An Introduction to Rhetoric: Using the “Available Means”

To many people, the word *rhetoric* automatically signals that trickery or deception is afoot. They assume that an advertiser is trying to manipulate a consumer, a politician wants to obscure a point, or a spin doctor is spinning. "Empty rhetoric!" is a common criticism — and at times an indictment. Yet Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) defined *rhetoric* as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." At its best, rhetoric is a thoughtful, reflective activity leading to effective communication, including rational exchange of opposing viewpoints. In Aristotle's day and in ours, those who understand and can use the available means to appeal to an audience of one or many find themselves in a position of strength. They have the tools to resolve conflicts without confrontation, to persuade readers or listeners to support their position, or to move others to take action.

**Key Elements of Rhetoric**

Let's start out by looking at a speech that nearly everyone has read or heard: the speech baseball player Lou Gehrig gave at an Appreciation Day held in his honor on July 4, 1939. Gehrig had recently learned that he was suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a neurological disorder that has no cure (today it is known as "Lou Gehrig's disease"). Although Gehrig was a reluctant speaker, the fans' chant of "We want Lou!" brought him to the podium to deliver one of the all-time most powerful, heartfelt — and brief (under three hundred words) — speeches.

Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about a bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth. I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but
kindness and encouragement from you fans. Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn’t consider it the highlight of his career just to associate with them for even one day?

Sure, I’m lucky. Who wouldn’t consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert; also the builder of baseball’s greatest empire, Ed Barrow; to have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins; then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology — the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy? Who wouldn’t feel honored to have roomed with such a grand guy as Bill Dickey?

Sure, I’m lucky. When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift — that’s something! When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with trophies — that’s something!

When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles against her own daughter — that’s something! When you have a father and mother who work all their lives so that you can have an education and build your body — it’s a blessing! When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed — that’s the finest I know!

So I close in saying that I might have been given a bad break, but I have an awful lot to live for! Thank you.

Why is this an effective speech? First of all, Lou Gehrig understood that rhetoric is always situational: it has a context — the occasion or the time and place it was written or spoken — and a purpose or goal that the speaker or writer wants to achieve. Gehrig delivered the speech between games of a doubleheader. The more important context, though, is the poignant contrast between the celebration of his athletic career and the life-threatening diagnosis he had received. Within this context, his purpose is to remain positive by looking on the bright side — his past luck and present optimism — and downplaying the bleak outlook. He makes a single reference to the diagnosis and does so in the straightforward language of strength: he got a “bad break” — there is no blame, no self-pity, no plea for sympathy. Throughout, he maintains his focus: to celebrate the occasion and get back to work — that is, playing baseball. While in our time the word rhetoric may suggest deception, this speech reminds us that rhetoric can serve sincerity as well.

Context and purpose are easy to spot in Gehrig’s speech; identifying them in more complex situations is harder, but it is essential to analyzing effective rhetoric. When we read any text, we ask about the context in which it was written. Then we consider the purpose: is the speaker trying to win agreement, persuade us to take action, evoke sympathy, make someone laugh, inform, provoke, celebrate, repudiate, put forth a proposal, secure support, or bring about a favorable decision? Keep in mind too that sometimes the context arises from current events or cultural bias. For example, someone writing about freedom of speech in a com-
munity that has experienced hate graffiti must take that context into account and adjust the purpose of the piece so as not to offend the audience.

Another reason this speech is effective is that Gehrig has a crystal clear main idea: he’s the “luckiest man on the face of the earth.” Whether you call this idea a thesis, a claim, or an assertion, it is a clear and focused statement. Further, Gehrig knows his subject — baseball in general, the New York Yankees in particular. Though he is a champion baseball player, he is not a polished orator or a highly sophisticated writer; therefore, as a speaker he presents himself as a common man, modest and glad for the life he’s lived. His audience is his fans and fellow athletes, those in the stadium as well as those who will hear the speech from afar, people rooting for him on and off the field. Gehrig’s understanding of how these factors — subject (and main idea), speaker, and audience — interact determines his speech: a plainspoken, positive appreciation for what he has had, and a champion’s courageous acceptance of the challenges that lie before him. No wonder one commentator wrote, “Lou Gehrig’s speech almost rocked Yankee Stadium off its feet.”

