

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Format

I. Introduction: Rhetorical Précis:

- A. Name of author, (appositive phrase about the author to establish credibility & authority) genre, and title of work; a rhetorically accurate verb (such as “assert,” “argue,” “suggest,” “imply,” “claim,” etc.); and a **THAT** clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.
- B. An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.
- C. A statement of the author’s apparent purpose followed by an “in order” phrase.
- D. A description of the intended audience and the relationship the author establishes with the audience

II. Body Paragraph #1:

- A. Topic sentence/transition: “(author’s last name) begins with/by...(make your claim about what strategy you see working address the purpose/prompt)”
- B. Specific example to support idea: provide EXPLICIT textual support woven into your comments to support your claim. Thoroughly discuss all strategies used in the beginning section, supporting with text. (Should be at least two or more complex, stylistic sentences.)
- C. Discussion of how examples supports idea: Connect the strategy back to your main claim/thesis/the purpose.

III. Body Paragraph #2:

- A. Topic sentence/transition: “After... the author moves to...” “Building off the strategy he/she used to begin, he/she ...” Connect an idea from the last sentence of the previous paragraph to the first sentence of this paragraph showing how the strategies build upon each other.
- B. Provide EXPLICIT textual support woven into your comments to support your claim. Thoroughly discuss all strategies used in the middle section, supporting with text. Should be at least two or more complex, stylistic sentences.
- C. Discussion of how example supports idea: Connect the strategy back to your main claim/thesis/ the purpose.

IV. Last Body Paragraph:

- A. Topic sentence/transition: “to close the essay/speech, (author)...” “Concluding the argument he/she ...” Connect an idea from the last sentence of the previous paragraph to the first sentence of this paragraph showing how the strategies build upon each other.
- B. Provide EXPLICIT textual support woven into your comments to support your claim. Thoroughly discuss all strategies used in the middle section, supporting with text. Should be at least two or more complex, stylistic sentences.
- C. Discussion of how example supports idea: Connect the strategy back to your main claim/thesis/ the purpose.

V. Conclusion

- A. Restatement of thesis that digs deeper into the overall intended meaning of the text than the one in the introductory paragraph (Try not to begin your conclusion paragraph with “In conclusion”).
- B. Reflection on examples and main ideas in body paragraphs, significance of these strategies, AND how they are linked to your thesis.
- C. State if these were effective in conveying the claim/thesis/purpose.
- D. Closing thought - closing out the main purpose of the text being analyzed.

Rhetorical Précis (Introductory Paragraph)

Definition of the Rhetorical Précis

A highly structured four sentence paragraph that records the essential elements of a unit of spoken or written discourse, including the name of the speaker/writer, the context of the delivery, the major assertion, the mode of development and/or support, the stated and/or apparent purpose, and the relationship established between the speaker/writer and the audience. Each of the four sentences requires specific information. Be sure to use **brief** quotations to convey a sense of style and tone.

Format

1st Sentence	Name of author, appositive phrase describing author/speaker, genre, and title of work and date in parenthesis (additional publishing information in parentheses or note) a rhetorically accurate verb (such as “assert,” “argue,” “suggest,” “imply,” “claim,” etc.); and a THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.
2nd Sentence	An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.
3rd Sentence	A statement of the author’s apparent purpose followed by an “in order” phrase.
4th Sentence	A description of the intended audience and the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

“Stone Soup” Précis Example

Barbara Kingsolver, creator of the Bellwether Prize and an honorary PhD from DePauw University, in her essay “Stone Soup” (1995) **argues that** a happy and whole family is not limited to the generic “Family of Dolls” nuclear family. Kingsolver develops her **argument** through the use of various pertinent examples, both anecdotal and historical, supplemented by thought-provoking rhetorical questions and effective references to outside literature. She writes to abolish the irrational thinking of how a families who do not fit the traditional mold are “broken” and “failed” **in order to** rectify society’s perception of these “broken homes.” Kingsolver writes for an **audience** of adults from as young as twenty years of age as shown with her sophisticated yet relatable writing style for her readers.

Rhetorical Analysis Body Paragraphs

1. Topic sentence: make a claim about the strategy used (the device/style/structure used to appeal to the audience, to expose a flaw -- the occasion, to establish the speaker, to introduce claim, to develop logic, to address opposition)

EX: "One of Hazlitt's most effective methods of promoting the importance of money is his strong diction."

2. Provide textual evidence of strategy: (introduce context, text, and claim)

EX: "The first three words of the piece, "literally and truly," set the mood for the entire passage.

3. Discuss, explain textual example in relation to the strategy and claim.

"Many fairly-tale idealist claim the ideally, happiness is not attached to wealth. However, by emphasizing two near-synonyms, 'literally and truly,' with the words 'and' Hazlitt makes the point the real world is all that matters. While love and happiness may be important, loving someone on an empty stomach is not an easy task, and this idea is enforced in Hazlitt's connotative diction."

4. Provide more textual evidence of strategy to advance the idea. (claim about strategy, text, explanation)

"However, not only do these adverbs show Hazlitt's pragmatism, but the entire piece is full of strong, albeit cynical diction. The verbs in the primary sentence of the piece all vary, but inevitably end up meaning the same idea: beggars will be "rejected" and "compelled;" they will not be "asked to dinner" or "noticed on the street;" they are "scrutinized" or "neglected," "assailed," and all around abused. The straight denotation of these words is clear: poor men do not lead fun lives. In addition, however, the verbs are passive, the connotation of which is lower-class men are not in control of their lives, and are instead controlled by the rich who neglect them."

