

Epiphora or Epistrophe- Figure of repetition that occurs when the last word or set of words in one sentence, clause, or phrase is repeated one or more times at the end of successive sentences, clauses, or phrases.

- "Where **now**? Who **now**? When **now**?"
(Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*, 1953)
- "Take whatever idiot they have at the top of whatever agency and give me a better **idiot**. Give me a caring **idiot**. Give me a sensitive **idiot**. Just don't give me the same **idiot**."
(Aaron Broussard, president of Jefferson Parish, speaking about FEMA Chief Michael Brown, Sep. 6, 2005)
- "Success hasn't changed Frank Sinatra. When he was **unappreciated and obscure**, he was **hot-tempered, egotistical, extravagant, and moody**. Now that he is **rich and famous**, he is still **hot-tempered, egotistical, extravagant, and moody**."
(Dorothy Kilgallen, 1959 newspaper column)
- "There is nothing **wrong with America** that cannot be cured by what is **right with America**."
(Bill Clinton)
- "I've gotta be your darn **conscience**. I'm tired of being your **conscience**. I don't enjoy being your **conscience**."
(Dr. Wilson to Dr. House in *House*)
- "She's safe, **just like I promised**. She's all set to marry Norrington, **just like she promised**. And you get to die for her, **just like you promised**."
(Jack Sparrow, *Pirates of the Caribbean*)
- "...and that government of **the people**, by **the people**, for **the people** shall not perish from the earth."
(- Abraham Lincoln, [*Gettysburg Address*](#))
- "I said you're afraid to bleed. [As] long as the white man sent you to Korea, **you bled**. He sent you to Germany, **you bled**. He sent you to the South Pacific to fight the Japanese, **you bled**. You bleed for white people. But when it comes time to seeing your own churches being bombed and little black girls be[ing] murdered, you haven't got no blood."

(-- Malcolm X, [*Message to the Grassroots*](#))

Anaphora (an-NAF-ruh): Figure of repetition that occurs when the first word or set of words in one sentence, clause, or phrase is/are repeated at or very near the beginning of successive sentences, clauses, or phrases; repetition of the initial word(s) over successive phrases or clauses.

- "The Republicans believe that the wagon train will not make it to the frontier unless **some of the** old, **some of the** young, **some of the** weak are left behind by the side of trail."

-- Mario Cuomo, [*1984 Democratic National Convention Address*](#)

- "**We are a people in** a quandary about the present. **We are a people in** search of our future. **We are a people in** search of a national community."

-- Barbara Jordan, [*1976 Democratic Convention Keynote Address*](#)

- "**What we need in the United States is not** division. **What we need in the United States is not** hatred. **What we need in the United States is not** violence and lawlessness; but is love and wisdom and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country whether they be white or whether they be black."

-- Robert F. Kennedy, [*Announcing the death of Martin Luther King*](#)

- "Yesterday, the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya. **Last night, Japanese forces attacked** Hong Kong. **Last night, Japanese forces attacked** Guam. **Last night, Japanese forces attacked** the Philippine Islands. **Last night,** the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And **this morning,** the Japanese attacked Midway Island."

-- Franklin Delano Roosevelt, [*Pearl Harbor Address*](#)

Rhetorical Question: Figure which asks a question, not for the purpose of further discussion, but to assert or deny an answer implicitly; a question whose answer is obvious or implied.

- Can anyone look at the record of this Administration and say, "Well done"?

Can anyone compare the state of our economy when the Carter Administration took office with where we are today and say, "Keep up the good work"?

Can anyone look at our reduced standing in the world today and say, "Let's have four more years of this"?

-- Ronald Reagan, [1980 Republican National Convention Acceptance Address](#)

Note: Reagan was a particularly effective user of "stacked" rhetorical questions.

- "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar?"

-- James 2:20-21 (KJV)

- "Sir, at long last, have you left no sense of decency?"

-- Joseph Welch, [The Army-McCarthy Hearings](#)

- "Do you want to see the flower of the manhood of this country which has brought everlasting glory to our nation neglected in the hour of its greatest need and afraid to face temptation?" -- John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

⁸ "Who shut up the sea behind doors
when it burst forth from the womb,
⁹ when I made the clouds its garment
and wrapped it in thick darkness,
¹⁰ when I fixed limits for it
and set its doors and bars in place,
¹¹ when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther;
here is where your proud waves halt'?

