***Rhetorical Analysis***

Activity Packet

This unit was designed to help you understand the benefits of rhetorical analysis through repetition. When we analyze another writer’s work we begin to see the wisdom behind the choices we make in writing. Analysis helps us understand the effect rhetorical choices have on an intended audience which, in turn, will help us make smarter, more effective choices in our own writing.

In this unit I will ask you to learn the 5 steps of analysis. You will learn that the **only** thing analysis does is to answer the question, “Why did the writer make this choice and what effect did it have on the audience?” You will learn to avoid summarizing or responding to the text you are analyzing and, instead, you will simply learn from the choices the writer has made and then put that learning into writing.

Below is your sample 5-step analysis that can be used as a reference throughout this unit. Keep in mind that this is only a template and not the required outline for your papers. These steps are meant to help ensure you have all the correct information to present a full analysis.

1. Name the author
2. Name a rhetorical tool or rhetorical move
3. Name the rhetorical appeal created by the rhetorical tool
4. Name the intended audience
5. Use multiple specific examples. Always reference or quote the text directly.

[The author] uses [rhetorical tool] to create a/an [ethical/emotional/pathetic appeal] for [audience]. An example of this is [reference/quote text directly]. This was effective/ineffective for the audience because [reasons]. Another example of this is [reference/quote from text]. This was effective/ineffective for the audience because [reasons].

**Activity 1:** Paper #1: Recognizing Rhetorical Devices

**Objective:** This assignment will help you learn to identify specific rhetorical tools in a text.

**Task:** Begin this assignment by choosing an article from the list of options on Learning Suite. Identify at least five rhetorical devices in your chosen article and identify examples for each. Be specific here! Merely saying “diction” or “figurative language” is not sufficient. Is it medical diction and biblical allusion? Or internet diction and hyperbole? Don’t feel like you need to know the official name of the tool the author is using (you can find a bazillion tools at rhetoric.byu.edu if you need some inspiration). Just describe the tools as best you can and give examples from the text to illustrate each device or tool.

Bring to class a printed, hard copy of your paper and your article. I will return them to you and you will save it to hand in as part of your final portfolio.

**Activity 2:** Identifying Claims, Reasons, and Assumptions (In Class)

**Objective:** You will learn to identify claims, reasons and assumptions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a text.

**Task:** Take the article for your first paper and identify the claims, reasons, and assumptions the author makes. Use the worksheet that will be passed out in class to help guide you. Take notes directly on the article, as you will be using it for the second paper and handing it in as part of your portfolio.

Keep this to use as you write Paper #2 and to hand in as part of your final portfolio.

**Activity 3:** Paper #2: Analyzing Tone (In Class)

**Objective:** You will practice analyzing the effectiveness of one specific tool in a text in order to better understand how you might do this for multiple tools in a larger text.

**Task:** You will use the article you wrote your first paper on for this assignment. Write a short 200-300 word analysis of the author’s tone. Is the tone effective for the audience? Does it fit the subject matter? Use specific examples where the author’s tone is especially prominent. Why did the author choose to portray his/her voice in this way? Don’t forget to utilize the 5-steps. Remember to use **specific examples**! Quote the text!

If you are struggling, think of the rhetorical situation and try asking yourself the following questions:

1. What is the author’s purpose?
2. What is he/she trying to convince the audience to think/feel/do?
3. What kind of voice does the author have?
4. Why would he/she choose to write with the tone that he/she does?

This must be typed and should be between 200-300 words in length. You will turn this in to me. I will record it and hand it back to be revised and re-submitted as part of your final portfolio.

**Activity 4:** Paper #3: TV Audience Analysis

**Objective:** This activity will help you learn how to analyze visual rhetoric. You will come to better understand how a text—even an unwritten one—appeals to a specific audience.