The Rhetorical Triangle

One way to consider the elements in Gehrig’s speech is through the rhetorical triangle below. Some refer to it as the Aristotelian triangle, so-called because Aristotle described the interaction among subject, speaker, and audience (or subject, writer, and reader), as well as how this interaction determines the
structure and language of the argument — that is, a text or image that establishes a position.

Thus far, we’ve been analyzing a speech from the viewpoint of the audience, or readers, but skilled writers consider this interaction as they are developing an essay, speech, letter, or other text. Writers or speakers must first choose a subject and then evaluate what they already know about it, what others have said about it, and what kind of evidence or proof will sufficiently develop their position.

You might think the identity of the speaker in your own writing is obvious, but that’s not necessarily so. Writers often assume what Aristotle called a persona — the character the speaker creates when he or she writes or speaks — depending on the context, purpose, subject, and audience. Are you speaking as a poet, comedian, or scholar? Are you speaking as an expert on ice skating, popular music, or a specific software program? Are you speaking as a literary critic in your English class or as a concerned citizen in your local community?

Before you proceed with these explorations and begin to craft an essay, however, it's important to think about the audience. What does the audience know about the subject? What is the audience’s attitude toward it? Is there common ground between the writer’s and reader’s views on the subject? Each audience requires you to use different information to shape your argument effectively.

Imagine you are writing an essay for a college application. Who will read it? What will they be expecting? What is likely to impress them enough to admit you to their school? Or perhaps you’re addressing peers you’re working with on a collaborative project. Maybe you are writing a letter to a prospective employer who has never met you. If you are writing to a newspaper to express an environmental concern or opposition to a policy proposed by an elected official, your audience might be a larger group — for example, the whole community.

**Appeals to Ethos, Logos, and Pathos**

After analyzing the relationship of speaker to subject, audience to speaker, and audience to subject, a writer is ready to make some strategic choices. One is how to persuade the audience by appealing to ethos, logos, and pathos.

**Ethos**

Speakers and writers appeal to ethos, or character, to demonstrate that they are credible and trustworthy. Think, for example, of a speech discouraging children from using alcohol. Speakers might appeal to ethos by stressing that they are concerned parents, psychologists specializing in alcoholism or adolescent behavior, or recovering alcoholics themselves. Appeals to ethos often emphasize shared values between the speaker and the audience: when a parent speaks to other parents in the same community, they share a concern for their children’s education or
well-being. Lou Gehrig establishes ethos quite simply because he is a good sport, a regular guy who shares the audience's love of baseball and family, and like them, he has known good luck and bad breaks.

In some instances, a speaker's reputation immediately establishes ethos. For example, the speaker may be a scholar in Russian history and economics as well as the secretary of state. Or the speaker may be "the dog whisperer," a well-known animal behaviorist. In other cases, the speaker establishes ethos through the discourse itself, whether written or spoken, by making a good impression. That impression may result from a tone of reason and goodwill or from the type and thoroughness of information presented. The speaker's ethos — expertise and knowledge, experience, training, sincerity, or a combination of these — gives the audience a reason for listening.

Logos

Writers and speakers appeal to logos, or reason, by offering clear, rational ideas. Appealing to logos (Greek, "embodied thought") means having a clear main idea, or thesis, with specific details, examples, facts, statistical data, or expert testimony as support! Of course, the idea must be logical. Although on first reading or hearing, Gehrig's speech may seem largely emotional, it is actually based on irrefutable logic. He starts with the thesis that he is "the luckiest man on the face of the earth" and supports it with two points: (1) his seventeen years of playing baseball and (2) his belief that he has "never received anything but kindness and encouragement from [his] fans." Specifically, he has worked with good people on the field, he's been part of a sterling team, and he has the "blessing" of a supportive family. That he has gotten a "bad break" neither negates nor even lessens any of these experiences. What assumption, or underlying belief, links these seemingly contrasting ideas? It's that Gehrig is lucky even though he's had a bad break. He assumes, no doubt as his audience does, that bad breaks are a natural and inevitable part of life.

Another way to appeal to logos is to acknowledge a counterargument — that is, to anticipate objections or opposing views. While you might worry that raising an opposing view will weaken your argument, you'll be vulnerable if you ignore ideas that run counter to your own. In acknowledging a counterargument, you agree (concede) that an opposing argument may be true, but then you deny (refute) the validity of all or part of the argument. This concession and refutation actually strengthens your argument; it appeals to logos by demonstrating that you considered your subject carefully before making your argument.