¹² "Have you ever given orders to the morning,
or shown the dawn its place,
¹³ that it might take the earth by the edges
and shake the wicked out of it?

Job 38:8-13

Hypophora: Figure of reasoning in which one or more questions is/are asked and then answered, often at length, by one and the same speaker; raising and responding to one's own question(s).

- "When the enemy struck on that June day of 1950, what did America do? **It did what it always has done in all its times of peril. It appealed to the heroism of its youth.**"

-- Dwight D. Eisenhower, *I Shall Go to Korea Address*

- "Since we have come so far, whom shall be rash enough to set limits on our future progress? Who shall say that since we have gone so far, we can go no farther? Who shall say that the American dream is ended? **For myself, I believe that all we have done upon this continent is but a prelude to a future in which we shall become not only a bigger people but also a wiser people, a better people, an even greater people.**"

-- Adlai Stevenson, *1953 Stump Speech*

Note: Can you spot the [epistrophe](#)?

- "In 1982, corporate growers gave [George] Deukmejian one million dollars to run for governor of California. Since he took office, Deukmejian has paid back his debt to the growers with the blood and sweat of California farm workers. Instead of enforcing the law as it was written against those who break it, Deukmejian invites growers who break the law to seek relief from governor's appointees. What does all this mean for farm workers? **It means that the right to vote in free elections is a sham. It means the right to talk freely about the union among your fellow workers on the job is a cruel hoax. It means that the right to be free from threats and intimidation by growers is an empty promise. It means that the right to sit down and negotiate with your employer as equals across the bargaining table and not as peons in the fields is a fraud. It means that thousands of farm workers, who are owed millions of dollars in back pay because their employers broke the law, are still waiting for their checks. It means that 36,000 farm workers, who voted to be represented by the United Farm Workers in free elections, are still waiting for contracts from growers who refuse to bargain in good faith. It means that for farm workers child labor will continue. It means that infant mortality will continue. It means that -- It means that malnutrition among children will continue. It means the short life expectancy and the inhuman living and working conditions will continue.**"

-- Cesar Chavez, [Commonwealth Club Address](#)

Note: Can you find [anaphora](#) and [antithesis](#)

Hyperbole: deliberate exaggeration of a person, thing, quality, event to emphasize a point external to the object of exaggeration; intentional exaggeration for rhetorical effect.

- "Henry was 18 when we met and I was queen of France. He came down from the north to Paris with a mind like Aristotle's and a form like mortal sin. We shattered the commandments on the spot."

-- delivered by Katherine Hepburn (from the movie *The Lion in Winter*)

- I decided to attend the Cowboys training camp. That year, 1967, the Dallas Cowboys had 137 rookies in training camp. **Gil Brandt was signing everybody that could walk.** Only five made the team that year, and I was one of the five."

-- Larry Rayfield Wright, [*Pro Football Hall of Fame Induction Address*](#)

Metaphor: Figure of speech occurring when a comparison made by speaking of one thing in terms of another; an implied comparison between two *different* things which share at least one attribute in common; an association between two unlike things (A vs. B) achieved by borrowing the language that refers to thing A and applying it to thing B. (not to be confused with simile)

"With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood."

-- Martin Luther King, [*I Have a Dream*](#)

Note here there are two metaphors which serve as a comparison for two different but related ideas: 1) racial problems = "jangling discords" and 2) racial problems solved through faith = "beautiful symphony of brotherhood"

"The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want."

-- Psalm 23:1 (KJV)

Simile: Figure of explication in which two things that share at least one attribute are explicitly associated with each other; an overt comparison between two unlike things as though they were similar -- usually with the words "like" or "as".

"A Republic whose history, like the path of the just, is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

-- William Jennings Bryan

"But **His strong love stands like a granite rock unmoved by the hurricanes of our inequity.**"

-- [originally delivered by Charles Haddon Spurgeon]

Personification: Figure which represents abstractions or inanimate objects with human qualities, including physical, emotional, and spiritual; the application of human attributes or abilities to nonhuman entities.

"Once again, the **heart of America is heavy**. The **spirit of America weeps** for a tragedy that denies the very meaning of our land."

