

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY OUTLINE

Overview

The purpose of the Rhetorical Analysis Essay is to showcase your ability to read closely and critically, to analyze author purpose, intent, and usage of rhetorical appeals, devices, and surface features, and to effectively communicate your analysis in written form. To that purpose, there are three objectives that every Rhetorical Analysis Essay MUST complete:

1. Accurately illustrate the rhetorical situation as a framework for the claim regarding the rhetorical appeals / strategies being used in the text.
2. Analyze 1-3 rhetorical appeals / strategies being used in the text to advance the purpose of the writer/speaker.
3. Explain why the text is important to the context within which it was written through the connection between text to self, text to world, or text to today.

Outline

While AP writers have complete autonomy with regard to their approach to rhetorical analysis and writing, the following outline is a suggested approach. You should aim for an essay length that analyzes 1-3 rhetorical strategies / surface features in body paragraphs devoted to each one. That being said, time is limited, so you want to make sure you have at least the bare minimum below:

I. Introduction

- A. Summary of the Rhetorical Situation
 - i. Exigence
 - ii. Purpose
 - iii. Audience
- B. Claim/Thesis
 - i. Provide a claim of which rhetorical strategies the writer/speaker uses to advance his/her purpose and make a judgment as to whether it is effective or not and why.

II. Body Paragraph #1: Rhetorical Strategy #1

- A. Introduce the writer/speaker's use of the first rhetorical strategy you are analyzing.
- B. Provide evidence (direct quote or paraphrase)
- C. Analyze how the rhetorical strategy or surface feature is working / not working to advance the writer/speaker's purpose. You should be seeking to answer the following questions:
 - i. How does this rhetorical strategy / surface feature convince or persuade the audience?
 - ii. How does this rhetorical strategy / surface feature advance the purpose?

III. Conclusion

- A. Why is the writer/speaker's use of the rhetorical strategies / surface features analyzed above effective in advancing the purpose?
 - B. Why is the purpose important to the context surrounding the writing of the text?
 - C. What important connections can you make between text and self, text and world, and text and today?
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