

The Glass Castle Reading Guide

Jeannette Walls | English 10 | Memoirs & Autobiography (Nonfiction)

Rhetorical Devices: (Define the following rhetorical devices. Then, explain the literary function and the rhetorical function of each device. Next, find an example of each of these in *The Glass Castle*. You can place these on another sheet if you are very Type A. Literary functions refer to what it enables the writer to do. Rhetorical functions refer to how those devices/strategies in writing impact a potential audience- the reader.)

Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Point-of-View	Perspective from which the text is narrated	Jeannette Walls utilizes a first-person point-of-view in her autobiographical memoir since it is a personal reflection.	Jeannette Walls utilizes a first-person point-of-view because it exemplifies the twenty-first century characteristics of autonomy and individualism.	"I was scraping the dried blood off my legs when I looked up and saw the Green Caboose come back around the bend... I pulled away from him. 'I thought you were going to leave me behind,' I said" (Walls 30-31).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Alliteration	Repetition of sounds at the start of words	Walls establishes rhythm in writing through the integration of alliterative language.	In doing so, Walls speeds up the way in which someone reads the text. This can support the rising action in a text.	"I suddenly woke up. The air was hot and stifling. I smelled smoke and then saw flames..." (Walls 33).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Allusion	Reference to something well-known	Walls integrates allusions in her text to incorporate connections to other events, places, or people in society/history.	This invokes a collective cultural consciousness (a.k.a. makes everyone feel like they are in the know and on the same page)- which creates an inclusive (and sometimes exclusive) environment for the reader.	"We didn't have a TV at home, so I watched it a lot. Red Buttons and Lucille Ball were my favorites" (Walls 11).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Ambiguity	When a word has more than one meaning (instead, it has multiple realms of interpretation)	Ambiguity, from a literary standpoint, opens up potential for symbolism, double entendre, and multiple realms of interpretation.	Ambiguity, from a rhetorical standpoint, allows/enables a reader to decipher which interpretative template they prefer. It provides choice to the reader.	"Others were rootless just like us- just passing through. They were gamblers or ex-cons or war veterans or what mom called loose women" (Walls 20).

Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Analogy	A brief type of comparison that compares two things to elaborate on a similar meaning	Analogies provide an avenue for figurative language or a potential platform for comparisons and connectivity in the text.	Analogies provide platforms for a connection between the reader and the comparison.	“Mom, however, told us that the FBI wasn’t really after Dad; he just liked to say they were because it was more fun having the FBI on your tail than bill collectors” (Walls 19).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Antecedent	The word, phrase, or clause referenced by the pronoun	In the text, antecedents allow variations in word choice and expand variation in diction.	Antecedents can scaffold the reader to pay closer attention to the people or the objects under discussion.	“‘Tinkerbelle can make it on her own,’ Dad said. ‘ She’s like my brave little girl. You are brave and ready for adventure, right?’” (Walls 17).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Aphorism/Proverb	A generally accepted statement of truth-like words of wisdom	Aphorisms are used to support the greater message in the text or to develop characterization (depending on who states the aphorism).	These, in turn, can teach a reader the greater message or help them better understand and connect or disconnect with a certain figure in the story.	“‘Years from now, when all the junk they got is broken and long forgotten,’ Dad said, ‘you’ll still have your stars’” (Walls 41).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Atmosphere	The mood of the text	Atmosphere conveys the setting of the story and its accompanying mood.	This manipulates the reader to feel the same mood portrayed in the text. It serves as a pathetic appeal.	“I thought the Joshua tree was ugly . It looked scraggly and freakish , permanently stuck in its twisted, tortured position, and it made me think...” (Walls).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Colloquial Language	Common or everyday language; slang; conversational/informal language	Colloquial language offers insight into a culture fostered in a story.	Colloquial language can make connections to the reader and create an informal reading space. This can work both ways.	“I could tell I was causing a big fuss , and I stayed quiet” (Walls 10).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Connotation	Society’s definition of a word	Connotative meanings can offer a space for experimentation with language and offer a platform for ambiguity in the text.	For a reader, connotative meanings can either: (1) isolate them from the text because they don’t understand them or (2) make them feel like an insider because they recognize the duality of meaning in the text.	“Sailors and women with lots of make-up stayed there. Dad called it a flophouse, but Mom said it was an SRO, and when I asked what that stood for, she told me the hotel was for special residents only” (Walls 30).

Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Denotation	The dictionary definition of a word	Denotative definitions and meanings can explain the intended interpretation of a certain segment of text.	For readers, this can establish an objective tone and create a more serious and direct engagement with the text.	“Venus didn’t have any moons or satellites or even a magnetic field, but it did have an atmosphere sort of similar to Earth’s, except that it was super hot- about five hundred degrees or more” (Walls 41).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Diction	The writer’s word choice (specific selections of word choice)	Specific word choice contributes to the atmosphere and the tone in a text.	Diction (a.k.a. specific word choice) can influence how a reader feels about a story. For example, using negative tone-related words could sway the reader’s opinion about something. Also, using colloquial language, informal words, ambiguous terminology, etc. could also impact the way a reader interprets and interacts with the text.	“In my mind, Dad was perfect, although he did have what Mom called a little bit of a drinking situation. There was what Mom called Dad’s ‘beer phase.’ We could all handle that. Dad drove really fast and sang really loud, and locks of hair fell into his face and life was a little bit scary but still a lot of fun. But when Dad pulled out a bottle of what Mom called “the hard stuff,” she got kind of frantic...” (Walls 23).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Didactic Story	A story with the intent to teach	Didactic stories can be utilized to express the theme in a story.	This teaches the reader.	“That was the thing to remember about all monsters, Dad said: They love to frighten people, but the minute you stare them down, they turn tail and run. ‘All you have to do, Mountain Goat, is show old Demon that you’re no afraid” (Walls 37).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Imagery	Detail-oriented language that invokes the senses	Imagery is employed to enable a visual image within written word.	This allows readers to picture what the writer sees. It can add credibility or pathos through an allowance of the reader to step into the shoes and viewpoint of the writer.	“Mom had grown up in the desert. She loved the dry, crackling heat, the way the sky at sunset looked like a sheet of fire, and the overwhelming emptiness and severity of all that open land that had once been a huge ocean bed” (Walls 21).

Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Hyperbole	An exaggeration	Hyperboles are utilized to support rising action and climatic components of a narrative. However, this device can also be used ironically to underscore a problem in the logic.	This can be used as a drama-builder to create suspense or exaggeration for the reader.	“Dad said that my sharpshooting would come in handy if the feds ever surrounded us” (Walls 21).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Comparisons (Similes & Metaphors)	Simile: comparison using like or as Metaphor: comparison without using like or as	Comparisons create connections in a text.	Certain types of connections are utilized to be more relatable to an intended audience, which is a sort of pathetic appeal.	“...tried to stop my nose from bleeding. It was dripping like a broken faucet. ‘Damn, honey,’ he said. ‘You busted your snot locker pretty good’” (Walls 31).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Invective	Emotionally violent verbal language	The character use of invectives can enhance the characterization of a person in the text. It gives insight into the character’s personality.	This can make the reader feel the hostility of a character or of a situation.	“‘You flea-bitten drunk!’ Grandma would scream. ‘You ***** flint-faced hag!’ Dad would shout back’” (Walls 20).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Litotes	An understatement that avoids making an affirmative claim by denying its opposite	Litotes are utilized to downplay something in a story line.	These can help the reader see irony in a story or see multiple ways of interpreting one situation.	“‘He gave me some perfect children, but He also gave me one that wasn’t so perfect , so He said, ‘Oops, I better take this one back’” (Walls 28).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Literary Conceit	The fancy word for an extended metaphor	Literary conceits are used to articulate an overarching theme and to add a cohesive vibe in the text.	These can scaffold readers to understand an overarching message in the text.	“I wondered if the fire had been out to get me. I wondered if all fire was related, like Dad said all humans were related, if the fire that had burned me that day while I cooked hot dogs was somehow connected to the fire I had flushed down the toilet and the fire burning at the hotel... I lived in a world that at any moment could erupt into fire” (Walls 34).

Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Onomatopoeia	When a word imitates a represented sound	Onomatopoeia adds space in the text to enhance the imagery through the integration of sound language.	This can bring the reader into the story and make it seem like they are there hearing the sound as the person in the story heard the sound.	“He showed us how to aim and fire his pistol, how to shoot Mom’s bow and arrows, and how to throw a knife by the blade so that it landed in the middle of a target with a satisfying thwock” (Walls 21).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Personification	Giving human like qualities to an inanimate object	Personification offers a space for imagination in a text. It gives the writer creativity in expression.	This can be utilized as a pathetic/emotional appeal. By making things seem more humanlike, it is appealing to the relatability factor in the text.	“... this time I held it really close to Tinkerbell’s face. Suddenly, her eyes grew wide, as if with fear; I realized, to my horror, that her face was starting to melt” (Walls 16). ““These cities will kill you,” he said” (Walls 34).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Repetition	Intentional repeating	Repetition is used to reinforce an idea in a story. This can also be used to support a literary conceit or the theme.	This can be used as a teaching technique or as a reminder technique because it keeps redirecting the reader’s attention to a specific point.	“Once he finished the Prospector and we struck it rich, he’d start work on our Glass Castle” (Walls 25). [Then] “That and so we could build the Glass Castle” (28).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Wit	Clever or intellectually amusing language	Wit is used to allow the writer to be creative with diction and language.	This can be used to appeal to an intellectually inclined audience to proffer a moment of play on words or a clever integration of logic. It logically appeals to a reader.	“Dad opened the back and used a macaroni noodle to insulate some crossed wires. The neighbor couldn’t get over it. He went around telling everyone in town that Dad sure knew how to use his noodle” (Walls 22-23).
Term	Definition	Literary Function	Rhetorical Function	Textual Support
Symbols	Natural Symbol= symbol in nature Conventional Symbol= common or	Symbolism offers multiple levels of interpretation in the text and can be utilized to enhance	Symbols can guide a reader toward a certain moment of realization in a story line. For example,	“It wasn’t just any tree. It was an ancient Joshua Tree. It stood in a crease of land where the

	<p>everyday mainstream symbol Literary/Contextual Symbol- need context to understand their significance</p>	<p>understanding or deeper levels of meaning.</p>	<p>the Joshua tree's struggle mirror Jeannette's childhood struggle. This parallelism strategy is a logical technique.... Providing symbols and bits of information for the reader to piece together.</p>	<p>desert ended and the mountain began, forming a wind tunnel. From the time the Joshua tree was a tiny sapling, it had been so beaten down by the whipping wind that, rather than growing skyward, it had grown in the direction the wind pushed it" (Walls 35).</p>
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