential statements. It is useful when you wish to link a series of events, ideas, impressions, feelings, or perceptions as immediately as possible, without judging their relative value or imposing a logical structure upon them. (“And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it”).

parataxis: independent clauses butted together without conjunctions (unlike the freight-train style) and using semicolons or commas. Parataxis is used when fluidity of freight-train is not desired. (“The habits of the natives are disgusting; the women hawk on the floor, the forks are dirty; the trees are poor; the Pont Neuf is not a patch on London Bridge; the cows are skinny . . .”).

triadic: A freight train sentence composed in three units is triadic. The triadic sentence provides a clearer structural principle that is not open-ended (unlike the freight-train and parataxis styles) and tends to be repetitive. (“Her showmanship was superb; her timing sensational; her dramatic instinct uncanny.”).

cumulative: A cumulative sentence consists of an initial independent clause followed by a number of subordinate constructions that accumulate details about the person, place, event, or idea. (“7000 Romaine St. looks itself like a faded movie exterior, apastel building with chipped arte moderne detailing, the windows now either boarded up or paned with chicken-wire glass and, at the entrance, among the dusty oleander, a rubber mat that reads WELCOME.”).

parallelism: Parallelism means that two or more words or constructions stand in an identical grammatical relationship to the same thing. Parallelism is pleasant to hear and economical. (“We will come *when we are ready* and *when we choose*.”).

balanced: A balanced sentence consists of two parts roughly equivalent in both length and significance and divided by a pause. Balanced elements may repeat the same idea, show cause and effect, precedence and subsequence, or any other relationships. (“Visit either you like; they're both mad.”).

loose: The main clause comes first and is followed by the subordinate clauses and phrases. The number of ideas in a loose sentence is easily increased by adding phrases and clauses. (“I found a large hall, obviously a former garage, dimly lit, and packed with cots.”)

periodic: The subordinate constructions precede the main clause, which closes the sentence. The periodic sentence is emphatic. Delaying the principal thought increases its importance. (“Given a moist planet with methane, formaldehyde, ammonia, and some usable minerals, all of which abound, exposed to lightning or ultraviolet radiation at the right temperature, life might start almost anywhere.”).

convoluted: The main clause is split in two, opening and closing a sentence; the subordinate constructions intrude between the parts of the main clause. Convoluted sentences establish strong emphasis by throwing weight upon the words at the beginning and end of the sentence. (“Now demons, whatever else they may be, are full of interest”).

centered: the main clause occupies the middle of the sentence and is both preceded and followed by subordinate constructions. In a centered sentence, the chance of obscurity is reduced in a long sentence if the main clause can be placed in the middle of the subordinate elements. (“Having wanted to walk on the sea like St. Peter *he had taken an involuntary bath*, losing his miter and the better part of his reputation.”).

fragment: The fragment is a single word, phrase, or a dependent clause standing alone as a sentence. In formal writing fragments are generally a fault, though occasionally valuable for eye-catching and unusual emphasis. (“That nightmare was almost realized in Hitler’s totalitarian system. Almost, but not quite.”).

active/passive -- In sentences written in *active voice*, the subject performs the action expressed in the verb; the subject acts (Example: The dog *bit* the boy). In sentences written in *passive voice*, the subject receives the action expressed in the verb; the subject is acted upon (Example: The boy *was bitten* by the dog).

antithesis – the opposition or contrast of ideas; the direct opposite. (“Though studious, he was popular; though argumentative, he was modest; though inflexible, he was candid; and though metaphysical, yet orthodox.”).

aphorism – A terse statement of known authorship that expresses a general truth or a moral principle. (If the authorship is unknown, the statement is generally considered to be a folk proverb.) An aphorism can be a memorable summation of the author’s point. (“Lost time is never found again.”).

chiasmus – A figure of speech based on inverted parallelism. It is a rhetorical figure in which two clauses are related to each other through a reversal of terms (as in “. . . ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.”).

juxtaposition: Placing dissimilar items, descriptions, or ideas close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast.

punctuation: How does the author punctuate the sentence and to what extent does the punctuation affect the meaning?

repetition/alliteration – *Repetition* is the duplication, either exact or approximate, of any element of language, such as a sound, word, phrase, clause, sentence, or grammatical pattern. *Alliteration* is the repetition of sounds, especially initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words (as in “she sells sea shells”). Although the term is not frequently in the multiple-choice section, you can look for alliteration in any essay passage. The repetition can reinforce meaning, unify ideas, supply a musical sound, and/or echo the sense of the passage.

