This document is designed to help give students a succinct and purposeful list of purposeful verbs to use—rather than the word “use” or its more eloquent synonyms—while completing rhetorical analysis assignments. It is governed by the philosophy that if students can either identify the rhetorical mode or the element of classical argument structure that is exhibited in the text at hand, then they won’t have to overthink identifying the rhetorical strategy because they will have a “go-to” word that clearly delineates what the author is doing. **Remember**: Devices are nouns, and strategies are ACTION VERBS (that are not related to the word “uses”).

Rhetorical and Argumentative Verbs

Give “Uses” a Rest

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| **Rhetorical Modes** | **Classical Argument Structure (Oration)** | **Other Verbs of Rhetorical Merit** |
| **Narration**1. Narrates

**Description**1. Describes

**Exemplification**1. Exemplifies
2. Provides

**Compare and Contrast**1. Compares
2. Contrasts
3. Juxtaposes

**Classification and Division**1. Divides
2. Classifies
3. Categorizes
4. Characterizes

**Definition**1. Defines

**Process Analysis**1. Initiates
2. Provides
3. Analyzes

**Cause and Effect**1. Causes
2. Affects

**USE** | **Exordium/Background Info**1. Creates
2. Initiates
3. Introduces
4. Illustrates

**Partition**1. Presents
2. Develops
3. Claims

**Confirmation**1. Confirms
2. Supports
3. Rationalizes
4. Legitimizes

**Refutation**1. Challenges
2. Refutes
3. Accepts
4. Defends
5. Counters

**So What?**1. Pleads
2. Clarifies
3. Implies
4. Calls to Action

**Employs** | 1. Considers
2. Reasons
3. Evokes
4. Elicits
5. Addresses
6. Provides
7. Distinguishes
8. Demonstrates
9. Provokes
10. Maintains
11. Repeats
12. Avoids
13. Concludes
14. Excludes
15. Focuses
16. Incites
17. Inspires
18. Ridicules
19. Opposes
20. Assumes
21. Speculates
22. Sympathizes
23. Alludes

**Utilizes** |

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| **Argumentative Structure** | **Common Corresponding Mode** |
| Exordium | Narration/Description |
| Background Information | Narration/Cause and Effect/Exemplification |
| Partition | Classification and Division/Definition |
| Confirmation | Exemplification/Cause and Effect/ Process Analysis |
| Refutation | Compare and Contrast/Exemplification |
| So What? | Cause and Effect/ Process Analysis |