In longer, more complex texts, the writer may address the counterargument in greater depth. Lou Gehrig, however, simply concedes what some of his listeners may think — that his bad break is cause for discouragement or even giving up; he disagrees because he has "an awful lot to live for!" Granted, he implies his concession rather than stating it outright, but in addressing it at all, he acknowledges a contrasting way of viewing his situation, that is a counterargument.
Pathos

Without question, Gehrig's speech gains power with its appeal to pathos, or emotion. Although writing that relies exclusively on emotional appeals is rarely effective in the long term, choosing language (such as figurative language or personal anecdotes) that engages the emotions of the audience can add an important dimension. Obviously, Gehrig uses the first person (I) because he is speaking about himself, but he also chooses a sequence of words with strong positive connotations: greatest, wonderful, honored, grand, blessing. He uses one image — tower of strength — that may not seem very original but strikes the right note. It is a well-known description that his audience understands — in fact, they probably have used it themselves.

Although an argument that appeals only to the emotions is by definition weak — it's generally propagandistic in purpose and more polemical than persuasive — an effective speaker or writer understands the power of evoking an audience's emotions. Emotional appeals usually include vivid, concrete description and figurative language. In addition, visual elements often carry a strong emotional appeal. A striking photograph, for example, may strengthen an argument. Advertisers certainly make the most of photos and other visual images to entice or persuade audiences.

Ethos, Logos, and Pathos in Practice

Let's go through an argument that appeared in a newspaper and analyze the elements we've just discussed. In the following article, which appeared in the Washington Post on Mother's Day in 2006, Jody Heyman takes an interesting approach: she organizes her main argument around the counterargument.

We Can Afford to Give Parents a Break

In an era when the mythology of motherhood is slowly yielding to the realities, it seems only appropriate to disabuse ourselves of some of the myths surrounding our government's treatment of mothers.

Perhaps the most obvious yardstick of governmental respect for mothers is maternity leave policy. Of 168 countries on which I collected data — for Harvard University's Project on Global Working Families and at McGill University — 164 have found a way to guarantee paid maternity leave. The only ones that haven't are Papua New Guinea, Swaziland, Lesotho and the United States. In most high-income countries, moms can receive help from dads who have paid parental leave. Indeed, in 27 countries fathers have a right to at least three months of paid leave at the birth of a child. Not in America.

Breast-feeding is crucial because it lowers infant morbidity and mortality three- to five-fold. But in America, there is no guarantee that mothers will be able to safeguard their infants in this way. While 76 countries ensure
that mothers can take time from work to breast-feed their infants, America does not.

When children get sick, parents in 37 countries are guaranteed at least a minimum amount of paid leave to care for them. This is affordable because children get out of the hospital faster and recover from both chronic and acute illnesses more rapidly when parents are involved in their care. But the United States does not provide leave to any Americans for their own health problems — despite the fact that personal sick leave is a basic right of citizens in more than 150 countries around the world.

While a low-income mother in the United States is twice as likely as a middle-class one to have a child with asthma or another chronic condition and twice as likely to be providing 30 hours or more of care a month for elderly or sick parents, she is less likely to have the work flexibility she needs to provide that care. Half of middle-class Americans can rely on getting a job with sick leave; three quarters of low-income Americans cannot.

While American women and men agree that women still do more of the housework and provide more of the care both for children and aging parents, they have fewer benefits — less sick leave, annual leave, flexibility at work. The United States has engaged in a unique private-sector experiment — as opposed to any partnership between the public and private. The experiment has tested what companies can and will offer voluntarily. This means that companies that want to do the right thing by mothers are stymied. If they offer paid maternity leave, they have to compete with a company across the street that doesn’t — an uneven playing field that does not exist in most nations.

The conventional wisdom that the United States cannot afford to adopt more progressive and humane policies toward its own mothers and remain competitive in the global economy is upheld by certain myths.

Myth 1: The United States can’t compete while offering policies that would markedly improve the lives of most American parents and children. The World Economic Forum rated the four most competitive nations as Finland, the United States, Sweden and Denmark. All but the United States provide at least a month of paid annual leave, six months of paid parental leave and paid sick leave.

Myth 2: Decent working conditions will lead to high unemployment. Iceland enjoys among the world’s lowest unemployment rates, at 3.4 percent, yet ensures that all its working citizens enjoy a month of paid annual leave and extensive paid sick leave.

