



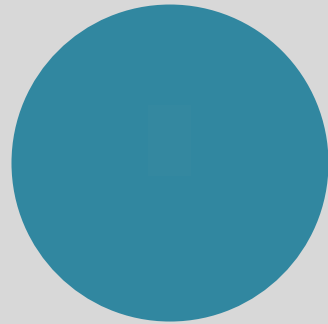
# LANGUAGE AMPLIFICATION VS. CONCISION

Exaggeration Woes

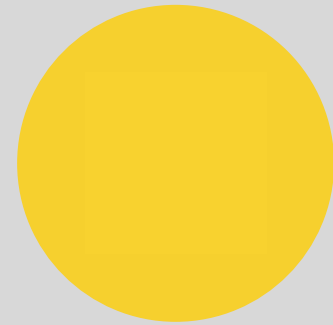
# Aristotle's Rhetoric – language and audience are linked



LOGOS



PATHOS



ETHOS



# LOGOS

- Logos uses persuasion through logical proof to convince the audience of a real or apparent point of view.
- Logos employs speech and language, statement, reason and explanation to establish an argument with the intelligent listener.



# PATHOS

- Pathos appeals to an emotional response from the audience.
- The intention of pathos is to urge the audience into action.
- Pathos uses sentiment to replace rational thought.



# ETHOS

- Ethos uses the reputation of the speaker to help persuade or influence the audience.
- That reputation may be real or invented, depending on the situation.



# FACT OR FICTION?

When is exaggeration appropriate?



# NON-LITERAL LANGUAGE

Hyperbole   Idiom   Irony   Metaphor   Simile   Understatement

# Hyperbole – literary device that uses creative language to intentionally exaggerate

- Fill in the blanks ...
  - It's raining \_\_\_\_\_.
  - He knew the forest like \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I'm so hungry I could eat a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Your suitcase weighs a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - She's addicted to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The gunshot was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - I'll be back in a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Typically, we exaggerate in very general terms, rather than specifics.
- When we correct for meaning or intention, we always revert away from the extreme but still move in a strong direction.
- Hyperbole is often based on how we perceive the experience.
- Claudia Claridge suggests that we have a pseudo scale of exaggeration that runs from hill to mountain.



# Write your own hyperbole

- Write five of your own. Make an attempt to be as original as possible.
- Hyperbole is not meant to be truthful or logical but descriptive and imaginative, humorous or expressive. It's intention is often to clarify our attitude rather than clarify the fact.
- Ethical hyperbole?
  - Is hyperbole appropriate in all forms of writing?
  - Are there instances in which it may be regarded as ridiculous?
- Name one form of writing in which hyperbole might be considered a poor choice.



# SUPERSIZED LANGUAGE

Louder and bigger – the language of extroverts

# Super Size Me

- Morgan Spurlock's film, starring himself, helped to coin the term. MacDonald's now calls this "Summer Size".
- Sometimes, language amplification is required just to be heard above the chatter.
- Extroverts have developed a new standards for extreme language.
- Hyper-inflation of language uses advertising principles and corporate jargon, to sell.
- Research suggests that extroverts require more cortical stimulation from their language.
- Terms such as 'average' or 'mediocre' or now considered negative rather than representing the median.
- Nobody wants to be vanilla anymore.

# Let's have a look at some examples

## Concision

- heroes
- sad
- crazy
- hungry
- new
- rogue
- hot
  
- Can you add to this list?

## Language Amplification

- superheroes
- tragic, pathetic, heart-rendering
- insane, ballistic, manic
- starving, ravenous, famished
- revolutionary
- viral
- scorching, sweltering, suffocating

# Inflate to infinite proportions

- Kreuz, Kassler and Coppenrath point to “extreme amounts of infinite magnitude”
- gobs, oodles, and zillions rather than 29.7%
- exaggeration in a positive direction is often the Western or American choice
- understatement or meiosis is the European favourite
- Americans frequently add prefixes such as uber-, mega-, ova- to regular nouns

# Food, Weather, and Sports

- language of food has changed dramatically; fish are no longer fried but grilled, crisped, seared, glazed, lacquered or truffled
- fresh vegetables are now dew-fresh, farm-fresh, and seasonal
- weather forecasters use endless extremist language in an effort to get more headlines read. Weather now includes words like Frankenstorm, snowmageddon, and weathernado.
- Suzie Dent cites the demise of the 100% with skating announcers who described Torville and Dean's ice routine as a pair who gave it 101% in the 80's.
- Fellow sports announcers were quick to follow suit.

# Amplification Exercise

– provide an amplified version of each of these words

- nice
- fine
- current
- bad
- poor
- angry
- clever
- good
- impressive
- love

# Reverse Amplification

– develop the concise form of the following phrases

- The employee was terminated at work.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- She said she was dying for a drink at the end of the day.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- The deluge of rain brought death and destruction to the valley.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Their fourth quarter ended in an epic failure.
- \_\_\_\_\_





# EFFECTS OF AMPLIFICATION

How does language inflation affect our perception?



