

Rhetorical Devices in Speeches

9th Grade

Six techniques that turn up in almost every famous speech.

Speeches use structural repetition because listeners cannot re-read.

Device	What it is	Effect
Anaphora	same opening phrase repeated	builds rhythm and momentum
Tricolon	groups of three	feels complete and memorable
Antithesis	opposites balanced	sharpens a contrast
Rhetorical question	a question not needing an answer	makes the audience think it themselves
Direct address	'you', 'we'	creates shared identity
Repetition	key word returns	fixes the idea in memory

"I have a dream" is anaphora. "Ask not what your country can do for you..." is antithesis.