



## Emphasis Techniques

There are several ways to control where the most emphatic parts of your writing occur (presumably because you want readers to pay particular attention, or you want to convey a particularly strong feeling).

- 1. By Position:** Usually, the most emphatic position is at the end (of a sentence, of a passage, of a story); the second most emphatic position is the beginning. Note that “emphasis” isn’t necessarily the same as “the most important”.
- 2. By Proportion:** Usually, the most important elements/ideas are given the most attention (spend most words on them).
- 3. By Repetition:** May create emphasis by repeating words/phrases in a different manner, or by repeating a structure (“I have a dream that (x)... I have a dream that(y)”). Be careful, though that your repetition isn’t just “repetitious” or predictable, or redundant.
- 4. By Mechanical Devices:** May create emphasis by using italics, underlining, bolding, font changes etc.
- 5. By Distinctiveness of Style:** The author may use language in an interesting way. For a list of rhetorical devices, refer to the handout, or use the following link:  
<http://chatt.hdsb.ca/~northj/Docs/resources/rhetoric.pdf>
- 6. Last, and least - By Flat Statement:** You can just tell readers what is important (but this strategy usually doesn’t work - it does nothing to create interest for readers).