

# Rhetorical Strategies

In general, you can persuade people by appealing to **LOGIC** (eg. probability, or cause/effect), **MORALITY** (the positive moral consequences or obligations (i.e. the “rightness” or “wrongness” of an action) and **EMOTION** (eg. Fear, greed, pride, hope, love, insecurity...)

## I Diction choices      The words that are used

- a. **Common language:** to seem like an honest, unpretentious person you could use:
  - Jargon:** words of a certain group esp. professional group. *Ex.* Lawyer jargon word “subpoena”
  - Slang:** words used by group, but which aren’t yet part of popular vocabulary
  - Vernacular:** common speech of a region *Ex.* Ottawa valley expression for bad weather “Dirty day”
  - Colloquialism:** “living” language (not formal, but not quite slang)
- b. **Imprecise language:** to ease away from precise/accurate account you could use:
  - Hyperbole:** exaggeration for effect
  - Euphemism:** make something sound better than it is (dysphemism: make sound worse)
  - Obfuscation:** to deliberately confuse the issue eg. By use of meaningless words/phrases, or by using words/phrases in uncommon ways, or by going off on a tangential subject
  - Generalizations:** remaining at the level of the general (vs. Specific)
- c. **Figurative Imagery:** description which compares, or represents
  - Metaphor/simile:** a comparison
  - Symbol:** a representation which is commonly understood/recognized
  - Analogy:** a point of similarity between two dissimilar things, with the assumption that they must share other characteristics
  - Personification:** a representation of a non-human thing which gives it human quality
  - Connotation:** words which have associated ideas
  - Stereotyping:** prejudge each member of a group on the assumption that each member is the same in its principal respects
- d. **Rhetorical questions:** those which do not require answers, because the answer is obvious, or implied
- e. **Repetition:** to make an idea seem more “true/correct” by repeating it

## II Logic:

- a. to persuade through the use of “proof” (Statistics/data, expert opinions, compelling empirical evidence)
- b. to persuade through formal argumentation (establish cause/effect, calculate likelihoods)
- c. to persuade by means of an analogy (to suggest “X” is like “Y”)
- d. to persuade by exploiting breakdowns in logic (“logical fallacies”)
  - Non Sequitur** (does not follow)
  - Over-simplification** (to reduce/ignore complexities of an issue)
  - False Analogy** (To suggest something is “like something else”, when it isn’t)
  - Doubtful Authority** (to accept the opinion of a non-expert)
  - Post hoc, ergo propter hoc** (to assume a cause/effect relationship when a correlation is noticed).
  - Beg the question** (to propose an idea which is contingent upon an unanswered/unacknowledged question)
  - Argument ad hominem** (to discredit the argument by discrediting the speaker)
  - Either/Or** (to propose that only 2 choices exist, when there are more than 2)

