Rhetorical Devices

**Euphemism:** A neutral or positive expression used instead of one that carries negative associations.
- “The government faces resistance from an organized group of freedom fighters.”

**Dysphemism:** A negative expression used instead of one that carries positive associations.
- “The government is valiantly combating resistance from terrorists.”

**Innuendo:** A claim that makes an *implicit* suggestion.
- “Since you’re debating whether to vote for me or Snodgrass, you may want to know that I have never cheated on my taxes.”

**Loaded Question:** A question that rests on unwarranted or unjustified assumptions.
- “Have you always been impolite?”
**Stereotype:** A thought or image about a group of people based on little or no evidence.
- “I wouldn’t expect anything different from a philosopher.”

**Rhetorical analogy:** Comparing one thing to another in order to convey a particular feeling (either negative or positive).
- This often comes in the form of a simile or metaphor.
- “Joe is a robust stallion of a man.”
- “Theresa’s sense of humor is as dry as the Sahara.”

**Rhetorical explanation:** An explanation that conveys a strong attitude or feeling because of the diction used.
- “Notre Dame lost to USC this weekend because they played like my little brother’s peewee team.”
**Weaseler:** A qualifying term used to provide the speaker with a “way out” of objections.
- “Using our hair treatment may leave your hair healthier and shinier!”

**Downplayer:** A word used to make someone or something look less significant.
- “Scare quotes” can sometimes turn words into downplayers.
- “I wouldn’t invite Jimmy to drum for the band—he’s barely been playing for two years.”
- “I suppose Jimmy is a ‘drummer’, but we can do better than that.”

**Horse laugh/Sarcasm:** The use of ridicule to make a claim or person seem objectionable.
- “Sure, Nascar is a real sport—anything that inspires that much Budweiser consumption must be a feat of athletic prowess!”
**Hyperbole:** An extravagant overstatement used to convey a particular attitude.

-“The new Radiohead record is the most amazing album ever made.”

-Note: Other rhetorical devices (dysphemism, sarcasm, etc.) may make use of hyperbole.

**Proof Surrogate:** An expression used to suggest that there is evidence for a claim without actually citing any evidence.

-“Scientists have known that aliens exist for years now.”
-“Everyone knows that bottled water is better for you than tap water.”