

# Introduction to Rhetoric

*“Cultivation to the mind is as necessary as food to the body.”*

*Marcus Tullius Cicero*

# What is Rhetoric?

“So let rhetoric be defined as the faculty of discovering in the particular case... the available means of persuasion”

(Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 1355b)

Key ideas: meaning, purpose, intent,  
audience, effect

# Rhetorical Analysis 101

- The two questions one needs to answer when analyzing a text
  - What is the author's purpose? (What's being said?)
  - How (strategies / choices) does he communicate that purpose to the audience? (How's it being said?)

# Exigence

- The elements leading the writer to enter into the conversation
- Occasion – what prompts the writer to tackle this issue / subject at this time

# Purpose

- The author's / speaker's specific reasons for writing
  - What does he hope to accomplish?
- What does the writer want the audience to do with the exigence placed before them?
  - The writer has already acted on the exigence; the writer wants the audience to act on the exigence as well

# Audience

- the target of the writer/speaker
- Audience can have several levels
  - Primary – immediate, intended audience
  - Secondary – future, not the initial focus of the speaker's intention

# Appeals

- **logos**—logical appeal (i.e. content, facts, statistics, numbers, concrete)
- **pathos** – emotional appeal (i.e. anecdotes, sensory language, informal language)
- **ethos** – ethical appeal (i.e. speaker's credibility, qualifications, reputation, demonstration of research)

# Organization, Structure, Form

- The arrangement of ideas and sequence of thoughts as they interact with the audience's mind / ears
- What is the significance of the paragraph placement within the text?
- Why did the writer choose this particular type of writing (anecdotal, definition, comparison / contrast, cause and effect, satire)?



# Devices / Strategies

- Diction – choice of words
- Syntax – sentence structure
- Figurative Language / Rhetorical Strategies
  
- It is not enough to be able to identify these components in a text; one must be able to connect them to the meaning (purpose) and explain how they help the writer achieve that meaning.

*All communication is  
argument.*

## Effective arguments include

- key issues
- anticipated objections
- gathered support
- logical reasoning

# The Five Parts of a Classical Argument

## Part 1: Introduction

- Warms up the audience
- Establishes goodwill and rapport with the readers
- Announces the general theme or *thesis* of the argument.

## Part 2: Narration

- Summarizes relevant background material
- Provides any information the audience needs to know about the environment and circumstances that produce the argument
- Sets up the stakes—what's at risk in this question.

# Part 3: Confirmation

- Reveals, in a logical order (usually strongest to weakest or most obvious to most subtle), the claims that support the thesis
- Provides evidence for each claim.

# Part 4: Refutation and Concession

- Looks at opposing viewpoints to the writer's claims
- Anticipates objections from the audience
- Allows as much of the opposing viewpoints as possible without weakening the thesis

# Part 5: Summation

- Provides a strong conclusion, amplifying the force of the argument
- Shows the readers that this solution is the best at meeting the circumstances.



# NOTE:

- These portions do not always correspond to paragraphs. Each of these parts represents a "chunk" of the paper, which might be one or more paragraphs; for instance, the *introduction* and *narration* sections might be combined into one chunk, while the *confirmation* and *concession* sections will probably be several paragraphs each.

# Reading and Analyzing the Rhetoric of Others

Responding to AP Prompts

# Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural Address

- Read the speech carefully. DO NOT MARK ANYTHING YET.
- Question 1: *What* is his purpose?
- Question 2: *How* does he achieve that purpose?

# Step-by-Step Analysis

- Read the speech again. Record all connotative words in the appropriate column and row.
- Record verbs and adverbs which indicate chronology / time in the appropriate column and row.

# Step-by-Step Analysis

- Record a brief summary of each paragraph's content in the appropriate column and row.
- Record examples of rhetorical appeals in the appropriate column and row.
- Label the parts of the classical argument.

# The AP Essay Prompt

- In his Second Inaugural Address, given one month before the end of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln surprised his audience – which expected a lengthy speech on politics, slavery, and states' rights – with a short speech in which he contemplated the effects of the Civil War and offered his vision for the future of the nation. Read the address carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies President Lincoln used to achieve his purpose. Support your analysis with specific references to the text.

# AP Grading

**QOE/GV**

# 2 Parts to the Prompt

- What is his purpose?
- How does he achieve that purpose?



# Student Sample - DDD

- Read the student sample.
- Analyze the student sample
  - Use your knowledge of the Lincoln text
  - Use the QOEGV grading scale
    - Write specific comments for each part of the QOEGV
- Assign the sample a score (1 – 9)

Planning a response  
and communicating  
that response  
effectively

# The Introductory Paragraph

The beginning should be **broad**.

As you progress, the information should become more **specific**, leading to the thesis statement.



