

Rhetorical Devices: Antithesis

Objective: As they continue through Unit I (Reading Literature and Writing Narrative), students will be able to recognize select rhetorical devices such as antithesis, hypophora, and rhetorical questions and utilize these devices in strengthening their own writing strategy in order to score a 4 or 5 on the CCSS rubric for narrative writing. Students will also recognize author Toni Morrison's use of such devices in the novel, *Song of Solomon*, identifying and tracking the significance of each.

Do-Now: Revisit, revise, and extend one of your previously written journal entries to include the following devices: appositive, hyperbole, understatement and/or litotes, and antithesis. Using your CCSS rubric for Narrative Writing, extend your writing to address specific language on the rubric.

A fairly simple way to show a complex thought.

Antithesis makes use of a contrast in language to bring out a contrast in ideas. It is one of the most attractive and powerful tools in speech and writing. Some of the most famous lines in modern history are built on the antithesis, from Neil Armstrong's "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "...not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

More on Antithesis

- Antithesis has a natural beauty to the human ear because we are creatures who love to organize and categorize our thoughts and ideas.
- Antithesis organizes ideas in a way that is both evocative and powerful, and it is an excellent tool to have in your writer's toolbox.
- Antithesis can be built by contrasting any of different parts of a statement.

- You may wish to keep the structure of the sentences identical, but use two opposing words.
- You may wish to change entire clauses to contrast with one another.
- You may even wish to have whole sentences oppose one another throughout the course of a paragraph. While simply opposing a key word can be the easiest to build, longer uses of antithesis can be very powerful.

- “Life can be kind and cruel, full of hope and heartache.”
- “We live within our limits, for we are men, not gods.”
- “I speak not from ignorance, but from experience.”
- “War is not fought to achieve joy, but rather to avoid pain.”
- “The villain lives by his wits, not by his labor.

- “We are caught in war, wanting peace. We are torn by individuals, wanting unity.”- Richard Nixon
- “If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.”-John F. Kennedy
- Marc Antony: “ I came to bury Caesar, not to praise him.”- Shakespeare (Julius Caesar)
- “I pass with relief from the tossing sea of Cause and Theory to the firm ground of Result and Fact.”- Winston Churchill
- “Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice; moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.” –Barry Goldwater
- Brutus: “Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.” –Shakespeare (Julius Caesar)
- “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...” –Charles Dickens (A Tale of Two Cities)
- “To err is human, to forgive, divine.”- Alexander Pope (An Essay on Criticism)
- “Fair is foul, and foul is fair.” –Shakespeare (Macbeth)