-- Lyndon Baines Johnson

"I'm gonna speak to this mountain -- whether it's a **mountain of sickness**, whether it's a mountain of debt; whether it's a **mountain of loneliness**; whether it's a **mountain of despair** -- whatever this mountain is."

-- T.D. Jakes, *All I Have is a Seed on my Side*

Can you spot the [anaphora](#)?

"To the fans in Chicago, St. Louis and Atlanta, I wanna say 'thank you' for your support. Your chanting of 'B-r-u-u-u-c-e' as I entered the game always gave me chills. I wish I could trot out there and get that feeling again, but **Father Time has caught up with me**. First **he took my arm**, then **he took my hair**, then **he took the color from my beard**. But **he cannot take the great friendships and memories I have from being a baseball player.**"

-- Bruce Sutter, *Baseball Hall of Fame Induction Address*

"Today, we begin a new chapter in the history of Louisiana. I've said throughout the campaign that there are two entities that have the most to fear from us winning this election. One is **corruption** and the other is **incompetence**. **If you happen to see either of them, let them know the party is over.**"

-- Bobby Jindal, [Louisiana Governor-Elect victory Speech](#)

"Such acts are commonly stimulated by **forces** of hatred and malevolence such as today **are eating their way into the bloodstream of American life.**"

-- USSC Justice Earl Warren, *Eulogy for John F. Kennedy*

Antithesis : Figure of balance in which two contrasting ideas are intentionally juxtaposed, usually through parallel structure; a contrasting of opposing ideas in adjacent phrases, clauses, or sentences.

- "He is no fool who gives what he **cannot keep** to gain that which he **cannot lose**"

-- [Jim Elliot](#)

- Lloyd Braun: "Serenity now; insanity later."

-- from *Seinfeld* episode "The Serenity Now"

- "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will **not be judged by the color of their skin** but **by the content of their character**. I have a *dream* today!"

-- Martin Luther King, Jr., [I Have a Dream](#)

- We must have a sense of responsibility for the future. We are not **destined to be adversaries**. But it is not **guaranteed that we will be allies**."

-- William Jefferson Clinton, [Address to the Russian Duma](#)

- "We find ourselves **rich in goods** but **ragged in spirit, reaching with magnificent precision for the moon** but **falling into raucous discord on earth**. We are **caught in war, wanting peace**. We're **torn by division, wanting unity**."

-- Richard M. Nixon, *Inaugural Address*

Note: In this case there are four different, successive antitheses

Oxymoron: Figure that binds together TWO words that are ordinarily contradictory; a TWO WORD paradox; two words with contrary or apparently contradictory meanings occurring next to each other, and, which, nonetheless, evoke some measure of truth; the figure conjures a new way of seeing or understanding, a novel meaning.

"...And it is important that the Iraqi people continue to reject these terrorists, who know nothing but violence and destruction, who do not care about the future of Iraq, who do not care about the future of the Iraqi people. These cold acts of terrorism like this have gone on far too long. Together, we can put a stop to this, and we must throw these **heartless zealots** out of this country for good."

-- Lieutenant General Raymond T. Odierno, 07/26/07 Press Briefing

Note 1: A zealot may be many things -- "dauntless" "stainless," "mindless," even "bathless" -- but not heartless. The word "zealot" is closely related to the word "zeal," a notion that typically entails radical ideology wedded to fervent emotional commitment. A zealot especially may not be characterized or even faulted for a lack of "heart," as this aspect is embedded within the very definition of the term. Lieutenant General Odierno likely means that these zealots don't care about the havoc they wreak upon the peace-desiring citizens of Iraq. The sentiment is entirely understandable. However, these zealots do care, care enough, in fact, to commit the very acts for which they are being charged as "heartless." What zealots can be faulted for is having a heart in the wrong place. In this case, Iraq may well have no place for this particular brand of zealotry.

Paradox: Figure that employs an apparent contradiction which, nonetheless, evokes some measure of truth; a statement which seems at one level to be nonsensical because it moves against a normalcy. At another level, however, the figure conjures a new way of seeing or understanding, a novel meaning.

Example #1: "I don't hustle with people who are dishonest."

-- delivered by Woody Harrelson (from the movie *White Men Can't Jump*)

Example #2: "The close we are to danger, the farther we are from harm."