Myth 3: Decent working conditions will inhibit economic growth. Ireland got the nickname “Celtic Tiger” because its growth rate is among the world’s highest — 6.4 percent per year throughout the 1990s and in the early years of this decade. It achieved this growth rate while ensuring six months of paid parental leave, four weeks of paid annual leave, short- and long-term paid sick leave and unpaid leave to meet children’s health needs.
If politicians of either mainstream persuasion in the United States really valued mothers and families on Mother’s Day or any other day, they would commit to finally ensuring rights for American mothers and fathers that most parents around the world already enjoy. They would ensure that American mothers receive paid maternity leave, as mothers in 164 other nations do. They would ensure that moms have breast-feeding breaks and sick leave. They would support early childhood education and after-school programs. Then the United States could be truly competitive in the most meaningful sense, and “Happy Mother’s Day” would be more than just another myth.

The writer is director of the McGill University Institute for Health and Social Policy, founder of the Project on Global Working Families at Harvard, and author of Forgotten Families: Ending the Growing Crisis Confronting Children and Working Parents in a Global Economy.

Jody Heyman establishes ethos from the outset by referring to “our government,” indicating that even though she is being critical, she is doing so on behalf of the audience. Then immediately in the next paragraph, she provides information that establishes her as an expert: she has “collected data — for Harvard University’s Project on Global Working Families and at McGill University.” Working with projects associated with two prestigious universities gives her strong credibility to speak on the subject. Further, at the end of the article, a biographical note states that Heyman was the director or founder of each project and indicates she has written a book on the topic at hand. Without question, her voice is an informed one.

Note that where something is published affects its credibility. In Heyman’s case, her opinion piece appeared in a newspaper based in the nation’s capital (where the legislation that Heyman calls for would be enacted). Moreover, it is a well-respected publication. In addition, this newspaper is associated more with liberal than conservative views, so Heyman can assume that her audience will be more receptive than hostile to her position. Although her readers may not agree with everything, they are likely to be willing to consider her views regarding family leave. Articles such as Heyman’s are often reprinted in other publications, so it’s always good to note where they originally appeared in order to understand who the writer was targeting.

Perhaps Heyman’s strongest appeal to logos is her decision to frame her viewpoint not as a women’s rights issue but as an economic one. She develops her argument for several paragraphs with facts and figures, presumably from the data she has collected. In fact, she begins the second paragraph by citing policies in other countries. She then goes on to write, for example, “When children get sick, parents in 37 countries are guaranteed at least a minimum amount of paid leave to care for them,” and “personal sick leave is a basic right of citizens in more than 150 countries around the world.”

She also appeals to reason by carefully analyzing cause and effect. When she compares the situations of low- and middle-income mothers, for instance, she
emphasizes the effect on each group of not having paid sick leave or "work flexibility." Then she points out the disparity between men’s and women’s working conditions in order to emphasize the burdens carried by women, who are less likely to have the means to shoulder them.

After Heyman appeals to logos through facts, figures, and analysis, she focuses on what she expects to be the central objection to her call for an expanded maternity leave policy: "that the United States cannot afford to adopt more progressive and humane policies toward its own mothers and remain competitive in the global economy." She presents this concern in the form of three counterarguments — which she calls "myths" — and addresses them one by one. She refutes each with more facts, figures, and analysis. For instance, one of the myths is that "Decent working conditions will lead to high unemployment." Her refutation is to cite the case of Iceland, which "enjoys among the world's lowest unemployment rates, at 3.4 percent, yet ensures that all its working citizens enjoy a month of paid annual leave and extensive paid sick leave."

Does Heyman ignore pathos? She does not; for instance, identify herself as a mother or call on her personal experience with motherhood in any way, which might tug at the reader’s heartstrings. Yet, she uses the occasion of Mother’s Day and the warm feelings surrounding it to appeal to the audience’s emotions. "If politicians ... in the United States really valued mothers and families on Mother’s Day," she suggests, they would enact the policies she advocates. And by writing in her final sentence, "Happy Mother’s Day' would be more than just another myth," Heyman uses the emotional power of Mother’s Day to compel readers to consider her argument.

