Explaining Stylistic Devices

* Identify the stylistic device (repetition, opposites, etc.). See the back go G- 11 for your list.
* Gives at least one example from the text quoting the specific line, phrase or words related to the stylistic device along with the context of how they are used

(What is the speaker talking about in this part of the speech?)

* Explain the effect the speaker wants this particular stylistic device to have on his/her audience (ethos, pathos or logos).
* What does he/she want his/her audience to **think**, **feel** and **do**?

Samples from “The Gettysburg Address” demonstrating Lincoln’s use of pathos.

Stylistic Device: Repetition

Lincoln repeats words including “dedicate,” “conceived,” “nation,” “field,” “devotion,” “dead,” “war,” and “people.” These examples emphasize the ideas of dedication to our nation and to its founding principles. In particular the words “dead,” “war,” and “people” emphasize that blood has been shed in order to save our nation and protect our freedom. He appeals to the listeners’ sense of patriotism, honor and pride in hopes that they will continue to fight in the Civil War.

Stylistic Device: Opposites

Lincoln uses many opposites, especially connected to life and death. The line “those who here gave their lives that that nation might live” is a powerful line that contrasts life and death. Lincoln connects that future of our nation to the sacrifices of the soldiers. Lincoln further says, “it is for us the living…to be dedicated here to the unfinished work…these dead shall not have died in vain” which further honors the dead but also speaks to the living. These opposites are used to inspire the survivors to continue to fight to end slavery.

Stylistic Device: Allusion

Lincoln’s opening and closing sentences refer to the birth of our nation and The Declaration of Independence. The formal “four score the seven years ago,” when our country was “conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal” create an eloquent and serious tone that honors the sacrifices soldiers have made. At the end of his speech, Lincoln underscores how essential it is to win the Civil War in order to maintain a nation with a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Lincoln motivates the soldiers, because if they don’t win, our nation, as it was envisioned in the Declaration of Independence, will “perish.”

Stylistic Device: Dashes

The final sentence of The Gettysburg Address contains four dashes that describe “the great task remaining before us.” This is a call to action for the soldiers. He creates a sort of list that soldiers should dedicate themselves to: “increased devotion to that cause,” “resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain,” “a new birth of freedom,” and, “a government [that] shall not perish from the earth.” Using the dashes builds up the listener’s emotions and motivation to keep fighting for such a worthy cause.