



RHETORICAL ANALYSIS AND APPEALS

The Art of Persuasion

**PAUSE
VIDEO**

NOTES WORKSHEET #3

PLEASE RECORD YOUR ANSWER UNDER
IN CLASS ACTIVITY #1: Reflection

**PAUSE
VIDEO**

Your task is to reflect in 1-2 paragraphs:


1. What did you like or not like about Phase 1? You can comment on assignments, lessons, handouts/worksheets, the essay, discussion board posts, etc.
2. What resonated most with you about Phase 1?
3. What would you change about Phase 1 if you had the opportunity?
4. Which of our course Learning Outcomes did you achieve during Phase 1 and how? (Which assignment(s) allowed you to put into practice that/those specific learning outcome(s))?

Course learning outcomes:

1. Recognize the role of language attitudes and standards in empowering, oppressing, and hierarchizing languages and their users, and be open to communicating across different languages and cultures.
2. Explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations.
3. Develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing.
4. Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations.
5. Engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes.
6. Understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences.
7. Locate research sources (including academic journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles) in the library's databases or archives and on the Internet and evaluate them for credibility, accuracy, timeliness, and bias.
8. Compose texts that integrate your stance with appropriate sources using strategies such as summary, critical analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and argumentation.
9. Practice systematic application of citation conventions.


WHAT IS RHETORICAL ANALYSIS?

Rhetorical analysis looks not at what a text says, but what it does. It's an examination of the "moves" authors (sub)consciously make to make their argument persuasive. This work may include analyzing the complex relationships between author, audience, text, purpose, context, and exigence, as well as an analysis of an author's argument, use of evidence, rhetorical strategies, and textual arrangement.



Unlike summary, a rhetorical analysis does not only require a restatement of ideas; instead, you must recognize rhetorical moves that an author is making in an attempt to persuade his or her audience to do or to think something. In the 21st century's abundance of information, it can sometimes be difficult to discern what is a rhetorical strategy and what is simple manipulation; however, an understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical moves will help you become more savvy with the information surrounding you on a day-to-day basis.

In other words, rhetorical moves can be a form of manipulation, but if one can recognize those moves, then one can be a more critical consumer of information rather than blindly accepting whatever one reads, sees, hears, etc.



The goal of a rhetorical analysis is to explain **what** is happening in the text, **why** the author might have chosen to use a particular move or set of rhetorical moves, and **how** those choices might affect the audience. The text you analyze might be explanatory, although there will be aspects of argument because you must negotiate with what the author is *trying to do* and *what you think* the author is doing.

One of the elements of doing a rhetorical analysis is looking at a text's rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation is the context out of a which a text is created.

Author

The “author” of a text is the creator – the person who is communicating in order to try to effect a change in his or her audience. An author doesn’t have to be a single person or a person at all – an author could be an organization. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, one must examine the identity of the author and his or her background.

- What kind of experience or authority does the author have in the subject about which he or she is speaking?
- What values does the author have, either in general or with regard to this particular subject?
- How invested is the author in the topic of the text? In other words, what affects the author’s perspective on the topic?
- *Example of author analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump’s Inaugural Address) President Trump was a first-term president and someone who had not previously held political office. He did not yet have experience with running the country. He is, however, a wealthy businessman and had a great deal of experience in the business world. His political affiliation is with the Republican party – the conservative political party in America.*

Audience

In any text, an author is attempting to engage an audience. Before we can analyze how effectively an author engages an audience, we must spend some time thinking about that audience. An audience is any person or group who is the intended recipient of the text and also the person/people the author is trying to influence. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, one must examine who the intended audience is by thinking about these things:

- Who is the author addressing?
 - Sometimes this is the hardest question of all. We can get this information of “who is the author addressing” by looking at where an article is published. Be sure to pay attention to the newspaper, magazine, website, or journal title where the text is published. Often, you can research that publication to get a good sense of who reads that publication.
- What is the audience’s demographic information (age, gender, etc.)?
- What is/are the background, values, interests of the intended audience?
- How open is this intended audience to the author?
- What assumptions might the audience make about the author?
- In what context is the audience receiving the text?

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- *Example of audience analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump's Inaugural Address) Inaugural addresses are delivered to "the American people"; one can assume that all Americans are the intended audience. However, Americans were divided at the moment of President Trump's election, with some voters very happy that he was elected and others upset by it. Those opinions tended to split along party lines: Republicans tended to support Trump, whereas Democrats were critical of him. Republicans may be making the assumption that President Trump would be a great leader; Democrats were likely making the assumption that he would be a bad leader. As a candidate, President Trump (like all political candidates) spent most of his time in speeches trying to rally his base of supporters (his audience – Republican voters). In the inaugural address, he knows that his intended audience, his Republican base, is watching and listening with support. But there may be others who are watching his speech who are not a part of the intended audience, and as president, he likely wishes to engage and to reach out to even the Democrats who rejected him.*

Setting

Nothing happens in a vacuum, and that includes the creation of any text. Essays, speeches, photos, political ads – any text – was written in a specific time and/or place, all of which can affect the way the text communicates its message. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, we can identify the particular occasion or event that prompted the text's creation at the particular time it was created.

