

## APSU Writing Center

### Rhetorical Analysis

#### Rhetorical Analysis

- Rhetorical analysis is the study of how a text's elements work together to persuade an audience. It focuses on the strategies the author uses, such as the audience, purpose, and tone, rather than the content or topic of the text itself.

<b>Literary Analysis:</b> examines how an author uses <b>literary devices</b> like symbolism, theme, and character development to convey meaning or evoke emotions.	<b>Rhetorical Analysis:</b> focuses on how an author uses strategies like ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos to <b>persuade</b> or influence an audience, emphasizing the text's structure and context.
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#### Read the Text Carefully

- Read the text closely and take notes. Look for the author's main message, tone, and any points that stand out.
  - **Example:** In Juliet's soliloquy in Act 2, Scene 2, when she says ... she challenges the importance of...

#### Understand the Author's Purpose

- Think about why the author wrote the text. Are they trying to convince you of something, explain a concept, or entertain? This will help guide your analysis.
  - **Example:** Shakespeare's purpose is to show the conflict between love and societal expectations, highlighting...

#### Identify the Appeals

- **Ethos:** appeal to the writer's credibility
  - Does the author show **trustworthiness** or expertise?
  - Does the writer address other viewpoints?
  - How does the writer's word choice or tone affect how you view the writer?
  - **Example:** Romeo and Juliet's love is presented as pure and noble, appealing to...
- **Pathos:** appeal to emotion or to the audience's values or beliefs
  - How does the author try to make you **feel**?
  - Who is the target audience for the argument?
  - Is the writer making any assumptions about the background, knowledge, values, etc. of the audience?
  - **Example:** The tragic ending, aims to evoke...
  - **Example:** The author uses imagery to appeal to...
- **Logos:** appeal to logic
  - Does the author use facts or **logic** to support their argument?
  - What kind of evidence is used (i.e., expert testimony, statistics, proven facts)?
  - Does the writer's thesis make that purpose clear?
  - Where in the text is the main argument stated? How does that placement affect the success of the argument?
  - **Example:** The characters make decisions based on their emotions, but their actions...

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- **Kairos:** appeal to timeliness
  - When and where was the argument originally presented?
  - What circumstances may have motivated the argument?
  - What would an audience at this particular time understand about this argument?
  - **Example:** Romeo and Juliet's decision to...

### Know the Audience

- Who is the author writing for? How does the author target this audience with their message and tone?
  - **Example:** Shakespeare's original audience would be familiar with the concept of family loyalty, so...

### Look at the Structure

- Check how the text is organized. Does the structure make the argument clearer or more convincing?
  - **Example:** The play follows a tight structure, starting with the public feud and building tension through...

### Examine the Language

- Notice the author's word choice. Are they formal, casual, emotional, or logical? How does this affect the tone and message?
  - **Example:** Shakespeare uses poetic language in the form of iambic pentameter and metaphors, such as...

### Rhetorical Analysis Outline

- **Introduction**
  - Briefly introduce the text being analyzed (title, author, purpose).
  - Mention the rhetorical strategies used (ethos, logos, pathos, kairos, etc.).
- **Body Paragraphs**
  - Break the analysis into individual paragraphs focusing on each rhetorical strategy:
    - ethos, logos, pathos, kairos, audience, structure, language, etc.
- **Conclusion**
  - Summarize how the author used these strategies to achieve their goal.
  - Evaluate if these strategies were successful in convincing or engaging the audience.
  - **Example:** Shakespeare effectively uses pathos to make the audience sympathize with...
  - **Example:** The play's structure builds tension through...

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Rhetorical Analysis Outline

**Introduction**

**Thesis Statement:** *(Introduce the main theme of the work and the focus of your analysis.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 1)**

**Brief Plot Summary:** *(Summarize the turning point that directly ties into your analysis.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 2)**

**Ethos** *(Analyze how the author builds credibility or trustworthiness in the text.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 3)**

**Pathos** *(Examine the emotional appeal and how it impacts the audience.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 4)**

**Logos** *(Discuss the use of logic, reasoning, or evidence to persuade the audience.)*

**Body: (Paragraph 5)**

**Kairos** *(Analyze the timeliness or urgency in the text.)*

**Conclusion**

**Provide a short summary:** *(Summarize how these rhetorical strategies support the text's theme and overall argument.)*



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### References

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