5. Final connection of strategies to claim/thesis/purpose.

"This despairing word choice shines a dark light on the self-fulfillment and autonomy those without money can never achieve, Hazlitt's main reason for sending the warning to people."

Simple Breakdown of what to write:

1. Topic sentence that states rhetorical device linking to thesis (begin with transition for 2nd and 3rd body paragraphs)
2. Introduce 1st example and quote it (or paraphrase if it is too long)
3. Explain effectiveness of 1st device related to Credibility/Passion or emotion/Logic
4. Relation of the device/example to the theme
5. Introduce 2nd example and quote it (or paraphrase if it is too long)
6. Explain effectiveness of 2nd device related to Credibility/Passion or emotion/Logic
7. Relation of the 2nd device/example to the theme
8. How both rhetorical devices connect and are both effective in conveying Zusak's overall theme

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Conclusion

First: Restate the thesis statement

Depending on how you re-phrased the thesis, it should come first in the conclusion. When doing this, you should briefly analyze how the author or creator of the work discussed in the paper has achieved his or her intentions.

Remember the conclusion is your **last** chance of making an impact with the paper, so it is advisable that you restate the thesis in a way that brings in **sophistication or digs deeper than the one in the introduction**. However, DO NOT introduce any new ideas or points when writing the conclusion.

Next: Highlight your main ideas for the analysis

The conclusion should also give a short summary or short explanation of the main points that you have discussed in the essay. Instead of simply restating the key points of the paper, it is advisable that you also **describe why they are important and how they are linked to your thesis**.

You have been discussing these ideas in the body of the essay, hence, the conclusion should only highlight a brief summary.

Restatement of the key points should also involve a brief explanation of the **significance of the rhetorical strategies** used in the work under analysis. Don't forget to state if these were effective in conveying the claim/thesis/purpose and why.

Finally: Closing Thought

Close out the main purpose of the text being analyzed. Be thoughtful here and use a powerful clincher.

Examples of Rhetorical Analysis Essay Conclusions

Example 1

Sample conclusion for a rhetorical analysis essay, "Why Privacy Matters: Debunking the Nothing-to-Hide Argument"

"...Through the effective use of rhetorical tools and the mindful arrangement of this essay, Solove persuades the audience the nothing-to-hide argument is a narrow, one sided-way of conveying privacy. Solove uses his expertise in the art of rhetoric by focusing his introduction on ethically appealing to the audience. By managing rhetorical distance between himself and the audience, he builds a relationship and establishes his authority, while not portraying himself as a superior..."

Example 2

Sample conclusion for a rhetorical analysis of "The Right Stuff"

"...The major question overlooked by Suzuki's essay- one of the logistics, is how can the schools, understaffed and overstressed, add the difficult subject of sex education to their curriculum. Admittedly, David Suzuki writes his essay at a time when education budgets were in better shape than they are today, and he certainly makes an excellent point that educators should respect their students and appeal to their interests..."

Example 3

Sample conclusion for a Rhetorical analysis of "The Other Canadians and Canada's Future"

"...Essentially, Salloum delivers an effective argument for his original audience through his use of logic, passion, and credibility. He carries out what is fundamentally stated in his thesis. However, despite his effective use of examples, his argument would have been more effective if his logic was more developed in some areas. Also, this would have made him more credible in the eyes of current readers. For both audiences, his credibility is strong, since he is informed and presents a fair argument, considering more than one facet of the issue.

Hints for Rhetorical Analysis Essay Writing:

1. **Rhetorical analysis moves beyond merely listing the devices or appeals used or stating how the purpose is crafted.** Analysis moves into connecting strategies to purpose, occasion, audience, subject, and/or tone. Analysis involves reflecting on how the argument would be different if the certain strategies identified were not used, and moves to discussion of how and why the strategy builds the argument.
2. **To determine the strategies used, consider where the main claim is made (structure) and the development of the supporting claims.** Consider why a particular example and bit of evidence is effective toward that particular subject, audience, occasion, and/or purpose. Consider if the speaker is drawing on emotions or logic or credibility or all of them in what order. (DO NOT DIRECTLY DISCUSS ETHOS, LOGOS, OR PATHOS!!!)
3. **Identify the main point, idea, or purpose, and state it clearly.** *e.g. Dillard encourages the reader to live life with passion.*
4. **Do not use information from the prompt just to fill your first paragraph**
5. **Avoid summarizing!!!**
6. **Do not use useless phrases like:**
 - a. ...keeps the reader's interest
 - b. ...uses good syntax
 - c. ...to keep your attention
 - d. ...uses excellent rhetorical strategies
 - e. ...uses diction very effectively
 - f. ...paints a picture
7. **For every strategy mentioned, give an example!!!!**
e.g. Dillard uses savage imagery such as "stalks," "killing," "crunching," to introduce her theme of nature's intensity.
8. **Connect every strategy to the author's idea or main point.**
e.g. Dillard uses violent imagery such as "crunching," "bites," and "splitting," in order to foreshadow her point at the end that people should shed their lackadaisical ways and live with passion.

OR

e.g. Words such as "bites," "killing," and "splitting," foreshadow the intensity of her purpose to live life with passion.
9. **Do not state** "The author uses metaphors to..." Instead, state "the author metaphorically states," or "the author alludes to," or "the author compares opposing items to create a mental image for the reader..."
10. **AVOID RIP WORDS!!** Especially "you," "get," "it is/was," "there are/were," and "I think/believe/feel"

