

Spice Up Your Writing Rhetoric Cards

Amplification

Order the words or clauses in a sequence of increasing force by adding more detail with each repetition. Use to add emphasis and make the idea important.

Pride—boundless pride—is the bane of civilization

Anadiplosis

Repeat the last words/word of a sentence, clause, or phrase at the beginning of the next sentence, clause, or phrase. Use to drive a point home or put the reader's focus on a key word, idea or emotion. Use at the climax of a scene or chapter or at a plot point.

Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering. (Star Wars)

Anaphora

Repeat a word or phrase at the beginning of series of clauses or sentences. Use to emphasize an idea. Adds emotion, tension. Builds to a climax – frequently found in best sellers in chapter 1 and often at the end of a chapter or novel.

I know you are disappointed I left. I know you are disappointed I never wrote. I know you are disappointed I came back.

Epistrophe

Repeat a word or phrase at the end of series of sentences. Three is ideal. Use to heighten emotion, add rhythm and cadence.

*The oak tree was gone. The fence was gone.
But worst of all, the house was gone.
I ain't got a permit. I don't need a permit. And
get this through your thick head, I don't have
to show you no stinkin' permit.*

Asyndeton

Leave out conjunctions between clauses to speed up pacing or add emphasis.

Run, fly, flee. He's coming to get you.

Metonymy

Call something or someone by one of its characteristics. Use to add voice and emphasis and local color. Found in many best sellers.

Tricky-Eye moved closer, his eye doing that crazy twitching it did when he was furious.

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Homoioptoton

Repeat the same endings in adjacent words. Use to add rhythm, smoothing, and emphasis.

She lay shaken, broken, and beaten.

Parallelism

Use the same structure within multiple parts of a sentence/clause/phrase. Important: The parts must match grammatically.

*like father, like son
not guns and money, but wheat and oil*

Polysyndeton

Use a string of conjunctions between clauses to slow down pacing and to add rhythm and effect. Effective in descriptions.

He was thin in the ribs and long in the legs and stinking worse than a garbage truck.

Symploce

Begin a series of clauses with the same word and end each sentence with the a different, but repeated word. Use a repeat of 3 or 4. Very effective for hammering an idea or showing heavy emotion in dialogue.

You may know something I don't. You may believe something I don't. You may hate something I don't.

Antimetabole

Repeat the exact phrase in reverse order. Use to make point, deepen description, add rhythm.

*The wise eat to live, not live to eat.
He was the kind of man who preferred to be looked over, rather than overlooked*

Synesthesia

Use one sense to convey the experience of another. Use to deepen description and add emphasis to a particular image.

*A silky voice
The smell of victory
A taste of glory*

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