PowerPoint Analysis of Patrick Henry’s Speech to the Virginia Convention

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Persuasive techniques are used to try to convince a reader or a listener
to think a certain way or to perform a specific action.
Persuasive techniques usually appeal to the listener's reason or emotions.

In Patrick Henry’s stirring and persuasive speech, he forcefully urged them that they needed to arm themselves and be prepared to oppose King George III.
He spoke without any notes in a voice that became louder and louder, climaxing with that now famous ending.

He also used allusion (often) - to God.

He used Slanted Language – The use of words packed with emotion to invoke a strong reaction from the audience and make people feel a certain way.

He used Rhetorical Question – A question that is not meant to be answered but to be pondered:
"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?"

atrick Henry was an excellent orator and we talked in class about the rhetorical techniques evident in his famous speech: EXCLAMATION, REPETITION, RESTATEMENT, PARALLELISM, and RHETORICAL QUESTION. Identify an example of one of the techniques and discuss it. Why is it or is it not effective? Why did you choose it as something important to the speech? In addition, identify and explain other rhetorical strategies employed by Henry.



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In "Speech in the Virginia Convention" Patrick Henry says,"They tell us sir,that we are weak--unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?" Patrick henry is getting his point across by a series of questions asked, by which he is asking when the state of Virginaia would become stronger. Persuading Virginia that war with Britain is the right choice. This is an important factor in which Virgina were to make peace with Britain or go to war with them. Henry uses Aphorisms such as,"I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided; and that is the lamp of experience. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss." He brings out this use to persuade Virginia that peace "betrayed with a kiss" would only make them look weaker.



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In Patrick Henry's speech at the Virginia Convention, he uses the rhetorical technique of restatement. In lines 42-45 Henry uses rhetorical question to shed light on the topic of war. Henry restates to word subject and the different ways Virginia has attempted to come to a martial agreement with Britain. Henry says: "Have we anything new to offer on the suject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which is capable; but it has been in vain." Henry uses this effective strategy because it gives the president a better understanding of the various times they've tried to gain peace with Britan. Henry obviously got his point across, I couldn't easily turn a man down as persuasive as him.



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In Patrick Henry's "Speech in the Virginia Convention" he uses the technique of exclamation. He uses this technique when talking about the more emotional things and with the use of exclamation, his point gets across very well. When saying things like, "Our chains are forged!" (77) and "The war is inevitable-and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!" (78) one can tell that he feels very passionately. The use of exclamation helps express these feelings. He also uses the technique of repetition in the quote above. Repetition is also effective because it puts emphasis on the point he is trying to get across.This helps the delegates relate to what he is feeling and have a better understanding. It helped me have a better understanding as well.



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In Patrick Henry's "Speech in the Virginia Convention" he uses the techniques of exclamation and parallelism. At the end of his speech Henry exclaims, "...give me liberty, or give me death!" This quote is an example of both parallelism and exclamation. Both of these techniques are extraordinarily effective in this sense. After giving this persuasive speech about how the colonists needed to declare war on Britain because if they didn't they might as well be slaves, he just tops it all of with exclaiming he would rather die than continue to be ruled by Britain. Even though Patrick Henry was younger than many of the men at the Convention, it had to have been persuading to hear someone go to such an extreme such as death.



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Patrick Henry's duty in, "Speech in the Virginia Convention" was to persuade the delegates to declare war against Britian. In order to perform such a task, Henry used various tasks, like rhetorical questions. Henry wanted to impact his audience by pressing questions upon them to make them think and affect them personally. On line 63 Henry states, "Tell us, sir, that we are weak-unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?". I chose this quote because I can infer his passion on the subject of freedom. It is also very obvious that he is trying to persuade the others to be stronger and to not lie on their backs while their rights are taken away. Besides the rhetorical question technique, Henry also uses repetition, restatement, parallelism, and exclamation to let his voice be heard on his stand on freedom.



