

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Rhetorical Analysis Practice

Advanced Placement English Language

Instructions: For each passage or scenario below, analyze the rhetorical strategies employed. Answer in complete sentences, providing specific evidence and reasoning. For fill-in-the-blank items, choose the most precise term from the list provided in the prompt. Write your responses on separate paper if needed.

1. **Short Answer:** In his 1963 “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King Jr. writes, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Identify the rhetorical device used in this statement and explain its effect on the audience.

2. **Essay / Long Response:** Consider the following excerpt from a speech by a political leader: “We stand at a crossroads—one path leads to division and decay, the other to unity and renewal. The choice is ours, but the time to choose is now.” Write a paragraph analyzing how the speaker uses antithesis, metaphor, and urgency to persuade the audience. Discuss the intended emotional and logical appeal.

3. **Fill in the Blank:** Choose the correct term from the list below to complete the sentence.

List: ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, anaphora, chiasmus, synecdoche, metonymy

When a speaker emphasizes the right moment to act, appealing to the timeliness of an issue, they are employing _____.

4. **Short Answer:** Read the following sentence: “The pen is mightier than the sword.” Identify the rhetorical figure used here and explain how it functions in argument.

5. **Essay / Long Response:** In a famous commencement address, the speaker repeats the phrase “We must go forward” at the beginning of successive clauses. Identify this device and write a short essay analyzing how repetition can build momentum and reinforce a central theme. Use at least two specific examples of how this technique might affect an audience.

6. **Fill in the Blank:** Choose the correct term from the list below to complete the sentence.

List: ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, anaphora, chiasmus, synecdoche, metonymy

A speaker who cites expert testimony and statistical data to support an argument is primarily using

_____.

7. **Short Answer:** Explain the difference between *synecdoche* and *metonymy*. Provide an original example of each.

8. **Essay / Long Response:** Analyze the following statement: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” Identify the rhetorical device (chiasmus) and write a paragraph explaining how the inversion of words creates a memorable and persuasive effect. Discuss the appeal to civic duty.

9. **Fill in the Blank:** Choose the correct term from the list below to complete the sentence.

List: ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, anaphora, chiasmus, synecdoche, metonymy

A speaker who describes a tragic event in vivid, emotional language to evoke sympathy is relying on

_____.

10. **Short Answer:** Identify the rhetorical appeal primarily at work in the following scenario: A doctor argues for a new treatment by presenting clinical trial results and success rates. Name the appeal and justify your answer in one to two sentences.

Answer Key

1. **Answer:** The device is *antithesis* (or parallel structure with contrast). King juxtaposes “injustice anywhere” with “justice everywhere” to emphasize the interconnectedness of communities. The effect is to create a moral imperative, urging the audience to see injustice as a universal threat.
2. **Answer:** The speaker uses *antithesis* (“division and decay” vs. “unity and renewal”), *metaphor* (“cross-roads”), and *urgency* (“the time to choose is now”). The antithesis highlights stark choices, the metaphor simplifies a complex decision, and urgency creates a call to immediate action. Together, they appeal to both logic (logos) and emotion (pathos), motivating the audience to choose unity.
3. **Answer:** *kairos*
4. **Answer:** The figure is *metonymy* (or possibly *synecdoche*). “The pen” stands for writing or intellectual influence, and “the sword” stands for military force. The device functions by substituting a concrete object for an abstract concept, making the argument vivid and memorable.
5. **Answer:** The device is *anaphora* (repetition of “We must go forward” at the beginning of successive clauses). Repetition builds rhythm and emphasis, reinforcing the central theme of progress. It creates a sense of momentum and unity, making the audience feel part of a collective movement. For example, in Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, anaphora (“I have a dream”) builds emotional intensity and solidarity.
6. **Answer:** *logos*
7. **Answer:** *Synecdoche* is a figure of speech in which a part represents the whole (e.g., “All hands on deck” where “hands” means sailors). *Metonymy* is a figure in which one thing is substituted for another closely associated thing (e.g., “The White House issued a statement” where “White House” means the President or administration). Original examples: Synecdoche: “Nice wheels!” (wheels for car). Metonymy: “The crown approved the law” (crown for monarch).
8. **Answer:** The device is *chiasmus*, where the grammatical structure of the first clause is inverted in the second (“ask not what your country can do for you” becomes “ask what you can do for your country”). The inversion creates a memorable, balanced phrase that emphasizes reciprocity and civic duty. It appeals to pathos by inspiring selflessness and logos by framing a logical exchange of responsibilities.
9. **Answer:** *pathos*
10. **Answer:** The appeal is *logos*, because the doctor uses clinical trial results and success rates—evidence based on data and reasoning—to persuade the audience logically.