rhetoric  

Advanced Definition

noun

1. the art, ability, or study of using language effectively in speech or writing, esp. to influence or persuade one’s audience.
   
   *Her skillful rhetoric serves her well in political debates.*

2. the study of language structure and style, esp. specialized aspects of language use in literature, such as figures of speech.

3. the use of inflated or pretentious language, or such language itself; affectation in speech or writing.
   
   *One hears a good deal of rhetoric concerning this issue in Congress, but little seems to get done.*

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. Reagan’s foreign policy matched his rhetoric in force. Turning away from détente, he ordered a massive buildup of the United States armed forces, in funding and in members.

2. Obama called for “a more perfect union,” echoing Abraham Lincoln’s soaring rhetoric. Rather than spotlighting ongoing discrimination, Obama celebrated “the men and women of every color and creed who serve together, and fight together, and bleed together under the same flag.”

3. For example, scholars have recently explored the curious place of Indians in the pageantry and rhetoric of the Revolutionary-era generation. They have found that both during and after the imperial struggle Revolutionary leaders and followers showed ambivalence toward Indian culture, adopting various forms of Indian masquerade and affinities yet exhibiting deep anxieties regarding the Indian presence.

4. Obama eschewed the fiery rhetoric of civil rights-era and black-power activists who challenged discrimination and celebrated black pride; instead he drew lessons from centrist black politicians like former Massachusetts senator Edward Brooke, Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, and Virginia governor Douglas Wilder, all of whom won elections in majority white jurisdictions by downplaying race. Still, as an African American candidate, the question of race was unavoidable for Obama.