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Patrick Henry is, as we all know, a very smooth talking, persuasive speaker. In "Speech in the Virginia Convention" Henry uses rhetorical questions to his advantage. He gets the delegates to think of the subject as he gradually builds up to his final declaration. Henry asks the delegates if they should "try argument" with England to gain their independence but they "have been trying that for the last ten years" with no results. The questions he uses such as these keeps the delegates thinking about the answer and as Henry says the answers aloud, they are more willing to listen to what he has to say. In a way, the audience gets to hear what they want while Henry makes his point.



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\*Henry used various techniques, like rhetorical questions (sorry!)



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My favorite technique that Henry uses is rhetorical questions. I can personally relate to the use of rhetorical questions in persuasion because of my experiences in debate. one of the most effective things to use to persuade a judge is the rhetorical question. In one of our questions for our reading log homework on Henry the book asks, are rhetorical questions effective or manipulative? I believe our book has this point all messed up. Rhetorical questions are effective because they are manipulative. Henry is masterful at using rhetorical questions to manipulate the delegates of the Virgina convention. Henry recognizes that one of the common goals is to gain strength and organization. By asking a series of rhetorical questions culminating in "shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction?", he uses the questions to manipulate (the most effective form of persuasion) the delegates into taking action, and thus, achieving his desired goal.



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One of the techniques that Patrick Henry uses so effectively in "Speech in the Virginia Convention" is parallelism. When speaking about how they had done everything to "avert the storm which is now coming on", Henry states that they (we) "have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament." Starting out with 'we have' so many times really reinforces the point that they honestly had tried everything. It lists their endeavors effectively, letting each one stand out (we have PETITIONED... we have REMONSTRATED... etc.). By repeating a grammatical pattern in several of his statements, Henry helped make his statements stand out.



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Patrick Henry uses many rhetorical techniques but the one that is most evident is repitition. He uses repitition in his speech" The Virginia Convention". In lines 69-79 he tends to repeat "sir" , and the phrase " let it come" he says: " Sir, we are not weak...sir, we shall not fight our battles alone..." he goes on to say " The war is inevitable-and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!" he repeats sir to get the person he's addressing attention, he also uses exclamation after repeating let it come this emphasizes Patrick Henry's emotion and how he's trying to get the crowd on his side



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Henry uses many skilled and persuasive techniques such as rhetorical questions which can be effectively used to move an audience. Used to stir and instill anger in the hearts of those around him he puts several rhetorical questions together to create a strong motion for his intent."our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish?



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In Patrick Henry's "Speech in the Virginia Convention" he uses the rhetorical technique, parallelism and even more specifically antithesis. An example of an antithesis used by Henry is " Give me liberty, or give me death". This is very effective because of how powerful his contrasting statement is, it dramatically makes his point clear. This certain antithesis was effective enough to still be used today. Another rhetorical technique he uses is rhetorical question. He says "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" This question is effective because it gets the reciever thinking and upset at the thought of being a slave in chains to England.



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Patrick Henry uses many techniques in his speech but the most important one is Paralellism. This is a very effective technique, especially in this speech because it emphasizes the point the authour is trying to bring across to the audience. Patrick Henry said."I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided;and that is the lamp of experience. i know of no way of judging of the futuure but by the past." Here Henry basicall repeats himself by saying. Experience is guiding me, and where does one gain experience from the past. By repeating the same thing twice Patrick Henry emphasizes this idea. Patrick Henry also uses many Rhetorical questions to emphasize the meaning of the subject and stirr the audience heart and emotions, one of them being,"What neans this martial array,, if its purpose be not to force us to submission?" This particular rhetorical question is a great example of how Patrick Henry carefully placed his words to stirr emotions and thoughts. The question is meant for the audience to begin thinking about what brittain is really doing to the colonies. and why they want independence.



