Rhetorical Analysis Papers Study Sheet

Goals of this Study Sheet

Rhetorical analysis papers often stump students because the method of analysis and the focus of that analysis differ from a regular non-rhetorical paper. In this study sheet, we are going to highlight some of the differences between the two and go over how to to properly analyze a text.

The Introduction

In your intro, provide any necessary background information related to the author or the topics covered by the author. You also need to include your thesis, referencing the author’s main point or purpose and the rhetorical devices he used to achieve this purpose. The bulk of your essay should be the body paragraphs, so keep your intro short and sweet.

Start by crafting the thesis for your rhetorical analysis. In your thesis, you should briefly mention the author’s purpose and main argument, then list 3 to 4 of the main rhetorical devices the author uses. Choose the strategies that you feel have the strongest supporting evidence. Look for quotes and examples you can use to prove your point. For each of the rhetorical strategies you select, you’ll need to gather examples from the text. Consider why the author used this device and the overall effect it achieved. You can also evaluate how effectively you feel the author implemented this strategy.

The Body Paragraphs

It is the main part of a work. It contains all important statements and arguments. That’s why the body paragraphs have to answer many questions. In this part of a writing assignment, analyze and explain how the author maintains his statement and which strategies and devices he applies.
Explain the thesis and persuasive statements of the author. Each paragraphs should be devoted to a particular strategy. A successful analysis and explanation of the thesis should always answer next questions:

- What is the strategy?
- Does the strategy actually work?
- What are the working examples of the strategy?
- What was this particular strategy used for?
- Did this strategy have an effect on the audience?
- What effect does this strategy create?

**Ethos, Pathos, Logos**

Whether speaking or writing, the way to persuade someone is to use rhetoric: the art of effective writing or speaking. This is one of the cornerstone methods of rhetorical analysis. Many years ago, Aristotle discussed these three terms in his well-known book *Rhetoric*. He considered them to be the primary persuasive strategies that authors should use in their papers:

**Ethos** appeals to ethics. You evaluate an appeal to ethos, you examine how successfully a speaker or writer establishes authority or credibility with her intended audience. You are asking yourself what elements of the essay or speech would cause an audience to feel that the author is (or is not) trustworthy and credible.

Methods of implementing ethos:

- Use appropriate and professional language for your intended audience
- Design your communications professionally
- Conduct sound and ethical research (and cite all sources)
- Use appropriate jargon to demonstrate awareness of the field and your audience
- Follow established conventions and paradigms
• Make logical connections between ideas and avoid logical fallacies at all costs

**Pathos** appeals to emotions. In a similar vein, it is the emotional reaction of the target audience to the arguments provided by the author. When you evaluate pathos, you are asking whether a speech or essay arouses the audience’s interest and sympathy. You are looking for the elements of the essay or speech that might cause the audience to feel (or not feel) an emotional connection to the content.

**Methods of implementing pathos:**
- Use humor to keep people engaged
- Show images that evoke strong emotions
- Choose words that get people excited or emotionally charged
- Change your tone of voice or pace to evoke enthusiasm or angst

**Logos** means the using of the rational thinking. When you evaluate an appeal to logos, you consider how logical the argument is and how well-supported it is in terms of evidence. You are asking yourself what elements of the essay or speech would cause an audience to believe that the argument is (or is not) logical and supported by appropriate evidence.

**Methods of implementing logos:**
- Use statistics or established facts
- Name features of a product or service
- Reference research in support of your claim
- Make logical connections between concepts
- Be specific (when appropriate, be as specific as possible and avoid generalizations)

**The Conclusion**
When the main part of the rhetorical analysis essay is done, it’s time for writing a conclusion. To do this, you must restate your thesis. Do not simply repeat the thesis in your introduction word-for-word. Instead, rephrase it using new terminology while essentially sharing the same information.

- When restating your thesis, you should be able to quickly analyze how the original author’s purpose comes together.
- When restating your thesis, try to bring more sophistication or depth to it than you had in the beginning. What can the audience now understand about your thesis that they would not have without reading your analysis?
- Finally, restate your main ideas. When restating your main ideas, you should also explain why they are important and how they support your thesis.
- Keep this information brief. You spent an entire essay supporting your thesis, so these restatements of your main ideas should only serve as summaries of your support.

**Source Referenced**

“What is a Rhetorical Analysis Essay?” *JustBuy Essays*,