Persuasive Techniques

1. Emotional Appeal: Writers may appeal to fear, anger or joy to sway their readers. They may also add climax or excitement. This technique is strongly connected to the speech's mood.

2. Word Choice (Diction): Is a person "slim" or "skinny"? Is an oil spill an "incident" or an "accident"? Is a government expenditure an "investment" or a "waste"? Writers tend to reinforce their arguments by choosing words that will influence their reader's perception of an item or issue. Diction may also help to establish a writer's "Voice" or "Tone".

3. Rhetorical Question: Sometimes a speaker will ask a question to which no answer is required. The speaker implies that the answer is obvious; the listener has no choice but to agree with the speaker's point.

4. Repetition: Overly repetitive writing can become tiresome. However, when used sparingly for effect, it can reinforce the speaker's message and/or entertain the listener. Writers may repeat a word, a phrase or an entire sentence for emphasis.

5. Parallelism: When a speaker creates a "balanced" sentence by re-using the same word structure, this is called parallelism. Always strive for parallelism when using compound or complex sentences.

6. Analogy: This tool is not limited to poets. Speakers often use figures of speech or comparisons (simile, metaphor, personification) for desired emphasis.

7. Appeal to Authority (association): A speaker may mention an important event or person in a speech to lend importance or credibility to his/her argument.

8. Hyperbole: This is one of the more enjoyable persuasive techniques. It involves completely overstating and exaggerating your point for effect. (Like when your mom says, "I must have asked you a million times to clean your room!" Get it?)

9. Irony: Irony is present if the speaker’s words contain more than one meaning. This may be in the form of sarcasm, gentle irony, or a pun (play on words). It can be used to add humor or to emphasize an implied meaning under the surface. The speaker's "voice" becomes important here.

Note: There are obviously other persuasive techniques available for your use (beyond the nine listed above). Feel free to use any rhetorical devices (or poetic devices) you may have learned in previous courses as long as they enhance your speech or message.