

TED Talks Rhetorical Précis (RP) Assignment

Overview: An important part of your success on the AP test — and in your life beyond high school — will be a broad knowledge of what is going on in the world, the kinds of social and political debates being had, and the ways people involved in those arguments make their cases successfully, and unsuccessfully. One of the three essays you will write on the AP exam will require you to provide evidence for a given argument from your own prior knowledge and understanding of national, world, historical events, and global ideas. This assignment is designed to help you prepare for that.

A précis (pray-see) is a brief summary that follows a specific format.

1) A single sentence which includes the author, title, date (in parentheses); a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "asserts," "argues," "refutes," "proves," "explains," etc.), followed by a clause that contains the major claim (thesis statement) of the work.

Example: In his TED Talk, "Ingenuity and elegance in ancient African alphabets" (2013), Saki Mafundikwa, a Zimbabwean teacher, author and historian, proclaims that Africans need to look within their own historical artifacts to create designs, logos, textiles, and art.

2) A single sentence explaining how the author develops and supports the argument with Rhetorical techniques:

Pathos, Logos, Ethos

Parallel Structure

Figurative Language (tone, metaphor, imagery, etc.)

Syntax, Tone, Diction

Dichotomy/Juxtaposition

ANY Terms from your list of techniques

Example: Mafundikwa combines historical facts, imagery, and pathos with a variety of cultural references to support his claim.

3) A single sentence describing the author's purpose.

Example: Mafundikwa wants Africans to take advantage of the ancient African alphabets to inspire new ideas instead of looking for inspiration outside of their culture.

4) A single sentence describing how the speaker's tone affects the intended audience for the piece or describing the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

Example: His informative tone inspires an audience which consists of African artists and designers—people who may not know of the valuable ideas that can be found in ancient symbols.

Putting it all together:

In his TED Talk, "Ingenuity and elegance in ancient African alphabets" (2013), Saki Mafundikwa, a Zimbabwean teacher, author, and historian, proclaims that Africans need to look within their own historical artifacts to create designs and art. Mafundikwa combines historical facts, imagery, and symbols with a variety of cultural references to support his claim. Mafundikwa wants Africans to take advantage of the ancient African alphabets to inspire new ideas instead of looking for inspiration outside of their culture. His informative tone inspires an audience which consists of African artists and designers—people who may not know of the valuable ideas that can be found in ancient symbols.