**Task:** Find a TV show you don’t normally watch (if you decide to watch it on Hulu or another online source, sign out if you normally subscribe so that the advertisements are not catered to your preferences). Listen to or watch at least 30 minutes of your chosen program, paying special attention to the advertisements. Advertisements are carefully constructed to appeal to specific audiences. When you are finished you will select one of the commercials that you viewed as being specifically chosen for that TV show’s audience.

You may be able to look up the commercial on YouTube or elsewhere afterwards, but, just in case, you will want to take *very* specific notes on the commercials so that you have something to reference.

Write a 500-600 word analysis of the television commercial you viewed in which you consider the following questions:

1. What is the author’s purpose? What is he/she trying to convince the audience to think/feel/do?
2. Who was the intended audience of this advertisement? Are there common characteristics in this group? What do they think/believe? What are they suspicious of? What biases do they have?
3. What specific tools/strategies is the author using to convince his/her audience?
4. Are the tools effective in convincing the audience? Why or why not?
5. Where was this program originally broadcast? What does that imply about the opinions/biases of the author(s)? Of the viewer(s)?

**Reminder:** You are not simply answering these questions in order. You are selecting 2-3 specific tools from the commercial and using these questions to prompt a thoughtful analysis of why this commercial was created for this TV show’s audience.

Come to class with a full draft fulfilling the prompt (hard copy *or* electronic). We will peer review your paper. You will then take it home to revise and re-submit in your final portfolio.

**Activity 5:** The Great Debate

You will receive instructions on this in class during the preceding class period.

You will hand in your preparation notes as part of your final portfolio.

**Activity 6:** Paper #4: Final Audience Analysis

**Objective:** The purpose of this assignment is to allow you the opportunity to analyze a small part of the rhetoric that surrounds you everyday. You will come to see that arguments are pervasive, and by applying critical thinking and reasoning skills, you will be able to better evaluate the persuasive rhetoric you encounter.

**Task:** Choose a **written** form of rhetoric that you often encounter in your daily life. This could include a blog, a humor article, an ESPN article or an op-ed from the New York times. There are a few rules about what you can select:

1. It must be something written in 2013
2. It can be no longer than one page in length. (You may choose a longer piece and only analyze a section of it, though you must approve this with me.)
3. The piece must be arguing for something or stating some kind of opinion.

You will write a 500-600 word analysis of the audience of this paper. This will be similar to the audience analysis you did of the television commercials; however, this time you will be looking at a written text. Use the following questions to help you begin thinking and organizing your analysis:

1. What kind of voice does the author have? Why would they choose to write with the tone that they do when considering their audience?
2. What is the author’s purpose? What is he/she trying to convince the audience to think/feel/do?
3. What specific tools/strategies is the author using to convince his/her audience?
4. Are the tools effective in convincing the audience? Why or why not?

Your paper should open with a brief claim and then conclude in one or two sentences by drawing a final conclusion about the effectiveness of the argument for its audience. Again, please look to the 5 steps to ensure you are staying on-task and that you have all the correct information in your analysis.

Bring a hard copy of your paper to class with a print out of your chosen text. We’ll peer review these drafts in class, then you’ll revise it to turn in with your final portfolio.

**Activity 7:** Group Conferences with Bess

You’ll sign up in class or online to meet with me and some of your peers about your fourth paper.

**Activity 8:** Final Drafts and Completed Portfolio

Your portfolio is due in my **box** in **4110 JFSB** on **Thursday, October 24th, at 4:00 pm**.

Your portfolio should include: A final draft of all 4 papers, clearly marked so I am aware which is which. Please also include your earlier drafts with revision comments, as well as the printed, annotated copies of the texts you used for papers 1, 2 and 4. Please consult the cover sheet for particulars.

This final portfolio will be worth 200 points with a grade breakdown as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Paper #1 | 25 points |  |
|  | Paper #2 | 50 points |  |
|  | Paper #3 | 50 points |  |
|  | Conference | 5 points |  |
|  | Paper #4 | 70 points |  |
|  | Total | 200 points |  |