

Terms and Structures of Language (UW-La Crosse Public Speaking Center)

Word choice and language structure help reinforce our message and connect with our audience.

Repetition: words, phrases, or information that is repeated throughout a speech

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1963): “I have a dream.”

Alliteration: repeating the same vowel sounds in a sentence

- “Sally sells sea shells by the sea shore.”

Parallelism: use of similar structure of words, phrases, or clauses

- “She is an activist, a community organizer, and a social media influencer.”

Antithesis: contrasting ideas put together in parallel structure.

- John F. Kennedy (1962): “We choose to go to the moon at because it is easy, but because it is easy, but because it is hard.”

Narrative: stories which operate to connect an audience to the speech

- When determining if you should use a narrative, consider two issues:
 - Narrative coherence: Does the story make sense?
 - Narrative fidelity: Is a narrative believable?

Handout adapted from: Husiman, D., Berry, I., Peterson, J., Van Oss, J. (Eds.) (2019). *Communicating Effectively*. Southlake, TX. Fountainhead Press.