[Kirsti.Loves.You](https://www.wikispaces.com/user/view/Kirsti.Loves.You) Sep 27, 2011

Patrick Henry used many useful techniques in his "Speech in the Virgina Convention". However, my personal favorite is his use of rhetorical questions. They seem to be the most effective and most striking. The first rhetorical questions he asks that really left an impression upon me were "Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourelves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love?" Henry is asking, are these acts of war from King George III necessary to mend their differences? These questions are the most potent in the speech because his audience heard his words and realized the logic behind his questions. This was extremely effective and useful for his appeal. Henry also made use of the technique called exclamation. Exclamation is self-explanatory. It was so effective in his speech because it made use of passion which showed his feeling to the audience. In one instance, Henry exclaimed, "The war is inevitable--and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!" He was making a logical observation but backing it up with passion. This was effective because his audience could plainly see his reasoning. All of Henry's techniques he used were useful, however I found his use of rhetorical questions and exclamations to be far superior to the others.



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Henry uses many rhetorical techniques, some of which include repetition. Henry repeats "He has" through out his "Speech in the Virginia Convention."He has abdicated...He has plundered...He has excited...He has contrained," are all used as a rhetorical technique of repitition. Henry does this to emphasize eveything that "He" has done.



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Rhetorical Questions are one of the most common rhetorical techniques, and one of the best. A rhetorical question is simply a question that is asked that is not supposed to be answered. The purpose of this figure of speech is not to secure a response but to assert or deny a point implicitly. Patrick Henry does this best in his “Give Me Liberty Give Me Death” Speech when he says,” They tell us, sir that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger?” Without saying it, Henry convinces his listeners that now is the time to act.



[Mirandaa\_Marie](https://www.wikispaces.com/user/view/Mirandaa_Marie) Sep 28, 2011

Patrick Henry uses rhetorical questions in many of his speeches. This is an effective technique because it makes the audiance start thinking about a certain subject and also makes the answer to the question very obvious. In the Virginia Convention Patrick Henry asks "When shall we be stronger? Will it be when we are totally disarmed and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house?" son basically the obvious answer to this question is that they should not wait around till the last minute when British troops are already on their side. THis is very effective because it makes peoples opinions lean to his side.



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Rhetorical questioning makes people think about the question asked, so when Henry asks "Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed at every house?" The audiences response should have been, hey this is our opportunity! We should grab it by the horns! That is exactly what happened! Action was the result of the speech. Henry uses tellurium when saying " we must fight! We must fight!" He is trying to emphasize his opinion. That they should go to war and fight. Tellurium is an attention grabber, and in this case it did it's job well.



[christinoli11](https://www.wikispaces.com/user/view/christinoli11) Sep 28, 2011

In Patrick Henry's "Speech in the Virginia Convention", he uses parallelism to express the colonists and his desperation of the acceptable tries to get away from British rule. "We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have.Supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne ..." Henry directs an annoyed and aggravated tone towards his audience in order to persuade colonists against the British rule. This rhetorical technique is effective and important to his speech because it sums up and exaggerates his motive and purpose of his his speech, being his frustration of British rule and how "Mr. President" would not listen to the cries of his people.



[Montgomery\_JP](https://www.wikispaces.com/user/view/Montgomery_JP) Sep 30, 2011

Patrick Henry was a master of the art of rhetoric, and a brilliant speaker to say the least. In his 1775 "Speech in the Virginia Convention," he makes heavy use of the method of rhetorical questioning. As he describes man's tendency to maintain the illusion of hope, he says man is "...apt to shut [his] eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren, til she transforms [him] into beast." Henry then asks "Is this the part of wise men, engaged in the great and arduous struggle for liberty?" Henry's use of rhetorical question is effective because it makes the listener think. It is important to this speech because it helps communicate Henry's message about hope: it is foolish for the colonists to hope that the British will redress their "abuses." Henry continues to use another rhetorical question, that is at the same a rhetorical device called an allusion: "Are we disposed to be of the number who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, see not, the things which so nearly concern our temporal salvation?" This line is an allusion to a passage in the Bible, Mark 8:18. This is effective because it encourages the audience, people who were familiar with the Bible, to feel more connected to Henry's plea of freedom because they could relate it to a situation in the bible.