

ASSIGNMENT SHEET AND GRADING RUBRIC: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Task: In 4–6 double-spaced pages, analyze a persuasive text to determine whether the author uses rhetorical appeals persuasively. Select two or three of the author's rhetorical strategies to analyze in depth to show your audience *how* the author uses language rhetorically and *whether* or *not* he/she effectively convinces a target audience. Your audience will be the instructor and your classmates.

____ The “A” Analysis (180–200 points)

The “A” rhetorical analysis makes an insightful claim about what makes the article persuasive, indentifying and evaluating various kinds of appeals (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*) and the strategies used for creating those appeals. Avoiding summary, the writer focuses on *how* the author creates a particular effect and provides incisive textual evidence for each specific strategy analyzed, blending in quotes effectively and seamlessly. The writer concludes with clear closure, reinforcing the claims (without rote repetition) and suggesting further implications.

An “A” rhetorical analysis is exceptionally well written, in addition to being thorough in its analysis. The title cleverly forecasts the focus of the analysis, and the introduction effectively catches the reader's attention, contextualizes the text, and forecasts the organization of the analysis. The analysis itself is unified (i.e., each paragraph supports the thesis) and coherent (i.e., the writer uses effective transitions from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, and idea to idea). Each paragraph has a strong topic sentence, examples from the text, and focused analysis. The writer creates an appropriate ethos through diction and style, with varied sentence lengths and clear, concise sentences and diction, particularly when using rhetorical vocabulary. The writer avoids vague, wordy, or obscure sentences, and punctuation, grammar, spelling, and usage adhere to the highest standards of edited American English. The analysis follows MLA documentation and formatting conventions.

____ The “B” Analysis (160–179 points)

The “B” analysis makes a clear claim about what makes the article persuasive, indentifying and evaluating various kinds of rhetorical strategies and appeals for *how* they work on the audience, though the rhetorical strategies and appeals may not be as specifically described as they could be. The writer provides sufficient examples from the text and analysis of those examples, though the analysis might be a little obvious or might not be thorough enough. The conclusion summarizes the argument, but the writer may not address fully the implications of the argument or its analysis.

The “B” analysis is well written, including a serviceable title and introduction, though may lack the flair of the title and introduction of an “A” analysis. The analysis is generally unified and coherent, with slight lapses in unity and/or transitions; the writing is also engaging, though the voice may lack the distinctiveness of the “A” analysis, and the syntax and diction may not be quite as polished; rhetorical terms are not used as effectively as they could be. Sentences are generally clearly written. A few errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, usage, and MLA documentation and formatting appear randomly throughout the analysis, but such errors do not interfere with the reader's understanding.

___The "C" Analysis (140–159 points)

The "C" analysis makes a claim about the rhetorical strategies and appeals of a text, though the claim may be obvious and uninteresting or is not clearly stated or fully developed. The analysis might be at times vague, imprecise, or insufficient. The writer lapses into summary, and examples from the text are incorporated ineffectively or incorrectly. The writer might even waver between objectively analyzing the text and subjectively arguing with it, agreeing or disagreeing with its claims and arguments. The writer does not make the case that the article and the analysis are important, timely, or consequential.

The "C" analysis is readable but requires some effort on the part of the reader. The title and introduction may be uninteresting or may not announce the focus of the analysis well enough. The flow of the analysis is, at times, choppy and unclear, though the writer develops a main idea throughout the analysis. Transitions from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, or idea to idea might be weak. The writer's voice does not do much to engage the reader, and syntax and diction lack sophistication and may be difficult to follow in places. Some errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and usage appear frequently, though the reader is generally able to understand the argument. Errors in MLA documentation and formatting likewise appear with some frequency.

___The "D" Analysis (120–139 points)

In a "D" analysis, a text is selected, and the writer writes about it, but clearly the essay is more summary than analysis. Rhetorical appeals or strategies might be identified, but the writer provides insufficient evidence from the text and little or no analysis. The writer may have misunderstood the argument of the text being analyzed, or the writer may argue with the text rather than analyze it.

The "D" analysis is laborious for the reader. The title is rudimentary and may not indicate the focus of the analysis, and the introduction is similarly boring and/or fails to announce the focus of the analysis. The analysis lacks shape: the arrangement is unclear; the writer may lapse into tangents or the flow from sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph, and idea to idea is rough and unclear. The meaning of sentences is generally clear, but there may be sentence fragments, run-ons, or comma splices, and the diction might be vague or inappropriate. The analysis is riddled with errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, usage, and MLA documentation and formatting.

___The "E" Analysis (0–119 points)

An "E" is generally only given to a rhetorical analysis that falls well short of the minimum requirements of the assignment, is plagiarized, or violates a policy established by an individual instructor (e.g., a late-paper policy).