

Language Features

Language Features: the features of language that support meaning (for examples sentence structure, noun group / phrase, vocabulary, punctuation, figurative language, framing, camera angles etc. Choices in language features and text structures define text type and shape its meaning. Choices depend on mode, medium, audience and purpose. Language features help the reader to better understand the texts.

It's useful to put language features into two categories but there are plenty of cross overs:

1. **Descriptive Language:** language features which are used while describing something to create vivid or layered meanings.
2. **Persuasive Language:** invite readings / responses by promoting particular thoughts, feelings, attitude changes.

Descriptive Language

Lexical Choice / Type of discourse (*always specify field / type*): establish the tone, context and add connotations, levels of meaning; create patterns and connections which add to meaning. Identify the parts of speech (adjectives, verbs, pronouns, noun phrase) that you are exploring - as 'lexical choice' is a broad label not saying more than 'word choice' which isn't very helpful by itself. Consider other metalanguage (superlatives, imperatives, euphemisms etc.)

Colloquial Language / Level or type of discourse (e.g. formal / informal, scientific, medical etc.)

The type of language used in a particular context – can include dialect.

Emotive Language: plays on emotions of audience

Neutral version: Scott was attacked by Bing for four minutes.

Emotive version: For what seemed a lifetime, Scott was subjected to a spiteful, gutless battering by the jobless, steroid-pumped Bing.

Dialogue (conversation among two or more characters) creates personality and drives plot in fictional or interpretive texts. It allows the writer to deliver ideas about character / people / situations.

- **Interior or Inner Monologue / Dialogue:** thoughts / feelings of character – speaking to oneself to reveal personality or state of mind.

Figurative Language: meaning beyond the literal. Writers use this language feature to add levels of meaning / connotations. There are several literary devices which come under the figurative language. Most common are:

- **Simile:** comparing one thing to another (usually using like or as).
- **Metaphor:** referring to a person or thing as being something else.
- **Personification:** the attribution of any non-human things with human characteristics. **Hyperbole:** exaggeration for effect.

Imagery: a combination of various literary devices to provide a vivid description with only words. Evoking the sense of sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound. Imagery can be categorised by the nature of its description:

- **Visual:** "The forest was dim and dark"
- **Auditory:** "The patients at the Arkham mental asylum were screaming and shouting"
- **Tactile:** "The man ran his hands through the tall, snow-covered grass"
- **Olfactory:** "She smelled like a field full of jasmine flowers"
- **Gustatory:** "The sweet and juicy apple pie was everyone's favourite"

Sound Devices Using the sound of words for effect. These sound devices may be thought-provoking, comedic or just descriptive. Sound devices include:

- **Onomatopoeia:** depiction of the sounds made by something through a word. E.g. "Rustling Leaves", "Roaring Lion", "Splashing River" "Hoot-Hoot", "Squeak"
- **Alliteration:** repetition of a sound made by a consonant.
- **Assonance:** repetition of a sound made by a vowel in a phrase or sentence.
- **Pun:** It is an element of humour which uses the homonyms with different meanings to play on the words in the sentence. E.g. "A horse is a very stable animal."
- **Sibilance:** the repetition of an 's' sound
- **Rhyme /Repetition**

Syntax

The kinds/length of sentences are used where and why. Consider the effect of word and sentence order. Pace?

Language Features

Persuasive Language

Evidence / expert opinion / statistics: data, paraphrasing and quotes used to show expertise / range

Inclusive Language: uniting a group of people. For example, US, WE, OURS etc.

Exclusive Language: highlighting or excluding someone or a group. Words such as they, them, those etc. are used to alienate someone.

Rhetorical Devices: to persuade the reader to think / feel in particular ways – Here are a few of many:

- Alliteration (repetition of consonant sounds)
- Analogy - compares two things that have similar characteristics
- Anaphora - repeats word or phrase in succession
- Antiphrasis – uses a word with an opposite meaning for effect
- Litote – understatement for effect
- Oxymoron – a two word paradox (near miss, seriously funny)
- Parallel structure – same words at start of sentences
- Rule of threes – listing in groups of three for maximum impact – particularly in oral texts.

Repetition

Repetition involves repeating the same words or phrases to have a lasting effect, associating particular words and phrases with meaning.

Contrast / Juxtaposition Deliberate placing of elements for effect (contrast = show difference somewhere in text – can be ongoing through imagery / characterisation, juxtaposition = placement in close proximity - similar or different)

Generalisation

Generalisation is a language feature in which a broad statement is said to be applicable for a large group of people or things. It widens the scope of a concept. Generalisation is similar to stereotyping.