-- delivered by Billy Boyd (from the movie *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*)

Polysyndeton : The deliberate and excessive use of conjunctions in successive words or clauses.

- **And** God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, **and** creeping thing, **and** beast of the earth after his kind: **and** it was so. **And** God made the beast of the earth after his kind, **and** cattle

after their kind, **and** every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: **and** God saw that it was good."

-- Genesis 1:24-25 (KJV)

- "We must change that deleterious environment of the 80's, that environment which was characterized by greed **and** hatred **and** selfishness **and** mega-mergers **and** debt overhang...."

-- Barbara Jordan, [*1992 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address*](#)

- "As soon as he learned that the Republican fiction writers, in Congress and out, had concocted a story that I'd left him behind on the Lucian Islands and had sent a destroyer back to find him at a cost to the taxpayers of two **or** three **or** eight **or** twenty million dollars, his Scot soul was furious."

-- Franklin Delano Roosevelt (on his dog, Fala)

Asyndeton - a string of words not separated by normally occurring conjunctions.

- Perhaps the achievement of Paradise was premature, a little hasty if no one could take the time to understand other languages, **other views**, **other narratives**."

-- Toni Morrison - [*Nobel Lecture*](#)

- "We use words like honor, **code**, **loyalty**. We use these words as the backbone of a **life spent defending** something. You use them as a **punch line**."

-- delivered by Jack Nicholson (from the movie *A Few Good Men*)

- "I speak here as a politician and also as a Catholic -- a layperson baptized and raised in the pre-Vatican II Church, educated in Catholic schools, attached to the Church **first** by **birth**, **then by choice**, **now by love**."

-- Mario Cuomo, [*Religious Belief and Public Morality*](#)

- "Be one of the few, **the proud**, **the Marines**."

-- Marine Corps Advertisement

- "When we listen to the better angels of our nature, we find that they celebrate the **simple things, the basic things** -- such as goodness, decency, **love, kindness**."

-- Richard Nixon, *Inaugural Address*

Alliteration: Figure of emphasis that occurs through the repetition of initial consonant letters (or sounds) in two or more different words across successive sentences, clauses, or phrases.

"I think a need a **bigger box**." -- Taco Bell Commercial

"...Well, sir, I'm Jordan Rivers. And these here are the *Soggy Bottom Boys* out of Cottonelia, Mississippi -- **s**ongs of **s**alvation to **s**alve the **s**oul. Uh, we hear that you pay good money to sing into a can." -- delivered by George Clooney (from the movie '[O Brother, Where Art Thou?](#))

Assonance: Figure of repetition in which different words with the same or similar vowel sounds occur successively in words with different consonants; two or more words with similar vowel sounds sandwiched between different consonants.

"The gloves **d**idn't **f**it. **I**f **i**t doesn't **f**it, you must acqu**i**t."

-- Johnny Cochran, Closing Arguments from the O.J. Simpson Trial

Parallelism: Figure of balance identified by a similarity in the syntactical structure of a set of words in successive phrases, clauses, sentences; successive words, phrases, clauses with the same or very similar grammatical structure. This figure often occurs public address with others such as **antithesis, anaphora, asyndeton, climax, epistrophe**.

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall **pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe** to assure the survival and the success of liberty."

-- John F. Kennedy, [Inaugural Address](#)

"I've tried to offer leadership to the Democratic Party and the Nation. If, in my high moments, I have done some good, **offered some service, shed some light, healed some wounds, rekindled some hope**, or stirred someone from

apathy and indifference, or in any way along the way helped somebody, then this campaign has not been in vain."

-- Jesse Jackson, [*1984 Democratic National Convention Address*](#)

For the Ireland of 1963, one of the youngest of nations and the oldest of civilizations, has discovered that the achievement of nationhood is not an end but a beginning. In the years since independence, you have undergone a new and peaceful revolution, an economic and industrial revolution, transforming the face of this land while still holding to the old spiritual and cultural values. You have **modernized your economy**, **harnessed your rivers**, **diversified your industry**, **liberalized your trade**, **electrified your farms**, **accelerated your rate of growth**, and improved the living standards of your people."

-- John F. Kennedy, [*Address to the Irish Parliament*](#)

