RHETORICAL FUNCTIONS

Rhetorical functions are strategies to create clear and effective composition and presentations, particularly in the academic environment. **Description, definition, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, classification, giving instructions…** are some examples of Rhetorical functions.

DESCRIPTION

Describing characterizes appearances, changes, conditions, attitudes, processes, steps, concepts, things, places, events… It says what a person, object, situation... are like or look like. In academic life, *descriptions* introduce a scientific view of the world since it tells about the different behaviors and distinctive features of an object or situation: how it looks, sounds, tastes, smells, reacts, works …

The nature of something can be explained by describing it. For example, the concept of *Economics* may be difficult to be *defined*, but a *description* of its characteristics, structure and functions, makes it easier to understand.

Descriptions often involve the use of *modifiers*; that means words or phrases that modify another word. When describing, it is important to consider particular criteria or categories: Cost, quality, quantity, time, age, physical and emotional conditions etc. These modifiers, almost always **adjectives**, should be placed as near as possible to the word or words they describe, so the reader finds the characteristics without any problem. **intelligent, responsible, honest and brilliant** students

Describing things

Criterion	Characteristics
Texture	hard, firm, steady, rigid, tough, rough, harsh, soft, lax, smooth
Size	tiny, small, little, petite, minuscule, big, large, giant, immense, huge, microscopic,
Cost	expensive, costly, reasonable, equitable, cheap, inexpensive, low-cost
Quality	good, worthy, excellent, fine, satisfactory, adequate, bad, evil, malicious, mediocre, average
Quantity	much, many, several, numerous, various, little, a little, few, limited, a few
Age	new, brand new, modern, firsthand, novel, contemporary, up-to-date, old, ancient, antique
Shape	cylindrical, tubular, square, quadrangular, round, curved, triangular, three-sided
Length	long, lengthy, overlong, extended, stretched, short, dumpy, diminutive

Exercise:
Choose 2 objects and write proper characteristics from the chart above. **Example**: The sun: hot, round, powerful
1**. gold**: hard, rigid, fine, expensive / **calculator**: rectangular, small, good quality, low cost / **blanket**: big, soft square / **telephone**: expensive, smart telephone, small / lighter: small, cheap, cylindrical, hard/

Describing people's personalities and behaviors

organized	smart	**silly**	**talkative**
reserved	malicious	**impolite**	**reliable unreliable**
practical	active	**unfair**	**easygoing**
creative	sociable	**rude**	impatient
responsible	strict	**selfish**	sincere
hardworking	punctual	**messy**	mischievous

Exercise: Choose the necessary adequate adjectives from the chart above in order to characterize the following personality types.

To be a brain: smart, creative, intelligent, hardworking,

To be a workaholic: irritable, hardworking, strict, responsible, punctual

To be a people person: talkative, easygoing, friendly, sincere, sociable, outgoing

To be a friend: sincere, reliable, reserved, loyal, helpful, honest, fair.

Example:

Object: octopus.

Characteristics: huge head / eight long, fearful arms / soft and rubberlike head / powerful jaws / long arms , tentacles/

An octopus appears to be **just** a huge head with eight long, fearful **arms**. Its head **is** soft and rubberlike. Its eyes stick out on stalks so that it can see in all directions. Its mouth is on the underside of its body and has powerful jaws shaped like a beak. The long arms, or tentacles, have double rows of suckers. These can fasten onto objects with such suction that they cannot be pulled off.

I wonder what does he look like?

I wonder what is he like?

Describing People

I wonder what does he look like?

Height

- Tall
- Short
- Of average height
- About...cm tall
- Dwarf

Build

- Skinny/slim/lean
- Fat/plump/obese
- Well-built
- Frail
- Muscular
- Stocky
- Chubby
- Sturdy

Age

- Old/young
- Middle-aged
- Teenager
- Adult
- In his/her early/mid/late 20s,30s

Face

- Round
- Oval
- Long
- Freckled
- Squared

Eyes

- Dark
- Large
- Bright
- Narrow
- Small

Hair

- Dark/fair
- Long/short
- Straight/wavy/curly
- Spiky
- Bald
- Blond/ginger/brown
- Shoulder-length
- Worn in ponytail/plaits

Skin

- Fair/Dark
- Tanned
- Pale
- Light

Nose

- Long
- Hooked
- Flat
- Pointed
- Large
- Straight

Mouth

- Thin
- Full lips/crooked
- Even teeth
- Large

ESLBUZZ

Exercise: Read the following text, identify, and highlight **concrete** *descriptions*: the described object and its characteristics. Some examples have been highlighted.

