

1 Learn the Skill

A **rhetorical device** is a particular use of language to achieve an effect—for example, to emphasize a significant point, attract audience attention, or create a feeling. Rhetorical devices are common in all writing, especially in speeches and arguments.

2 Practice the Skill

By practicing the skill of analyzing rhetorical devices, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Reasoning Through Language Arts Test. Study the table below. Then answer the question that follows.

RHETORICAL DEVICES

Device	Definition	Example
Analogy	An extended metaphor to help clarify an idea or make a point more persuasively	Think of stem cells as blank computer chips that we can program to do different tasks.
Enumeration	List of details to create rhythm or emphasize a point	This bill would benefit many in the community—teachers, parents, school workers, and, most importantly, students.
Repetition and parallelism	Restatement of the same or similar phrases or words to create rhythm and emphasis	Preserving the land would protect local wildlife. That is good. It would generate tourism. That is good. And it would save a unique ecosystem for future generations. That is good.
Juxtaposition of opposites (antithesis)	Two opposing concepts placed side by side to emphasize a point	"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."—Neil Armstrong
Qualifying statements	A statement that modifies, or changes, a previous statement to emphasize a point	Few people survived the blast—although fewer escaped with no injuries.

a Style and tone are not rhetorical devices, but authors use them to create a desired effect. For example, a patriotic tone can make readers feel proud and moved to take action.

b **Parallelism**, the repetition of the structure of a phrase or clause, is a form of repetition. For example, *When we go to the polls, when we go to the protests, when we go to the steps of the Capitol, our voices ring out.*

TEST-TAKING TIPS

When a question asks you to choose the best answer, choose the one that would apply in most or all situations. Some incorrect answer choices may be incomplete, too broad, or not always applicable.

1. If a writer favors tighter restrictions on factory pollution, which rhetorical device would be **most** effective for persuading readers?

- A. an analogy explaining how the pollution is produced
- B. enumeration of the diseases caused by pollution
- C. juxtaposition of two opposite adjectives to describe factories
- D. a qualifying statement saying that some pollution is acceptable

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage. Then fill in your answer in the box below.

THE CRISIS OF GLOBAL WARMING

- 1 We, the human species, are confronting a planetary emergency—a threat to the survival of our civilization that is gathering ominous and destructive potential even as we gather here. But there is hopeful news as well: we have the ability to solve this crisis and avoid the worst—though not all—of its consequences ...

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2. Which rhetorical device does the author use to emphasize that some effects of global warming are already unavoidable?

DIRECTIONS: Read the remainder of passage, read each question, and choose the **best** answer.

- 2 However, despite a growing number of honorable exceptions, too many of the world's leaders are still best described in the words Winston Churchill applied to those who ignored Adolf Hitler's threat (and I quote): "They go on in strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all powerful to be impotent."

- 3 So today, we dumped another 70 million tons of global-warming pollution into the thin shell of atmosphere surrounding our planet, as if it were an open sewer. And tomorrow, we will dump a slightly larger amount, with the cumulative concentrations now trapping more and more heat from the sun.

- 4 As a result, the earth has a fever. And the fever is rising. The experts have told us it is not a passing affliction that will heal by itself. We asked for a second opinion. And a third. And a fourth. And the consistent conclusion, restated with increasing distress, is that something basic is wrong.

- 5 We are what is wrong, and we must make it right. ...

- 6 In the last few months, it has been harder and harder to misinterpret the signs that our world is spinning out of kilter. Major cities in North and South America, Asia and Australia, are nearly out of water due to massive droughts and melting glaciers. Desperate farmers are losing their livelihoods. Peoples in the frozen Arctic and on low-lying Pacific islands are planning evacuations of places they have long called home ...

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3. Which statement **best** explains why the quotation from Winston Churchill is effective?

- A. It uses repetition to draw readers in and stress the importance of finding a solution.
- B. It lists the many ways that leaders acted with bravery during World War II.
- C. It uses juxtaposition of opposites to emphasize that leaders find excuses to avoid taking action.
- D. It includes a qualifying statement to suggest that quick action can defeat the evil of global warming.

4. The author uses an analogy in paragraph 4 to

- A. make the solution seem as simple as taking a pill to lower a fever.
- B. show that he is a reliable source who has expert knowledge.
- C. suggest that those who deny global warming are like a disease.
- D. emphasize that global warming is as dangerous as a serious disease.

5. In paragraph 6, the author lists the effects that global warming is already having. The author **most** likely included this enumeration to

- A. make readers believe that the problem is urgent.
- B. encourage punishment for polluters.
- C. reassure readers about the future.
- D. make readers aware of how to take action.