

# Assertion

## Definition of Assertion

When someone makes a statement investing his strong belief in it, as if it is true, though it may not be, he is making an assertion. Assertion is a stylistic approach or technique involving a strong declaration, a forceful or confident and positive statement regarding a belief or a fact. Often, it is without proof or any support. Its purpose is to express ideas or feelings directly, for instance, “I have put my every effort to complete this task today.”

## Types of Assertion

Assertion has four types, including:

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### Basic Assertion

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It is a simple and straightforward statement for expressing feelings, opinions, and beliefs such as:

“I wish I could have expressed this idea earlier, because now someone else has taken the credit.”

“Excuse me, first I want to finish my work, then I shall go with you.”

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### Emphatic Assertion

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It conveys sympathy to someone, and usually has two parts: the first encompasses recognition of the feelings or situations of the other person, and the second is a statement that shows support for the other person’s viewpoint, feelings, or rights such as:

“I understand you are busy, and me too, but it is difficult for me to finish this project on my own. So, I want you to help me complete this

project.”

“I know this is making you angry and frustrated because you have not gotten a response yet. But I can help you by giving you an estimate of how long it might take.”

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## Escalating Assertion

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It occurs when someone is not able to give a response to a person’s basic assertions, and therefore that person becomes firm about him or her such as:

“If you do not finish this work by 6:00 tonight, I I will engage the services of another worker.”

“I really want to finish this point before you start yours.”

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## Language Assertion

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It involves the first person pronoun “I,” and is useful for expressing negative feelings. Nevertheless, it constructively lays emphasis on a person’s feelings of anger such as:

“When you speak harshly, I cannot work with you because I feel annoyed. Therefore, I want you to speak nicely and then assign me a task.”

“When I don’t get enough sleep, it affects my nerves and I feel irritated. Therefore, I try to go to bed earlier.”

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## Examples of Assertion in Literature

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### Example #1: *Animal Farm* (By George Orwell)

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In *Animal Farm*, pigs make use of assertion as a tool for making [propaganda](#) in the entire novel. This is to weaken the position of other animals, preventing contradiction with their rules and leadership. In chapter seven, Squealer informs other animals that they need not sing the original anthem of the Old Major, Beasts of England — a song they used to inspire the revolution in the chapter one. Squealer asserts, saying:

“It’s no longer needed, comrade ... In Beasts of England we

However, that society has now been established. Clearly this song has no longer any purpose.”

Look at his language where he gives them information that is obvious, which they have realized already, and no one can make arguments against it. Thus, no one argued against his assertion.

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### **Example #2: *Pride and Prejudice* (By Jane Austen)**

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Elizabeth conceals her surprise at the news of Darcy’s plan to marry her. When Lady Catherine objects to this marriage, as Bennets have low connections and their marriage would ruin Darcy’s position before his friends and society, Elizabeth attempts to defend her family background by asserting:

“I am a gentleman’s daughter.”

In fact, she sets herself free from the exasperating control of snobs like Miss Bingley, Mr. Collins, and Lady Catherine, and declares:

“I am ... resolved.”

Then further says with assertion:

“... to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me.”

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### **Example #3: *Cherry Orchard* (By Anton Chekov)**

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Trofimov and Lopakhin exchange barbed words, and Lopakhin calls Trofimov an “eternal student.” When Lopakhin asks Trofimov’s views about him, Trofimov replies that he considers Lopakhin as “a soon-to-be-millionaire,” and “a beast of prey.” Then, Gayev points towards the conversation about pride the two men had earlier.

Trofimov asserts with reasoning about the folly of their pride, as man is a “pretty poor physiological specimen,” they are in misery, and “the only thing to do is work.” Although, he was pessimistic about the current situation of humans, however, he starts feeling optimistic for their future. He expresses this idea with assertion and rebukes Russian intellectuals, as they do not even know the meaning of work.

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#### **Example #4: *Othello* (By William Shakespeare)**

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**DESDEMONA:**

“I never did  
Offend you in my life, never loved Cassio  
But with such general warranty of heaven  
As I might love. I never gave him token.”

In these lines, Desdemona makes a dying assertion that she is innocent, denying Othello’s accusations. However, blinded by emotion and furious, Othello is resolved to kill her.

#### **Function of Assertion**

The function of assertion is to let readers to feel that they should not disagree or dispute what they read or hear; rather, they should accept the idea or notion as an indisputable fact. It has proved to be one of the best approaches for writers to express their personal feelings, beliefs, and ideas in a direct way. By using this technique, writers can defend others’ feelings and rights if violated. This rhetorical [style](#) also expresses self-affirmation and rational thinking of personal respect or worth. It is very common in various fields of life, like literature, politics, advertisements, and legal affairs.