Leadership Qualities

(By Kenneth Beare, About.com Guide)

There are **many** *qualities* that shape **a successful** *leader*. Consequently, there is no **single** *recipe* for guaranteeing **top management** *skills*. If there were, there wouldn't be so few truly international success stories. Obviously, a great decision-maker possesses the ability to inspire his employees.

A charismatic leader can motivate employees to give that added-extra that puts a company over the top. This leader is energetic while at the same time being thoughtful when it comes to important, strategy-changing decisions. This of course does not mean that balanced leader is without his impulsive side. In fact, it is exactly this adventurous spirit that separates true genius from run-of-the-mill management. If Bill Gates hadn't left Harvard University before graduation, he might never have become the stellar public figure that he is today. His ruthlessness combined with a passionate conviction has made him the envy of many an industry captain today. Many would say that Apple's Steve Jobs was taken advantage of. While this may be true in a certain sense, if Gates had decided to become a hardware manufacturer, as well as a software pioneer, as was the case with Jobs, he probably wouldn't have had his past resounding success with Microsoft software products.

Nowadays, however, the tables have turned with Steve Jobs leading Apple to incredible successes in both hardware and software developments for the computer, as well as innovative mobile phones and tablets. The lesson to be learned is that leadership can make the difference between a good company and a great company.

A definition responds to the question "*What is it*?" It explains an unknown term or concept with the help of other words like synonyms, antonyms, and examples. A definition is necessary because the word or concept may have more than one meaning. Communication between researchers is dependent on precise and clear definitions of concepts, processes, behaviors, and ideas that permit a complete understanding. Grammatically talking definitions require **the verb to be** and **another verb**: a chef **is** a person who **cooks** in restaurants.

Aristotle suggested that a good definition should include **the general class of the term** plus **the specific characteristics** that differentiate the term from other members of its class.

Aristotle Definition formula*:*

Term	=	***General Class***	+	**specific** ***Characteristics***:
Managers	=	people	+	direct companies and make decisions…
A project	=	allocation of resources	+	directed to an objective following a plan

Managers	*are*	*people*	*who*	*direct companies and make decisions about…*
A project	*is an*	*allocation of resources*	*directed*	*to get an objective following a plan*

Sometimes the formula is made in the following way:

Term	=	***Characteristics***	+	***Class***
UNIVALLE	=	a nonprofit academic	+	organization
UNIVALLE	is	a nonprofit academic		organization

Analyzing Definitions:
Read the following definitions: underline the general class and put in (parenthesis specific characteristics).

Example:

Helium is an inert gas (that is light and nonflammable).

- Protozoa are one celled organism.
- A machine is a device that transforms energy from one form to another.
- The cerebrum is the part of the brain that is the center of reasoning.
- Ecology is the study of the environment.
- Tolerance is the virtue of respecting ours and others' beliefs.

Formulating Definitions: Using the information given, write a definition.

Example:

- An amoeba/ one- celled animal/ constantly changes shape.

  An amoeba is a once-celled animal that constantly changes shape
- Ornamental / branch of architecture / deals with aesthetic
- Employee / person / works in an enterprise.
- Orchestra / group of musicians / make music playing different instruments.

Extended Definitions

A definition may consist of just a simple sentence, a paragraph, a chapter and even a book. When a concept is too complex to be defined in 1 or 2 sentences, an *expanded definition* is needed. It keeps the basic parts of a simple definition: ***class + characteristics***, but additional information (descriptions, examples, classifications, comparisons, explanations…) is included to complete it. The following text is an example of a larger definition.

What is Biology?

https://www.britannica.com/science/biology/Evolution

Biology, study of living things and their vital processes. The field deals with all the physicochemical aspects of life. The modern tendency toward cross-disciplinary research and the unification of scientific knowledge and investigation from different fields has resulted in significant overlap of the field of biology with other scientific disciplines. Modern principles of other fields—chemistry, medicine, and physics, for example—are integrated with those of biology in areas such as biochemistry, biomedicine, and biophysics. Biology is subdivided into separate branches for convenience of study, though all the subdivisions are interrelated by basic principles. Thus, while it is custom to separate the study of plants (botany) from that of animals (zoology), and the study of the structure of organisms (morphology) from that of function (physiology), all living things share in common certain biological phenomena—for example, various means of reproduction, cell division, and the transmission of genetic material.

After reading the extended definition that appears above, fill in the definition formula.