Diction:

diction – Related to style, diction refers to the writer’s word choices, especially with regard to their correctness, clearness, or effectiveness. For the AP exam, you should be able to describe an author’s diction (for example, formal or informal, ornate or plain) and understand the ways in which diction can complement the author’s purpose.

abstract/concrete—*Abstract* words signify things that cannot be perceived (Examples: honor, generosity, idea, democracy). *Concrete* words refer to perceptible things (Examples: a rose, a clap of thunder, the odor of violets).

ambiguity – The multiple meanings, either intentional or unintentional, of a word, phrase, sentence, or passage. For example, “It was a *funny* affair.” (“Laughable” or “strange”?)

colloquial/slang – The use of slang or informalities in speech or writing. Not generally acceptable for formal writing, colloquialisms give a work a conversational, familiar tone. Colloquial expressions in writing include local or regional dialects. (Example: “We have a *swell* professor of mathematics”)

pretentious—Using big words to no purpose—except perhaps to show off. (“Upon *receiving an answer in the affirmative*, he *proceeded* to the bulletin board.”)

clichés/euphemism/jargon—*Clichés* are trite expressions, devalued by overuse (Examples: “dead as a doornail,” “light as a feather,” “white as snow,” etc.). *Euphemism* comes from the Greek for “good speech,” and is a more agreeable or less offensive substitute for a generally unpleasant word or concept. The euphemism may be used to adhere to standards of social or political correctness or to add humor or ironic understatement. Saying “earthly remains” rather than “corpse” is an example of euphemism. *Jargon* is technical language misused (Example: “Given the stockpile of innovative in-house creativity for the for the generation of novel words . . .”)

connotation/denotation – The non-literal, associative meaning of a word; the implied, suggested meaning. Connotations may involve

ideas, emotions, or attitudes. Denotation refers to the strict, literal, dictionary definition of a word, devoid of any emotion, attitude, or color. (Example: the *denotation* of a knife would be a utensil used to cut; the *connotation* of a knife might be fear, violence, anger, foreboding, etc.)

formal v. informal /levels of usage—Levels of usage refers to the kind of situation in which a word is normally used. Consider three verbs that roughly mean the same thing: *exacerbate*, *annoy*, *bug*.

hyperbole – A figure of speech using deliberate exaggeration or overstatement. (The literal Greek meaning is “overshoot.”) Hyperboles often have a comic effect; however, a serious effect is also possible. (“I haven’t seen you for ages!”). Often, hyperbole produces irony. The opposite of hyperbole is *understatement*.

idiom—An *idiom* is a combination of words functioning as a unit of meaning, as in “to take the bus home.” (We cannot “carry, bring, or fetch the bus home”)

onomatopoeia – A figure of speech in which natural sounds are imitated in the sounds of words. Simple examples include such words as *buzz*, *hiss*, *hum*, *crack*, *whinny*, and *murmur*. If you note examples of onomatopoeia in an essay passage, note the effect.

tone – Similar to mood, tone describes the author’s attitude toward his material, the audience, or both. Tone is easier to determine in spoken language than in written language. Considering how a work would sound if it were read aloud can help in identifying an author’s tone.

Figurative Language:

simile—A *simile* is a brief comparison, usually introduced by *like* or *as*. (“My words swirled around his head like summer flies.”)

metaphor – A figure of speech using implied comparison of seemingly unlike things or the substitution of one for the other, suggesting some similarity. Metaphorical language makes writing more vivid, imaginative, thought provoking, and meaningful. (“Cape Cod is the bared and bended arm of Massachusetts.”)

personification – A figure of speech in which the author presents or describes concepts, animals, or inanimate objects by endowing them with human attributes or emotions. Personification is used to make these abstractions, animals, or objects appear more vivid to the reader. (“As London increased, however, rank and fashion rolled off to the west, and trade, creeping on at their heels, took possession of their deserted abodes”)

allusion – A direct or indirect reference to something that is presumably commonly known, such as an event, book, myth, place, or work of art. Allusions can be historical, literary, religious, topical, or mythical. There are many more possibilities, and a work may simultaneously use multiple layers of allusion. (“The accident was of *Titanic* proportions”)

irony/ironic – The contrast between what is stated explicitly and what is really meant, or the difference between what appears to be and what is actually true. Irony is often used to create poignancy or humor. In general, there are three major types of irony used in language:

- (1) *verbal irony* – when the words literally state the opposite of the writer’s (or speaker’s) meaning
- (2) *situational irony* – when events turn out the opposite of what was expected; when what the characters and readers think ought to happen is not what does happen
- (3) *dramatic irony* – when facts or events are unknown to a character in a play or piece of fiction but known to the reader, audience, or other characters in the work.

overstatement—see *hyperbole* under Diction.

understatement – the ironic minimalizing of fact, understatement presents something as less significant than it is. The effect can frequently be humorous and emphatic. Understatement is the opposite of *hyperbole*. Two specific types of understatement exist:

1. Litotes: A figure of speech by which an affirmation is made indirectly by denying its opposite (Example: “He was not averse to drinking” means he drank a lot).
2. Meiosis: The Greek term for understatement or belittling; a rhetorical figure by which something is referred to in terms less important than it really deserves (Example: When Mercutio calls his mortal wound a “scratch” in *Romeo and Juliet*).

puns—A *pun* is a word employed in two senses, or a word used in a context that suggests a second term sounding like it. Puns are usually used for comic effect. (“During the two previous centuries musical styles went in one era and out the other . . .”).

imagery – The sensory details or figurative language used to describe, arouse emotion, or represent abstractions. On a physical level, imagery uses terms related to the five senses: visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory. On a broader and

deeper level, however, one image can represent more than one thing. For example, a rose may present visual imagery while also representing the color in a woman's cheeks and/or symbolizing some degree of perfection. An author may use complex imagery while simultaneously employing other figures of speech, especially metaphor and simile. In addition, this term can apply to the total of all the images in a work. On the AP language exam, pay attention to *how* an author creates imagery and to the effect of this imagery.

allegory – The device of using character and/or story elements symbolically to represent an abstraction in addition to the literal meaning. In some allegories, for example, an author may intend the characters to personify an abstraction like hope or freedom. The allegorical meaning usually deals with moral truth or a generalization about human existence.

analogy – A similarity or comparison between two different things or the relationship between them. An analogy can explain something unfamiliar by associating it with or pointing out its similarity to something more familiar. Analogies can also make writing more vivid, imaginative, or intellectually engaging.

apostrophe – A figure of speech that directly addresses an absent or imaginary person or a personified abstraction, such as liberty or love. It is an address to someone or something that cannot answer. The effect may add familiarity or emotional intensity. William Wordsworth addresses John Milton as he writes, “Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour: / England hath need of thee.” Another example is Keats’ “Ode to a Grecian Urn,” in which Keats addresses the urn itself: “Thou still unravished bride of quietness.” Many apostrophes imply a personification of the object addressed.

conceit – A fanciful expression, usually in the form of an extended metaphor or surprising analogy between seemingly objects. A conceit displays intellectual cleverness as a result of the unusual comparison being made.

extended metaphor – A metaphor developed at great length, occurring frequently in or throughout a work.

metonymy – A term from the Greek meaning “changed label” or “substitute name,” metonymy is a figure of speech in which the name of one object is substituted for that of another closely associated with it. For example, a news release that claims “the White House declared” rather than “the President declared” is using metonymy

oxymoron – From the Greek for “pointedly foolish,” an oxymoron is a figure of speech wherein the author groups apparently contradictory terms to suggest a paradox. Simple examples include “jumbo shrimp” and “cruel kindness.” This term does not usually appear in the multiple-choice questions, but there is a chance that you might find it in an essay. Take note of the effect that the author achieves with the use of oxymoron.

paradox – A statement that appears to be self-contradictory or opposed to common sense but upon closer inspection contains some degree of truth or validity. (Think of the beginning of Dickens’ *Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times....”)

symbol/symbolism – Generally, anything that represents itself and stands for something else. Usually a symbol is something concrete -- such as an object, action, character, or scene – that represents something more abstract. However, symbols and symbolism can be much more complex. One system classifies symbols into three categories:

(1) *natural symbols* are objects and occurrences from nature to symbolize ideas commonly associated with them (dawn symbolizing hope or a new beginning, a rose symbolizing love, a tree symbolizing knowledge).

(2) *conventional symbols* are those that have been invested with meaning by a group (religious symbols such as a cross or Star of David; national symbols, such as a flag or an eagle; or group symbols, such as a skull and crossbones for pirates or the scale of justice for lawyers).

(3) *literary symbols* are sometimes also conventional in the sense that they are found in a variety of works and are more generally recognized. However, a work's symbols may be more complicated, as is the jungle in *Heart of Darkness*.

On the AP exam, try to determine what abstraction an object is a symbol for and to what extent it is successful in representing that abstraction.

Rhetorical Appeals:

rhetorical appeal: The persuasive device by which a writer tries to sway the audience's attention and response to any given work.

logos: Employs logical reasoning, combining a clear idea (or multiple ideas) with well-thought-out and appropriate examples and details. These supports are logically presented and rationally reach the writer's conclusion.

ethos: Establishes credibility in the speaker. Since by definition it means the common attitudes, beliefs, and characteristics of a group or time period, this appeal sets up believability in the writer. He or she is perceived as someone who can be trusted and is concerned with the reader's best interests.

pathos: Plays on the reader's emotions and interests. A sympathetic audience is more likely to accept a writer's assertions, so this appeal draws upon that understanding and uses it to the writer's advantage.