

## ORNAMENTS

In college writing, a writer has to work with so many rules (of grammar, of punctuation, of style, and of formatting). Not only can this practice be tedious, this constant employment of rules and traditional stylistic nuances can lead to some "cold" discourse.

"Cold" is this un-personable, third-person informative tone which we actually try to strive for in college, since the tone itself is often regarded as authoritative and actually easier to read. Besides, most instructors ask for this style, so we cannot deny them what they want. We have to pass the class, right?

Ornaments, also called Embellishments or Figures of Speech, help writers to combat the monotony of writing in this "cold" depersonalized style, many writers in college. Ornaments are, in a sense, rhetorical techniques. They are tools of rhetoric used for the purposes of persuasion and to make discourse (that is, writing, speech, or visual matter) more distinctive,

Ornamentation is one of the traditional canons of rhetoric, which helps a writer/speaker to stand out, to be creative, and to have a unique style (or voice). Thus, ornaments may also help your writing (specifically, your document) become more unique.

Ornamenting probably comes last on the "To-Do" list of college writing and the writing process for that matter. But, if you are looking for a new way to revise an older paper, ornamenting can be a crucial matter.

Once you have the foundation (the basic design) and you meet the needs of the audience (the message is understood and clear), then you can play. You can add ornaments and make things much more exciting linguistically and rhetorically. After all, some professors really look for students using literary devices. These instances make the reading more exciting and more, well, noteworthy.

Antique Ornaments, which date back to the ancient Greek and Roman writings, include traditional tropes and schemes (categories used to describe specific types of techniques), while some Contemporary Ornaments include listing, intertext, and others.

EX:

As a college student, you should never simply "give up" or quit. College is not a torture chamber, a prison, or a prison camp. College is an educational paradise. Sure, college is tough, but college is not impossible. Grades do not make good employees. Knowledge makes good employees. You simply need to graduate: Take that piece of paper (your diploma), and take control of your world.

As sneaky as it seems, the paragraph above is loaded with ornaments.

EX:

"College is not a torture chamber, a prison, or a prison camp."  
(This sentence contains a few metaphors, comparing college to things that it is not. A metaphor is a trope from antiquity (an old rhetorical technique). In addition, the subtle list itself is a more contemporary ornament called a list –also referred to as listing effect).

“College is an educational paradise.”

(This sentence contains a metaphor, comparing college to “paradise” or “heaven”)

In the paragraph, many lines repeat. For example, “College is tough... college is not impossible.” (embedded in this line is the technique of anaphora – repeating elements at the beginning of successive clauses).

Likewise, the line “Grades do not make good employees. Knowledge makes good employees.” Note the repetition at the end of these successive clauses; this technique is called epistrophe (sounds like epi-stro-f).