

The Rhetorical Analysis Paper

This paper should be at least two pages (500 words) in length. Please double space and use 1” margins and an academic font (Times, Arial, Calibri, etc.). This essay will be an analysis of an essay of your choice (see the list in this week’s learning module). An analysis goes “beneath the surface” of an essay and explains to the reader how the author made his or her argument and how effective it was. This essay focuses on “HOW” the writer puts the argument together. To successfully complete this assignment, you will:

1. Summarize the position and main claims for that position in the article (1 paragraph);
2. Identify specific features of the text, including types of evidence/support, figurative language, sentence elements, images, references, allusions, and organizational patterns.
3. Analyze the effectiveness of the use of those features to persuade the audience of the stance supported in the article. Note that your thesis statement should be focused on this evaluation: “The article was / was not effective because...”

Remember, your job is to analyze what rhetorical tools the author used to make his or her argument. In other words, *how* was the argument put together? Did the author use ethos? Logos? Did he or she rely on pathos? Is the article filled with broad generalizations, vague terms, and logical fallacies? Most importantly, *was the argument effective, and why?*

Basic Organizational Pattern:

1. Introduction: Setting up some context for the issue is a great way to open a position paper, as it allows you to show the issue is current. End this introduction paragraph with your **thesis statement**. Your thesis statement will most likely look something like this: “*Author X created an effective argument for Y by using tools A, B, and C.*” Of course, if you felt the argument was not effective, your thesis would reflect that.
2. Summary: Summarize the position argued in the article, as well as those main claims.
3. Feature 1: Set up the first feature of the writing in a **topic sentence** that also sets up your basic analysis of that feature.
4. Feature 2: See above.
5. Feature 3: See above.
6. Conclusion: Think about how you can lead the reader back out of the paper.

Once again, remember that while you are analyzing an argument, *your paper is not about the topic/issue so much as it is an analysis of how the writer uses specific techniques to achieve his or her purpose.*