**Worksheet on President Obama Satire (p.41 of the Anthology)**

This text appeared in *Private Eye*, the satirical magazine which pokes fun at politicians and other powerful figures such as those in the media.

The humour of this piece depends upon a recognition of the ways in which the grand, formal techniques used in serious speeches to address and inspire large audiences are undermined by juxtaposing moments of informality and family intimacy. Hence Craig Brown humorously imagines a conversation between Obama and his young daughter about the flavour of an ice-cream delivered in the style of a formal speech, which is the mode that most of the world see Obama using much of the time.

In order to begin to analyse the text, then, we need to understand some of the key features of formal speeches. Many of these are rooted in the rules of ancient **rhetoric** developed in the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome.

Don’t forget that speeches are essentially written, highly crafted texts and show evidence of that, although they are meant to be spoken ultimately and there will be evidence of this too.

Using the grid below, try to find some examples in the speech of the following features:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Effect** | **Example** |
| Simple present tense  The convention of humility  Rule of 3/ triadic structure/ tripling  Formal lexis and phrases  Personal pronouns  Biblical echoes  Poetic inversion of order of words in sentence; embedding of clauses and phrases  Manipulated sentence length  Repetition  Parallel phrasing  Metaphor and symbolism  Deictic references | Creates effect of poise and formality; signals that audience is being addressed in that moment.  Ancient rule of rhetoric that the speaker needs to announce their humble status.  Makes memorable; shows control and authority  Grandeur of register, authority of the speaker as inspirational figure  Personal vision/ inclusivity/ direct address  Reinforces sense of moral vision, learning, audience recognition  Shows control of the speaker  Short sentences create impact and reflect pausing in speech; long sentences show control of speaker  Memorable  Memorable  Memorable; authority of speaker; vivid images  Acknowledges spoken context |  |