Formal Language / Discourse

Utilising the specific terminology related to a topic. It targets an audience base which is familiar with those terms used.

The main components of formal language are:

- Full Words: The use of full words without shortening them.
- Complex terminology: Using specific and sophisticated terminology
- To the point: The text should come straight to the point
- Third-person perspective: The context is many times addressed in the third-person perspective.

Jargon / topic appropriate discourse specialised language related to group / subject

Humour / irony / puns

Humour aims to induce laughter in a situation or the audience. The words or statements are phrased in such a way that evokes laughter among the readers. It is a tool of persuasion as it can be used to lighten the mood of the narrative or highlight a situation by the mocking the irony in it. Components are satire, irony, sarcasm, pun, slapstick comedy, and exaggeration.

You would also use all the language feature listed under descriptive such as figurative language (metaphors, similes, personification, sensory imagery etc.) when constructing a persuasive text.

Language Patterns, Structural Features and Stylistic Choices

Language Patterns:

The arrangement of identifiable repeated or corresponding elements in a text. These include **patterns** of repetition or similarity (for example, the repeated use of verbs at the beginning of each step in a recipe, or the repetition of a chorus after each verse in a song).

Repetition

Contrast: characters, viewpoints, descriptions, ideas, settings etc.

Juxtaposition (placement of things in close proximity for effect)

Imagery types and patterns (e.g. using different types of sensory imagery as text progresses)

Extended metaphors

Lexical patterns – observable patterns in verbs / adjectives / pronouns which creates progression, change, contrast, builds character or mood, develops ideas.

Semantic field: words used in a text that refer to a specific subject or are connected by their connotations e.g. worms, grave, skull, dust all link to the subject of death.

Controlling or extended metaphor a comparison or connection between two things (usually one abstract and one concrete) that runs through the whole text or section of a text.

Call and Response: statement and answering statement

Structural Devices / Techniques / Elements

This refers to the order in which elements are placed in a text and the signposts that indicate a change or transition or development to an audience. This includes the **narrative arc**, the **introduction and development of conflict / problems**, the **openings and resolutions of texts**, as well as the more obvious **headings and subheadings**. You can also look at **focus and focus shifts**, **contrast and pace**, **time and place transitions**, **repetition and other language patterns**, **paragraph and sentence lengths**.

Feature	Purpose	Effect on the reader
openings	The start of a text must interest the reader.	Comment on how the writer introduces ideas and raises questions.
focus	This is what the writer focuses on as the text develops.	Analyse what is implied, eg a gloomy landscape implies an unhappy situation - what is causing that unhappiness? What will happen next?
shifts	Changes in ideas and perspectives, e.g outside to inside.	Comment on how this change is effective, e.g creates contrast.
contrast	The differences between two things.	Comment on the effect a drastic difference produces.
repetition or patterns	When words, phrases or ideas are repeated for effect.	Repetitive features can highlight key meanings, indicate a development or show a lack of change.

Language Patterns, Structural Features and Stylistic Choices

Feature	Purpose	Effect on the reader
temporal references	References to time.	Comment on how time is used to speed up or slow down the pace of the text.
order of events	This could be chronological or writers might choose to start at the end, in the middle, or with flashbacks / flash forwards.	Comment on how the order of events introduces and prioritises key ideas – and how this engages the reader.
endings	The conclusion of a text may be neat or leave us with questions.	Think about how the reader feels at the end. Have their feelings changed since the opening?
withholding information	Clues and hints are given without revealing everything at once.	Analyse what is implied by hints – how does this build the reader's expectations?
dialogue	Conversations and speech.	How does dialogue move the text forward?
headings, subheadings and questions	Divides the content of texts into topics and sub topics, can signal the start of new points.	How do they guide readers through a text?
bullets	Bullets can summarise and simplify a range of ideas.	Why does the writer summarise certain points?
sentence structures	Varied types of sentences, e.g simple, compound and complex.	Comment on how sentence structures affect the fluency of the text, e.g a sudden short sentence could reveal shocking information.
paragraph lengths	These vary like sentences e.g, to highlight significant points or to provide a detailed account.	Comment on how paragraph lengths affect the development of the text, e.g a final paragraph might summarise key points in an argument.

Stylistic Choices / Features

Stylistic features are defined as the ways in which **aspects of texts** (such as words, sentences, images) **are arranged** and how they affect meaning. Producers might have a particular recognisable style due to the features they consistently choose. This may include, but is not limited to:

narrative viewpoint / point of view

structural features (see above)

imagery

voice

syntax

written and visual language choices (type of discourse, style of camera work etc.)