- **Term**:
- **General Class**:
- **Characteristics**:
- **Examples**

What is systems engineering?

Systems Engineering consists of two significant disciplines: the technical knowledge domain in which the systems engineer operates, and systems engineering management. Three commonly used definitions of Systems Engineering are provided by the best-known technical standards that apply to this subject. They all have a common theme:

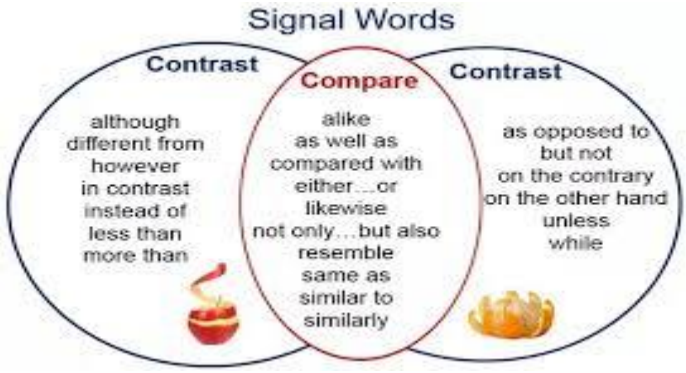
1. A logical sequence of activities and decisions that transforms an operational need into a description of system performance parameters and a preferred system configuration. (MIL-STD499A, Engineering Management, 1 May 1974. Now cancelled.)

2. An interdisciplinary approach that encompasses the entire technical effort, and evolves into and verifies an integrated and life cycle balanced set of system people, products, and process solutions that satisfy customer needs. (EIA Standard IS-632, Systems Engineering, December 1994.)

3. An interdisciplinary, collaborative approach that derives, evolves, and verifies a life-cycle balanced system solution which satisfies customer expectations and meets public acceptability. (IEEE P1220, Standard for Application and Management of the Systems Engineering Process, [Final Draft], 26 September 1994.)

In summary, systems engineering is an interdisciplinary engineering management process that evolves and verifies an integrated, life-cycle balanced set of system solutions that satisfy customer needs.

COMPARISON and CONTRAST



Comparing and *contrasting* identify the *likenesses/ SIMILARITIES* and *differences* among objects, people, or situations. ***Compare*** derives from Latin "to liken, to compare." *Contrast* derives from Latin contra, "against" .
They answer to questions: **What is the same about**…? **How similar is/are**…? Scientists try to organize information by seeking relationships of different situations.

- When an **ant** can **load** a crumb of bread becomes an extraordinary event because the crumb has three times the weight of the ant.
- But an **elephant** could not **load** three times its own weight.
- Comparative studies between **people who suffer from lung cancer** and **people who do not**, discovered a strong relationship between this disease and smoking.

Comparing Similarities/ LIKENESSES

Similarity Conjunctions: Similarly, Likewise, the same as, the same, also, too, both, in the same way…

A tablet is	**like** **comparable to**	*a computer*
Cell phones	**resemble** **parallel**	tablets in some ways.

Comparing Differences: Contrasting **Conjunctions:** However, in contrast, but, yet, on the other hand, even though, although, whereas, while, nevertheless.

My cousin is	**Unlike** **different from**	my uncle

Example:
Tribes **differed** in their basic ways of **providing** for themselves. Indians of the Southwest lived in villages and planted their corn and squash in orderly rows. **However**, around the Great Lakes forest Indians hunted deer and small furbearing animals. On the Great Plains braves tracked the buffalo, while in the Pacific Northwest plentiful supplies of salmon and other fish tempted Indians into their canoes and kept hunger away. Bernard Weisberger, The impact of our past. McGraw Hill, 1972.

Exercise: read the following text and fill in the chart comparative chart.

Cali and **Medellin**, both cities of Colombia, are **similar** cities in several ways, **but** different in some others.

To begin with, **Cali** is a medium size town with a population of about 2.000.000 people. "La Sucursal del Cielo", located to the south of Valle del Cauca State, is a flat land surrounded by mountains. Valle grows sugar cane and fruits.

As to **Medellin**, it is not a very large city either, having a population of about 1.800.000. "La Capital de la Montaña" has mainly a mountainous relief which also develops competitive agriculture process to growing corn and other cereals.

Talking about education, both cities have excellent universities. Two of them are Univalle and Antioquia University**.** In the same way these two public institutions are well known for their high academic level and for their campuses full of green and nature.

