

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Prompt

(adapted from Phil Witte's assignment from the EDWP Guide)

Final Draft Due Date: Monday, March 5 by 4:30 pm

Length and Formatting Guidelines: The essay should be 4-6 pages long, double-spaced, using 12-point font.

- Include a header (with your name, the date, and the course name/number).
- Include a creative and specific title.
- Include MLA citation style (refer to the Purdue OWL formatting guide).

Purpose and Guidelines:

Choose a text (i.e., an essay or article) that is directed toward an audience within a particular discourse community that you are familiar with or interested in examining. In writing this essay, you will analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the rhetorical strategies that the author employs in order to communicate his/her purpose. In addition, interpret the text in relation to the larger context. Consider how the writer's choices reflect the features and conventions of language use within the discourse community.

Audience: Write for an audience that includes your instructor and peers in the class.

Essay Structure:

In the introductory paragraph:

1. Identify the argument's **purpose**, including the topic, claims, and significance, as well as the **context**, including the author, audience, and larger conversation to which the argument contributes or responds.
2. **Position** yourself in relation to the argument; indicate whether or not you are a member of the community addressed in the argument or a member of the intended audience.
3. In the final sentence of the introductory paragraph, include a clear, specific **thesis statement** that articulates an original, unique, and nuanced insight that your analysis aims to demonstrate about the text.

In the body paragraphs:

1. Focus on analyzing **one** rhetorical appeal (logos, ethos, or pathos) throughout the essay.

2. Analyze this appeal in relation to at least two elements of the argument's **context** (author, audience, and conversation) and **purpose** (topic, claims, and evidence).
3. By incorporating short, embedded quotations within the paragraphs, interpret the ways in which the specific features of the language in the text - such the words and phrases - contribute to the intended effect.

In the concluding paragraph:

1. Reflect upon overall effectiveness of the author's choices.
2. Furthermore, rather than repeating ideas addressed in the essay, connect the analysis to the larger significance and implications of the issue, including the conversation or debate to which the author contributes.
3. End by addressing and reflecting upon any unresolved questions or future directions for inquiry.

Considerations:

- Remember that you should not directly respond to (i.e. agree or disagree with) the author's argument: your purpose is to analyze the argument and critique the way in which the text is constructed.
- Focus on analyzing rather than summarizing the text.

Sources to cite using MLA format:

- The text that you have chosen to analyze. Include in-text citations and a Works Cited page.
- **Optional:** sources on the author's background, intended audience, or argument's context.

Materials for Study:

Published Essays:

- Frank Cioffi, “Argumentation in a Culture of Discord”
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies”
- Tom Chatfield, “I Type, Therefore, I Am”

Sample Rhetorical Analysis Essays:

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Title	Article Title	Discourse Community
“Unexpected Emotion”	“21 Reasons Why Student-Athletes are Employees and Should be Allowed to Unionize” by Marc Edelman	College sports fans
“A Lopsided Pyramid: An Analysis on Michael Greger’s Call to Ditch the Dairy”	“Dairy” by Michael Greger	Nutritional sciences field

Criteria:

Note: The difference between an A- and B-level paper is that while an A-level paper offers a sophisticated, original, and innovative idea, a B-level paper offers observations that are less original and well-crafted. A C-level paper may offer summary instead of analysis and provide less thorough development and support.

Development/Argument:	Structure/Organization:	Craft/Language:
A-Level: Extraordinary		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development: thoroughly develops ideas using specific evidence and consistent attention to detail - Thesis: includes a specific, complex, and nuanced thesis statement - Analysis: offers an insightful and sophisticated analysis of the text in relation to the context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization: incorporates a clear structure (introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion) - Transitions: integrates varied transition words and phrases in order to create a clear logical flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Word Choice: employs precise, subject-specific vocabulary and an authentic voice - Grammar and Style: is written consistently in the present tense, using appropriate grammar and style
B-Level: Excellent		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development: develops ideas using specific evidence, though some examples may be less thoroughly supported - Thesis: includes an effective, though less specific thesis statement - Analysis: offers an analysis of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization: incorporates a generally clear structure (introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion) - Transitions: integrates varied transition words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary: employs generally effective word choice and voice - Grammar: is written consistently in the present tense using appropriate grammar and style, though there may be a few errors

<p>text, though the ideas may be more simple and predictable and less insightful than in an A-level essay</p>		
<p>C-Level: Good</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development: offers less thorough development and support and less specific evidence - Thesis: includes an ineffective or general thesis statement - Analysis: offers some analysis of the experience, or includes summary instead of analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization: incorporates an unclear structure (introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion) - Transitions: includes limited transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary: employs general word choice and voice - Grammar: includes errors in grammar and style or is written in inconsistent tenses

Rhetorical Analysis Assignment Schedule

Formatting: Each assignment should be typed, double-spaced, using 12 pt. font.

Assignment	Due Date	Submission Guidelines
Discourse community article (LSWA 4)	Wednesday, February 7 at 10 am	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Upload onto Canvas under Assignments.2. Print and bring a copy to share with your group.
Thesis statement (LSWA 5)	Monday, February 12 at 10 am	Upload onto Canvas under Assignments.
Rhetorical analysis chart (LSWA 6)	Wednesday, February 14 at 10 am	Upload onto Canvas under Assignments.
Rhetorical analysis essay completed first draft (4-6 pages)	Monday, February 19 at 10 am	Email the essay to each group member and me.
Peer review workshop/peer review letters	Wednesday, February 21 at 10 am	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Email the letters to each group member and me.2. Bring hard copies of the letters for each group member and yourself.
Rhetorical analysis essay final draft	Monday, March 5 at 4:30 pm	Upload onto Canvas under Assignments. Include in one Word document: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Final draft2. First draft3. Letters from peer reviewers4. Reflective cover letter or annotations

Reflective Cover Letter/Annotations (one page for the cover letter): due with the final draft on Monday, October 30

We will work on four major writing assignments this semester. For two of the essays, write a cover letter. For the other two essays, directly annotate your final draft using the comments function. The purpose of the letters/annotations is to help you reflect on your writing process. For either choice, consider the following questions:

1. How did you go about writing this piece?
2. If applicable, in what ways did our work in class influence your writing process?
3. What do you think works well in this piece, and why? Please provide specific examples.
4. In what ways, if any, do you think you could improve in writing this essay, or what might you do differently next time? Why?
5. In what ways did writing this essay help you to meet one or more of your writing goals for the semester?

LSWA (Low-Stakes Writing Assignment) Rubric *(adapted from M. Sweeney, E. Tacke, N. Limlamai)*

In evaluating the low-stakes assignments, I will provide feedback including a score from 1-5 as well as written comments. At the end of the semester, I will add the LSWA scores, and the total score will count toward your daily participation/engagement grade, which is worth 15% of the overall grade.

Score	Criteria
5: Extraordinary (A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-thoroughly addresses all aspects of the assignment and may exceed the requirements-offers nuanced, insightful, and thoughtful analysis-provides specific evidence and support-demonstrates consistent attention to detail
4: Excellent (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-addresses all aspects of the assignment-offers thoughtful, though less specific or developed, analysis-provides evidence and support-demonstrates attention to detail
3: Good (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-does not address all aspects of the assignment-may be less thorough or developed-may need more evidence, support, or clarification-includes some errors
2: Fair (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-does not address all aspects of the assignment-may be less thorough or developed-does not offer sufficient evidence or support-includes several errors
1: Poor (F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-does not address all aspects of the assignment-is underdeveloped, unclear, or oversimplified-does not offer sufficient evidence or support-includes several errors