

HOW TO WRITE: AP *Rhetorical Analysis* Paragraphs and Essays

Things you must know in order to accurately analyze a text:

1. SOAPS
2. Rhetorical Strategies
 - a. Appeals (ethos, logos, pathos)
 - b. Style (diction, syntax, details, imagery, tone, etc.)
3. Why did the author choose these strategies for the particular audience, occasion, and/or purpose?
 - a. This is the analysis part! Without this, you are merely summarizing the text.
 - b. Think about these questions:
 - i. HOW do the rhetorical strategies help the author achieve his/her purpose?
 - ii. WHY does the author chose those strategies for that particular audience and for that particular occasion?

Once you've identified the information above, it's time to begin putting your thoughts and ideas into a format that proves you have accurately analyzed the text. There are many ways to write an effective rhetorical analysis essay. Below is one way that is a good, simple format to help you get started. You may find as you become more comfortable with analysis that you want to deviate from this format. That's fine as long as you are still focusing on numbers 1-3 from above.

Introduction

The introductory paragraph to an analysis essay is usually brief. However, it must contain some essential information.

Put SOAPS in your introduction and follow this format:

FORMAT:

1. Speaker, Occasion, and Subject
(*Writer's credentials*), (*writer's first and last name*), in his/her (*type of text*), (*title of text*), (*strong verb – see list at end of this handout*) (*writer's subject*).

Well-known essayist and writer, Joan Didion, in her essay, *The Santa Ana*, describes the dramatic mood altering effects of the Santa Ana winds on human behavior.

2. Purpose
(*Writer's last name*)'s purpose is to (*what the writer does in the text*).

Didion's purpose is to impress upon readers the idea that the winds themselves change the way people act and react.

3. Audience
He/she adopts a[n] (*adjective describing the attitude/feeling conveyed by the writer*) tone in order to (*verb phrase describing what the writer wants readers to do/think*) in his/her (*intended audience*).

She creates a dramatic tone in order to convey to her readers the idea that the winds are sinister and their effects inescapable.

EXAMPLE:

Novelist, Amy Tan, in her narrative essay, "Fish Cheeks," recounts an embarrassing Christmas Eve dinner when she was 14 years old. Tan's purpose is to convey the idea that, at fourteen, she wasn't able to recognize the love her mother had for her or the sacrifices she made. She adopts a sentimental tone in order to appeal to similar feelings and experiences in her adult readers.

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