Categories:
Colombian cities
1. town size:
2. agriculture:
3.population:
4. academy:
5. location:
6. relief:

Topic sentence	Cali and Medellin are similar in several ways but different in some others.
similarities	
differences	
Similarity connectors	
Contrasting connectors	

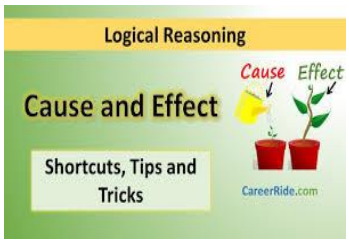
Exercise: read the text and identify the differences between the two schools.

In the 19th century, two widely differing schools of socialist thought emerged, *the Utopian Socialists* and *the Marxians*. The first group believed that public ownership of the means of production was a necessary goal for human happiness. However, they wanted to reach it gradually and peacefully, using democratic methods to make changes through the government. They believed in ballots, rather than bullets. They also felt that owners who had mines, factories or land taken away by the government should be paid for their property. People who have these beliefs today are called Socialists.

The second group, led by Marx, also wanted the government to take over all private property used to produce goods. However, their methods were to be very different. They thought that violence or revolution

would be necessary because the owners of property would fight to hold on to it. No payment should be made to these owners who lost their property. Today, those who believe in these methods are called Communists. (Edward Kolevzon, The Afro-Asian world. Allyn & Bacon, 1971).

CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS



Relationships in scientific facts include *Cause* and *Effect* function. Greek philosopher Leucippus (5th century B.C) suggested that there is ***causality*** in nature: events have a natural cause. Something causes apples to fall; something causes enterprises to succeed or fail in their projects… But never assume that one event caused another just because they happened in sequence.

Sometimes ***the effect*** of an event becomes ***the cause*** of the second one; and *the effect* of the second event may become *the cause* of a third. The result is a continuous chain reaction of causes and effects.

Science connects situations and events in order to discover the **how's and why's** of the world. Understanding *cause* and *effect* allows us to read more clearly and make sense of the text.

There are several ways to understand cause and effect in a reading:

- The easiest way to identify cause and effect is analyze and discern **what happened** and **why**.
- Cause and effect connectors are **therefore**, **because** and **as a result** .

Cause and effect patterns

Satisfied customers **cause** more and more customers to buy.

Charismatic leaders **motivate** people to develop meaningful projects.

If bosses are fair, employees give the added-extra, so the company goes to the top.

White light is **caused by / due to / a result of** a mixing of wavelengths

Example:

Event: Christopher Columbus arrived in Cuba in 1492

Cause: he lost the route to India.

Effects: encounter with indigenous, exaggerated ambition, robbery, violence, discrimination, death, killings, rapes, a new culture, a new language, a new religion, a new political sense

Deforestation

Deforestation is clearing Earth's forests on a massive scale, often resulting in damage to the quality of the land. Forests are cut down **for many reasons**, but most of them are related to money or to people's need to provide for their families. The biggest driver of deforestation is agriculture. Farmers cut forests to provide more room for planting crops or grazing livestock. Often many small farmers will each clear a few acres to feed their families by cutting down trees and burning them in a process known as "slash and burn" agriculture.

Logging operations, which provide the world's wood and paper products, also cut countless trees each year. Logg**ers**, some of them acting illegally, also build roads to access more and more remote forests—which lead to further deforestation. Forests are also cut as a result of growing urban sprawl. But not all deforestation is intentional. Some is caused by a combination of human and natural factors like wildfires and subsequent overgrazing, which may prevent the growth of young trees.

Deforestation has many negative effects on the environment. The most dramatic impact is a loss of habitat for millions of species. Seventy percent of Earth's land animals and plants live in forests, and many cannot survive the deforestation that destroys their homes. It also drives climate change. Forest soils are moist, but without protection from sun-blocking tree cover they quickly dry out. Trees also help perpetuate the water cycle by returning water vapor back into the atmosphere. Without trees to fill these roles, many former forest lands can quickly become barren deserts.

The quickest solution to deforestation would be to simply stop cutting down trees. Though deforestation rates have slowed a bit in recent years, financial realities make this unlikely to occur. A more workable solution is to carefully manage forest resources by eliminating clear-cutting to make sure that forest environments remain intact. The cutting that does occur should be balanced by the planting of enough young trees to replace the older ones felled in any given forest. The number of new tree plantations is growing each year, but their total still equals a tiny fraction of the Earth's forested land.

Workshop: Fill in the chart with information given on the text.

Problem	Causes	Effects	Possible solutions	Associated Vocabulary Key words