

We Shall Overcome

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Parallelism

“For the cries of pain and the hymns and protests of oppressed people have summoned into convocation all the majesty of this great Government—the Government of the greatest Nation on earth” (para. 4). This makes the reader stop and think about how good the government really is.

Punctuation

“This dignity cannot be found in a man's possessions; it cannot be found in his power, or in his position” (para. 9). The use of this semi-colon makes a pause longer than a traditional comma making it more dramatic.

Metaphor

“...to deny a man his hopes because of his color, or race, or his religion, or the place of his birth is not only to do injustice, it is to deny America and to dishonor the dead who gave their lives for American freedom” (para. 9) The use of this metaphor makes us stop and think about African Americans and their rights.

Simile

“For with a country as with a person, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (para, 6). The use of this simile says that if you dont share the wealth you will never be happy.

Sentence structure

“This bill will strike down restrictions to voting in all elections -- Federal, State, and local -- which have been used to deny Negroes the right to vote” (para, 18). This sentence add dramatic effect to the speech because it shows they’re changing it at every level.

Anaphora

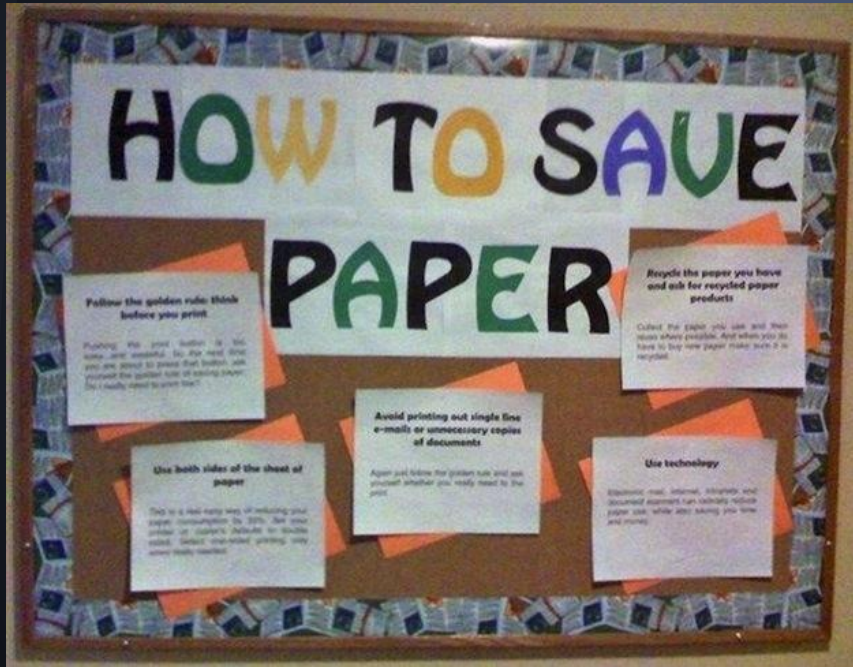
“There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem” (Johnson, para. 7). This is important because it is repeating that there is no problem.. which is making the audience understand what problem there is.

Reversed Structure

“A century has passed since the day of promise. And the promise is un-kept” (para, 29).

This reversed sentence structure makes an impact because it helps the audience understand the “promise” that is not being kept.

Irony



This is an example of irony because they are telling you how to save paper, but they used a whole bunch of paper to write on.

Antonomasia

“The answer for this question can be given only by Mr. Know-it-all.” (Antonomasia examples, para 4)

This is an example of antonomasia its giving a nickname to someone that “thinks they know it all.”

Antithesis

“Love is an ideal thing, marriage a real thing.”
(Antithesis examples, para 7)

This is an example of antithesis because it's comparing love to marriage, that people think love is easy and not real-marriage is hard work.

Its contrasting that love is an ideal thing, and marriage is a real thing.

Analogy

“At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama (para. 3).”

Johnson compares the current civil rights struggle to a struggle for freedom that most all Americans know and appreciate.

Signifying

"[Your mom] sent her picture to the lonely hearts club, but they sent it back and said, 'We ain't that lonely!' (Kochman)."

This is used to cleverly insult the audience.

Hyperbole

“This is the richest and the most powerful country which ever occupied this globe. The might of past empires is little compared to ours (para. 58).”

Johnson says this to give Americans the idea that part of taking this role means living up to moral standards that they've failed to meet because of the civil rights issue.

Understatement

“As a man whose roots go deeply into Southern soil, I know how agonizing racial feelings are. I know how difficult it is to reshape the attitudes and the structure of our society (para. 30).”

Johnson maintains political correctness and his good name by not going deeply into what those racial feelings are.

Rhetorical Question

“How many white families have lived in stark poverty? How many white lives have been scarred by fear, because we've wasted our energy and our substance to maintain the barriers of hatred and terror? (para. 35).”

Johnson makes the audience think about the injustice of what they're doing.

Work Cited

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