

Rhetorical Analysis

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Rhetorical analysis helps us answer the questions, "What is going on here?" and "How can we tell?" To find out how people get meaning from a text, we look at how the author, audience, and work come together in a particular context for a particular purpose. Rhetoric is aimed at change: creating a better understanding of a complex issue or convincing someone that a course of action is the right one, from buying athletic shoes to settling a dispute in the Middle East. We learn rhetoric as babies as we convince our parents to give us what we want, and we are subject to a continuous bombardment of rhetorical claims on our attention, from friends, family, government, organizations, and the media. Understanding how those claims work can help us to understand how the world works (and to resist claims as well).

<p><i>The Author (the author's voice or persona)</i> <i>ethos</i></p>	<p><i>The Audience (the reader)</i> <i>pathos</i></p>	<p><i>The Argument (the work)</i> <i>logos</i></p>
<p>How does the author present himself or herself? Is the author familiar with the subject? How can you tell? How does the author show good judgement or a broad perspective? Is the author reasonable? How can you tell? How does the author treat those who disagree? How does the author value others' welfare? How does the author treat the reader? Does the author use stereotypes or show prejudice? Where is this published? What does that say about this work? What did you expect to see that was <i>not</i> on the page? How does the author distract attention from this?</p>	<p>What are the characteristics of the audience? How can you tell? Race, age, sex, physical characteristics, habits Economic or educational level Religious, political, or professional affiliation Ethnicity, citizenship, location Is the reader/audience encouraged to have an emotional response to this writing? How can you tell? How should the audience use information about opposing views? Is the reader encouraged to examine or question the opposition's motives? What reader needs, values, or beliefs are presented here? How can you tell? Is there a pattern to word choice or word order? Is the language simple or complex? Are terms defined? What is the style of this work? How is this style created? Does the style of this piece resemble that of other works? Consider imagery, coherence, emphasis, repetition, rhythm, analogy, metaphor, simile</p>	<p>How is this work organized? What are the cues to this organization? Does the organization work? Process, narration Comparison/contrast Division/classification Cause/effect Definition, description What claims are made? Are these claims strong, obvious? What evidence is used to support the claims? Examples and illustrations Facts, statistics Precedents, laws Memories, records Expert or witness testimony or opinion How does the work look? Is it neat or sloppy? Is the layout good? Do font and font size seem appropriate? Do visual aid(s) add to the overall effect?</p>

The Art of Rhetoric: Understanding the *How* of Persuasive Writing

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According to Aristotle, rhetoric is the art of discovering the means of persuasion available for any subject. (James Moffett: Rhetoric is the art of manipulating others.) Rhetoric comes into play when there is some debate about an outcome--then a rhetor chooses the means to persuade the audience of a conclusion. **Rhetorical analysis identifies how writing achieves praise or blame, attack or defense, judgment of the past or recommendation for future action.** Strategies may serve more than one appeal.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ethical Appeal</u> (<i>ethos</i>) <i>The Author (the author's voice or persona)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategies</u></p> <p>Credibility (common sense) Familiarity with subject Awareness of broad perspective (without satirizing or stereotyping the opposition) Reasonableness, good judgement</p> <p>Character (virtue) Respect others' values Value welfare of others Show integrity, trustworthiness, open-mindedness</p> <p>Confidence (good will) Show self-understanding Uses own voice Understand reader needs Treat reader as equal</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Emotional Appeal</u> (<i>pathos</i>) <i>The Audience (the reader)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategies</u></p> <p>Inspiring feeling/empathy/sympathy Anger, pride, guilt, love, shame, hope, etc.</p> <p>Awareness of opposition Acknowledge opposition's argument Question opposition motives (without feeding audience's prejudices)</p> <p>Awareness of the audience's cultural and emotional background Race, age, sex, physical characteristics, habits Economic or educational level Religious or political affiliation Ethnicity, country of birth, citizenship, location</p> <p>Awareness of audience concerns Needs, values, beliefs of groups audience belongs to</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Logical Appeal</u> (<i>logos</i>) <i>The Argument (the work)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strategies</u></p> <p>Evidence Examples and illustrations Facts, statistics Precedents, laws Memories, records Expert testimony or opinion Witness testimony or opinion</p> <p>Organization Process, narration Comparison/contrast Division/classification Cause/effect Definition, description</p> <p>Relevance Appropriateness of evidence to this case Context Relationship of this argument to similar ones</p>
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More strategies (varying appeals):

Remember, most strategies may serve more than one appeal. Appeals may overlap.

Style >Imagery >Repetition >Rhythm >Coherence >Emphasis >Figurative language (analogy, metaphor, simile)

Words >Word choice >Word order

Tone >Formal/informal, Playful/solemn, Happy/sad, etc.

Appearance >Neatness >Page layout >Font and font size >Paper >Visual aid(s)

Omission >What is *not* on the page (expected but not there)

Rhetorical Analysis: *What goes on in this writing? How does it persuade? How does it attempt to convince the reader?*

Look at *what* a text *is*; tell *how* it *does* what it does.

⇒ Situate your reader in your text: describe or quote as much of the text as is needed, then tell *how* the writing persuades.

With evidence, *convince* your reader of the truth of your observations. Here are 4 ways to insert evidence into your paper:

1. **P - I - E** = Point Illustration Explanation 1. Make a **point**. 2. **Illustrate** the point with something from the text. 3. **Explain** the illustration.

2. **Quotation sandwich**: Set the quotation in the work, give the quote, explain why you chose that quote.

3. **Quotations as evidence**: >**No quotation explains itself.** >Briefly tell why a quoted author has a right to speak in your paper. >**Link** your quotation to your paper.

>Show the quotation has passed through your brain. If the quotation is fact, talk about it in ideas. If ideas, talk about it in facts. Don't repeat it.

(Remember that all *formulas are just a place to start*. Some PIE paragraphs are EIIP or PIEIEP. Avoid appearing formulaic.)