

Categorising the Core 32 Language Techniques

Learning Aim

Students will understand **how language techniques are grouped** and why writers choose different types for different effects.

Why this matters

Writers do not use techniques randomly. They choose them to **persuade, create imagery, shape sound, or emphasise ideas**.

A. Persuasive Language Techniques

These techniques directly influence opinions, attitudes or behaviour.

Key Idea

They work on **logic, emotions and trust**.

Techniques (definition + short example)

- **Rhetorical Question** – asks without expecting an answer.

“Do we really want our streets filled with rubbish?”

- **Emotive Language** – words that provoke feeling.

“innocent victims, heartbreaking loss”

- **Direct Address** – speaks to the reader (you/your).

“You can make a difference.”

- **Inclusive Language** – creates unity (we/our).

“We must act together.”

- **Imperatives** – commands.

“Donate now.”

- **Modality** – degrees of certainty.

“We must act; we might succeed.”

- **Facts and Statistics** – measurable evidence.

“Recycling increased by 45%.”

- **Anecdote** – short personal story.

“When my neighbour lost his job...”

- **Repetition** – repeating key words.

“We need hope, we need courage, we need action.”

- **Rule of Three** – groups of three ideas.

“Clear, fair and affordable.”

- **Listing** – organised sequences.

“Cost, time, transport, safety.”

- **Tone** – attitude of the writer.

confident / urgent / sympathetic

- **Analogy** – comparison to explain.

“Fighting climate change is like fixing a leaking roof.”

When writers use them

- speeches, adverts, opinion articles, campaigns.

When not to overuse

Too many persuasive devices can feel **manipulative or insincere**.

B. Figurative & Imagery Techniques

These techniques create strong pictures and emotional impact.

Key Idea

They appeal to the **imagination**, making writing memorable.

Techniques

- **Simile** – like/as.

“The night was like a blanket.”

- **Metaphor** – saying one thing *is* another.

“Time is a thief.”

- **Personification** – human qualities to objects.

“The wind whispered.”

- **Symbolism** – objects represent ideas.

“A dove for peace.”

- **Hyperbole** – deliberate exaggeration.

“I’ve told you a million times.”

- **Irony** – meaning the opposite of what is said.

“Great weather!” (in heavy rain)

- **Euphemism** – softer wording.

“Passed away” instead of “died”.

Where are they commonly used:

Narratives, speeches, opinion pieces — anywhere writers want a deeper emotional connection.

Caution

Avoid imagery that confuses or distracts from the main message.

C. Sound & Structural Techniques

These techniques make language **rhythmic, memorable and musical**.

Key Idea

They help ideas **stick in the reader’s mind**.

Techniques

- **Alliteration** – same starting sound.
“Safe, sensible solutions.”
- **Assonance** – repeated vowel sounds.
“Slow, low road.”
- **Consonance** – repeated consonant sounds.
“The stroke of luck.”
- **Onomatopoeia** – sound-imitating words.
“buzz, crash, whisper”
- **Parallelism** – repeated grammatical structure.
“to learn, to grow, to succeed”

Best used in

Slogans, speeches, poetry, and advertising.

Risk

Too much patterning can sound **forced or artificial**.

D. Contrast, Comparison & Emphasis Techniques

These techniques highlight differences and relationships to sharpen meaning.

Techniques

- **Juxtaposition** – placing opposites side by side.
“Luxury hotels beside extreme poverty.”
- **Contrast** – showing difference clearly.
“Some are silent; others shout loudly.”
- **Metonymy** – one related word stands for another.

“The White House announced...”

- **Colloquial Language** – everyday informal speech.

“It was a bit of a mess.”

Why writers use them

To challenge thinking, reveal tension, or emphasise key ideas.

When to avoid

- in formal essays (overusing slang)
- when clarity is more important than effect

MCQs — Identifying the Correct Category

1. “Do we really want our rivers polluted for another decade?”

This technique belongs to which category?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

2. “The city slept under a blanket of fog.”

This example belongs to which category?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

3. “Safe, sensible solutions can save lives.”

Which category is used here?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

4. “Luxury apartments were built beside crowded slums.”

This belongs to which category?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

5. “We must take action before it is too late.”

Which category does this example fit?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

6. “The wind whispered through the trees.”

Which category is shown here?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

7. “buzz, crash, hiss”

These words belong to which category?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

8. “Some people remained silent while others protested loudly.”

Which category best describes this technique?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

9. “You can help change this situation today.”

This technique belongs to which category?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques

10. “I’ve told you a million times not to leave the door open.”

Which category is used here?

- a. Persuasive language techniques
- b. Figurative & imagery techniques
- c. Sound & structural techniques
- d. Contrast, comparison & emphasis techniques