



# How To Write a Rhetorical Analysis



AP Lang & Comp

# What are Rhetorical Techniques?

- The effective use of words to persuade or influence.
- Includes ethos, logos and pathos.
- Includes tone, diction, details, imagery, figurative language, humor, syntax, etc, etc, etc.
- Anything used to deliberately create effect.



# What is a Rhetorical Analysis?

- Writing that separates the content (what the passage is about) from the methods (rhetorical strategies) used to successfully convey that content.
- Prompt offers an effect; answer should identify and discuss rhetorical techniques used to create the effect.



- Rhetorical Analysis = Why, How, So What
- WHY = Why are the choices effective and appropriate for the intended audience?
- HOW = How does the writer choose to present the material?
- SO WHAT = What is accomplished or created?
- If you don't do this, you don't have  analysis!!

# How do I Write a Rhetorical Analysis?

- Analyze the prompt to determine what kind of analysis and what effect to address.
- Understand the passage!
- Deal with “hidden” questions, such as: What IS the effect? Answer these in the first body paragraph.
- Given the time, select three techniques to discuss. Keep in mind the type of essay presented by the passage and look for typical techniques for that rhetorical mode.



- Compose a thesis that states **BOTH** the effect **AND** the techniques.
- Be sure to avoid the trap of explaining meaning; no AP essay question will ask you what a passage means.
- Focus on **HOW** a technique creates the given effect.
- Rule of thumb: more than **HALF** your essay should be commentary.

*\*\* Write a three sentence summary of these notes. \*\**



# How do I Write a Thesis for a Rhetorical Analysis?

- The author's name
- plus an adjective (sophisticated, carefully crafted, flashy, inventive)
- plus the rhetoric strategies (two to four specific rhetorical strategies used as topics of body paragraphs)
- plus a strong verb (demonstrates, creates, emphasizes, generates, fulfills)
- plus the function (what the rhetoric does for the piece)

Example: Douglass's sophisticated use of diction, imagery and figurative language creates his unfavorable attitude towards slavery.



# Use the SAME FORMULA to create your analysis...

Diction:

- Author's name
- plus adjective
- plus the term “diction”
- plus a strong verb
- plus the function
- plus examples from text.

Example: Andrist's snazzy diction recreates the dynamic personality of General Custer with choices such as “flamboyant” and “teetotaler”.



## Tone:

- Author's name
- plus an adjective (informal, light, impartial, simple)
- plus the term "tone"
- plus strong verb
- plus the function
- plus examples.

## Syntax:

- Author's name
- plus an adjective (short, simple, varied, repetitive, balanced)
- plus the term "syntax"
- plus the function
- plus examples.

