

## **Rhetorical Devices and Persuasive Strategies to Analyze on the SAT Essay**

**Ethos** – An appeal to authority aiming to establish the credibility of a speaker or source. For example, a writer might say “As a veterinarian...” or “a Harvard University study...” or “a constitutional scholar....”

**Pathos** – An appeal to the reader’s emotions. They’re trying to make you FEEL something. Angry, perhaps. Guilty. Sad. Jealous. The list goes on...

**Logos** – An appeal to logic. When the author makes logical connections between ideas, that’s logos. IF this happens, THEN this happens. Things like that.

**Anecdote** – A short personal story.

**Allusion** – A reference to a book, movie, song, etc.

**Testimony** – Quoting from people who have something to say about the issue.

**Statistics and Data** – Using facts and figures. Often accompanied by logos.

**Rhetorical Questions** – Asking questions to make the reader think.

**Metaphor** – Saying one thing IS another thing.

**Simile** – Saying one thing is LIKE another thing.

**Personification** – Giving a nonhuman thing human qualities.

**Hyperbole** – Exaggeration

**Understatement** – Making something sound much less than it is.

**Symbolism** – One thing represents something else.

**Imagery** – Language that appeals to the senses, most often visual

**Diction** – Word choice. Diction can be HIGH and fancy or LOW and informal. Writers can also use specific words for their DENOTATIVE (dictionary definition) meanings or their CONNOTATIVE (associative) meanings. It’s important to consider these things if you choose to analyze word choice.

**Slang** – A type of informal diction, often regional.

**Jargon** – Specialized language.

**Alliteration** – Several words that share the same first letter.

**Assonance** – Repeated vowel sounds.

**Syntax** – Sentence structure.

**Repetition** – Mentioning a word or phrase several times. ANAPHORA refers to lines beginning with the same word or phrase.

**Parallelism** – Writing constructed in a similar, symmetrical manner.

**Juxtaposition** – Holding two things up to compare or contrast them.

**Antithesis** – Mentioning one thing and its opposite.

**Analogy** – A comparison between two things, typically to explain function. Usually one thing is more complicated and the other is simple and common.

**Inclusive Language** – Words that make the reader feel part of a group. “We” is an obvious one.

**Tone** – The way the author’s voice sounds. Is he silly? Sarcastic? Desperate? Etc.

**Humor** – Jokes and funny language.

**Irony** – Situational irony: the opposite thing happens from what is expected. Dramatic irony: The reader knows more than the speaker or those being spoken about. Verbal irony: Saying one thing and meaning the opposite.