- Was there a debate about the topic that the author of the text addresses? If so, what are (or were) the various perspectives within that debate?
- Did something specific occur that motivated the author to speak out?
- *Example of setting analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump's Inaugural Address): The occasion of President Trump giving this speech is his election to the presidency. All presidents are expected to give a speech at their inauguration, therefore, the newly elected President Trump was required to give one.*

Purpose


The purpose of a text blends the author with the setting and the audience. Looking at a text's purpose means looking at the author's motivations for creating it. The author has decided to start a conversation or join one that is already underway. Why has he or she decided to join in? In any text, the author may be trying to inform, to convince, to define, to announce, or to activate. Can you tell which one of those general purposes your author has?

- What is the author hoping to achieve with this text?
- Why did the author decide to join the “conversation” about the topic?
- What does the author want from their audience? What does the author want the audience to do once the text is communicated?
- *Example of purpose analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump's Inaugural Address): President Trump's purpose in the inaugural address was to set the tone for his presidency, to share his vision with Americans, and to attempt to unite the country and prepare it for moving forward with his agenda.*


Text

In what format or medium is the text being made: image? written essay? speech? song? protest sign? meme? sculpture?

- What is gained by having a text composed in a particular format/medium?
- What limitations does that format/medium have?
- What opportunities for expression does that format/medium have (that perhaps other formats do not have?)
- *Example of text analysis for the rhetorical situation: (President Trump's Inaugural Address) Inaugural addresses are expected for each president. They are delivered in Washington DC – always in the same spot. The tone is formal. Inaugural addresses generally lay out a vision for the incoming president's term.*



A third element of rhetorical analysis requires you to connect the rhetorical situation to the text. You need to go beyond summarizing and look at how the author shapes his or her text based on its context. In developing your reading and analytical skills, allow yourself to think about what you're reading, to question the text and your responses to it, as you read. Use the following questions to help you to take the text apart—dissecting it to see how it works:

- **Does the author successfully support the thesis or claim?** Is the point held consistently throughout the text, or does it wander at any point?
- **Is the evidence the author used effective for the intended audience?** How might the intended audience respond to the types of evidence that the author used to support the thesis/claim?
- **What rhetorical moves do you see the author making to help achieve his or her purpose?** Are there word choices or content choices that seem to you to be clearly related to the author's agenda for the text or that might appeal to the intended audience?
- **Describe the tone in the piece.** Is it friendly? Authoritative? Does it lecture? Is it biting or sarcastic? Does the author use simple language, or is it full of jargon? Does the language feel positive or negative? Point to aspects of the text that create the tone; spend some time examining these and considering how and why they work. 

- **Is the author objective, or does he or she try to convince you to have a certain opinion?** Why does the author try to persuade you to adopt this viewpoint? If the author is biased, does this interfere with the way you read and understand the text?
- **Do you feel like the author knows who you are?** Does the text seem to be aimed at readers like you or at a different audience? What assumptions does the author make about their audience? Would most people find these reasonable, acceptable, or accurate?
- **Does the text's flow make sense?** Is the line of reasoning logical? Are there any gaps? Are there any spots where you feel the reasoning is flawed in some way?
- **Does the author try to appeal to your emotions?** Does the author use any controversial words in the headline or the article? Do these affect your reading or your interest?
- **Do you believe the author?** Do you accept their thoughts and ideas? Why or why not?

RHETORICAL APPEALS

Appeals to LOGOS

the argument itself; the reasoning the author uses; logical evidence

- Theories / scientific facts
- Indicated meanings or reasons (because...)
- Literal or historical analogies
- Definitions
- Factual data & statistics
- Quotations/Citations from experts & authorities
- Informed opinions
- Examples (real life examples)
- Personal anecdotes

Appeals to ETHOS

how an author builds credibility & trustworthiness

- Author's profession / background
- Author's publication
- Appears sincere, fair minded, knowledgeable
- Concedes to the opposition
- Morally / ethically likeable
- Appropriate language for audience and subject
- Appropriate vocabulary
- Correct grammar
- Professional format

Appeals to PATHOS

words or passages an author uses to activate emotions

- Emotionally Loaded language
- Vivid descriptions
- Emotional examples
- Anecdotes, testimonies, or Narratives about emotional experiences or events
- Figurative language
- Emotional tone (humor, sarcasm, disappointment, excitement, etc.)