**Thesis statement**

The main goals of the introductory paragraph are to set up your argument and to make the reader want to continue reading.

# Writing the Introduction

## Step One:

Broad universal statement relating to the subject or theme of the text -  
exigence

## Example:

Four years prior to his Second Inaugural Address, President Lincoln had given a speech about war, “an impending civil war.”

## Step Two – Easing your Way to the Thesis Statement

- Mention the author / title of the text, if you haven't already
- This is your occasion for writing - what you are writing in reaction / response to
- This sentence (or two) serves as a bridge between the universal opening statement and your thesis statement

# Step Two

Example:

Now, after four years of such conflict, the President is issuing a speech of reconciliation, trying to convince his people to come back together with their Southern brethren, and try and heal the grievously wounded nation.

# Step Three – The Thesis Statement

- Primary Goals:
  - Answer the question
  - Remember the two parts of the prompt
  - Outline, if possible, the plan for your body paragraphs

# The Thesis

## Example:

A gifted rhetorician, the President used three primary literary tools to make his point: parallel structure to illustrate similarities between Northerner and Southerner, allusions to the Bible to highlight the Christian values so important to both, and personification to paint the war as an evil enemy, and the nation as a wounded friend.



# The Body Paragraphs

- No set number of body paragraphs are required
- Remember the key lies in your ability to prove your thesis, so choose your examples carefully
- Always connect the example to the thesis – show why that particular example does what you are claiming it does

# Using Examples Correctly

- Identify the strategy / device
- Use paraphrasing or short quotations – Avoid long, unnecessary quotations
- Analyze *how* the example helps the writer achieve his purpose (connect to meaning)

# Example

The Christian values shared by both sides are further emphasized by Lincoln through allusions. He says in the third paragraph “let us judge not, lest we be judged.” This is a direct allusion to Jesus and his statement “judge not lest ye be judged.” It reflects the Christian value of forgiveness, something North and South share, and that should certainly apply for both in their current situation.

# Incorporating Quotations

- Any time you quote from a work, you must incorporate the quotation into a sentence of your own
- Making a “Quote Sandwich”
  - First, lead in to the idea
  - Next, cite the quotation
  - Finally, analyze the effectiveness of the example in the text

# Incorporating Quotations

## Use a signal phrase.

A signal phrase introduces the quote and absorbs it as part of a larger, complete sentence.

**WRONG:** *In The Good Doctor, the Narrator directly addresses the audience. "It's quite alright, you're not disturbing me" (Simon 7).* In this example, the quote is an independent sentence with no direct relation to any other part of the paragraph.

**BETTER:** *In The Good Doctor, the Narrator begins the play by directly addressing the audience: "It's quite alright, you're not disturbing me" (Simon 7).*

# Incorporating Quotations

## Use a signal verb.

A signal verb should be used with the author's name (if possible) to introduce the quotation.

**WRONG:** *In his article on horse racing, Merrill "advocate[s] the use of children as jockeys for professional horse races" (Merrill 15).* In this example, the quote is not subordinated to the text, it creates the text. The verb "advocates" is part of the quote, not the sentence. And a sentence without a verb is a fragment. Also, the author's name does not need to appear in the parenthetical citation if it appears in the text.

**BETTER:** *In his article on horse racing, Merrill staunchly supports "the use of children as jockeys for professional horse races" (15).*

# Conclusion

## Consider the following:

- How are the arguments in the essay connected?
- What have I proven?
- Why are my arguments important?
- Do my conclusions speak to a greater truth about the human condition? (hint: they always should)

All of these questions and the answers they produce are part of your essay's impact. This component is vital to the success of your essay.

# Conclusion

- No set number of sentences required
- Example:

At the dawning of his second term, Lincoln realized the necessity for the reunification of the nation. Using rhetoric, he appealed to the hearts and minds of the people and tried to mend the rift that had grown between North and South.



# Grammar?

Grammar cannot be ignored if you wish to become a more successful writer. Follow these basic tips to increase the effectiveness of your writing.

- **No first person or second person** – Avoid “I think” and the temptation of commands
- **Pronoun clarity** – Avoid the evils of “it” and “There is”
- **Verbs** – Utilize action and active verbs - the most important part of any sentence
- **No informalities** – Avoid contractions, slang, abbreviations, symbols, “a lot”

# A typical Rhetorical Analysis AP Prompt

Read [the speech] carefully. In a well-organized essay, analyze the rhetorical strategies (organization, diction, syntax, tone) that make [the speaker's] argument effective for his audience.

# Parts of the Prompt

Three objectives must be achieved before you can write your thesis or plan your essay

- Who is the speaker's audience?
- What is the speaker's purpose?
- Which particular devices or strategies (rhetorical appeals, diction, syntax, tone) are most effective in helping him to achieve his purpose?