# POSITIVE EFFECTS

- message may appear more enthusiastic, more interesting, more eager
- intention is to build confidence
- amplification seeks to play into emotional response
- increase persuasiveness to convince reader of product's merit
- ultimately, the goal in advertising is to sell more product
- what are the implications for writers/editors?



# NEGATIVE EFFECTS

- overuse of descriptors like 'totally', 'incredibly', 'amazingly' render them mundane
- misrepresentation of the facts may have serious consequences in medicine and politics
- linguistic inflation devalues the 100% as though it were not enough
- amplification may have appeared with social media
- again, what are the implications for writers/editors?

# Concision Exercise

- Which fields would use the most amount of concise language and the least amount of exaggeration?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- How does concise language affect the reader in a positive way?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- What are the negative effects of using concise language?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



# AUXESIS

- related to hyperbole, auxesis is a form of exaggeration
- terms are heaped one after another to add to the impact of the statement
- the last adjective is usually the most significant

# Auxesis examples

- Words and phrases are added to provide more description, to build a richer picture, to add flare and imagery, and most of all, to increase the impact of the original concept. (This is an example.)
- He was a most loving, devoted, committed and engaged father.
- Chris tried to pick up the weight not once, not twice, but three times before he realized it was too heavy.

## **Exercise Auxesis:**

1. Write down your own version of auxesis. Perhaps use the weather outside as a prompt.
2. Pare down the auxesis to its simplest form.
3. Which do you prefer, and why?
4. Why do politicians favour this form of rhetoric?



# CONGERIES

- the writer or speaker chooses to use multiple adjectives of greater descriptive power to amplify meaning

# Congeries Example

- “It was a dark, moonless night, inky black, heavy with stars that pricked the void.”

## **Congeries Exercise:**

1. Write a common noun representing a person, place or thing.
2. Record as many descriptive words as you can to define the noun.
3. Rank order the adjectives in terms of importance, intensity placing the most significant at the end.
4. Write a complete sentence using your congeries.
5. Write a new sentence that could be used in a political campaign.





# RESOURCES

# Resources

- Linguistic Supersizing: The Language of Extroverts, by Susie Dent (BBC)
- <https://www.bbc.com/reel/playlist/word-for-word?vpid=p09hg3dg>
- Super Size Me, by Morgan Spurlock
- “English Suffers Hyper-Inflation”, Daily Telegraph (UK)
- “The Death of 100%” by Suzie Dent
- [Amplification: Definition and Examples | LiteraryTerms.net](#)
- [Hyperbole - Examples and Definition of Hyperbole as Literary Device \(literarydevices.net\)](#)
- [Amplification Definition and Examples in Rhetoric \(thoughtco.com\)](#)
- [Exaggerated communication \(nih.gov\)](#)

# Resources Cont'd

- [Use of exaggerated language in news stories to describe drugs for treatment of Alzheimer's disease. - Abstract - Europe PMC](#)
- [This awesome dissection of internet hyperbole will make you cry and change your life | Charlie Brooker | The Guardian](#)
- [Looking back at Snowmageddon in St. John's metro area | SaltWire](#)
- <https://fowmedia.com/amplify-message/> -
- **Hyperbole in English: A Corpus-based Study of Exaggeration** by Claudia Claridge
- **Social and Cognitive Approaches to Interpersonal Communication** edited by Susan R. Fussell, Roger J. Kreuz
- Jennifer R. Mercieca (2019) Dangerous Demagogues and Weaponized Communication, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 49:3, 264-279, DOI: [10.1080/02773945.2019.1610640](https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2019.1610640)

# Resources Cont'd

- Marnie Lawler McDonough (2018) The Evolution of Demagoguery: An Updated Understanding of Demagogic Rhetoric as Interactive and Ongoing, *Communication Quarterly*, 66:2, 138-156, DOI: [10.1080/01463373.2018.1438486](https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2018.1438486) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01463373.2018.1438486>
- Jennifer R. Mercieca (2019) Dangerous Demagogues and Weaponized Communication, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 49:3, 264-279, DOI:  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F02773945.2019.1610640>
- <https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=XsvsAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA91&dq=exaggeration+in+language&ots=yCmjEq1-om&sig=Gd5qpRN7sGOQGehiaZYjgYH7adw#v=onepage&q=exaggeration%20in%20language&f=false>

Hyperbole in English: a Corpus-Based Study of Exaggeration.

- [https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=aegg\\_QdX6h8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=exaggeration+in+language&ots=SU5IFlv0rQ&sig=UKpLBx9tsFV8L93iiBB8c5Aw7v8](https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=aegg_QdX6h8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=exaggeration+in+language&ots=SU5IFlv0rQ&sig=UKpLBx9tsFV8L93iiBB8c5Aw7v8)