ASSIGNMENT

Widely considered the greatest scientist of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein (1879–1955) is responsible for the theory of relativity. He won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921. In 1936, he wrote the following letter to a sixth-grade student, Phyllis Wright, in response to her question as to whether scientists pray, and if so, what they pray for. How rhetorically effective do you find Einstein’s response? Explain your answer in terms of subject, speaker, audience; context and purpose; and appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos.

January 24, 1936

Dear Phyllis,

I have tried to respond to your question as simply as I could. Here is my answer.

Scientific research is based on the idea that everything that takes place is determined by laws of nature, and therefore this holds for the actions of
people. For this reason, a research scientist will hardly be inclined to believe that events could be influenced by a prayer, i.e., by a wish addressed to a supernatural being.

However, it must be admitted that our actual knowledge of these laws is only imperfect and fragmentary, so that, actually, the belief in the existence of basic all-embracing laws in Nature also rests on a sort of faith. All the same, this faith has been largely justified so far by the success of scientific research.

But, on the other hand, everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the Universe — a spirit vastly superior to that of man, and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble. In this way the pursuit of science leads to a religious feeling of a special sort, which is indeed quite different from the religiosity of someone more naive.

I hope this answers your question.

Best wishes

Yours,

Albert Einstein

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**Visual Rhetoric**

So far, we’ve been discussing texts that consist of words, either written or spoken, but the same elements of rhetoric are at work with visual texts, like political cartoons. Although political cartoons are often satiric, they may also comment without any hint of sarcasm or criticism. Consider the accompanying cartoon, which cartoonist Tom Toles drew after the death of civil rights icon Rosa Parks in 2006. Parks was the woman who refused in 1955 to give up her seat on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama; that act came to symbolize the struggle for racial equality in the United States.

We can discuss the cartoon in the terms we’ve been using to examine texts that are exclusively verbal: The subject is the death of Rosa Parks, a well-known person loved by many. The speaker is Tom Toles, a respected and award-winning political cartoonist. The audience is made up of readers of the Washington Post and other newspapers; that is, it’s a broad audience. The speaker can assume his audience shares his admiration and respect for Parks and that they view her passing as the loss of a public figure as well as a private woman. And finally, the context is a memorial for a well-loved civil rights activist, and Toles’s purpose is to remember Parks as an ordinary citizen whose courage and determination brought extraordinary results.
As you can see in this example, it’s not uncommon for one passage or image to use more than one appeal. Readers’ familiarity with Toles — along with his obvious respect for his subject — establishes his ethos. The image in the cartoon appeals primarily to pathos. Toles shows Rosa Parks, who was a devout Christian, as she is about to enter heaven through the pearly gates; they are attended by an angel, probably Saint Peter, who is reading a ledger. Toles depicts Parks wearing a simple coat and carrying her pocketbook, as she did while sitting on the bus so many years ago. The commentary at the bottom right reads, “We’ve been holding it [the front row in heaven] open since 1955,” a reminder that more than fifty years have elapsed since Parks resolutely sat where she pleased. The caption can be seen as an appeal to both pathos and logos. Its emotional appeal is its acknowledgment that, of course, heaven would have been waiting for this good woman, but the mention of “the front row” appeals to logic because Parks made her mark in history for refusing to sit in the back of the bus. Some might even read the caption as a criticism of how slow the country was both to integrate and to pay tribute to Parks.
 ASSIGNMENT

Analyze a political cartoon in terms of the rhetorical triangle and its appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos. As part of your analysis of audience, note if possible where the cartoon first appeared, and describe that source's political leanings. Finally, examine the interaction of written text and visual images.

An Example of Rhetoric from Literature

Rhetoric is by no means limited to nonfiction. Poetry, fiction, and drama also seek to persuade. For example, in Book 24 of Homer's epic *The Iliad*, the story of the Trojan War, the Greek warrior Achilles has defeated the Trojan prince Hector. Achilles has not only refused to return his rival's body to Troy for burial, but he has also dishonored it by lashing it to a chariot and pulling it through the dirt. This is the context. The purpose is that Priam, king of Troy and Hector's aged father, wants to reclaim his son's body from the brutal Achilles. In this scene, old meets young; the defeated meets the conqueror. Priam knows that his success depends on the strength of his rhetoric. He begins:

Remember your own father,
Achilles, in your godlike youth: his years
like mine are many, and he stands upon
the fearful doorstep of old age. He, too,
is hard pressed it may be, by those around him,
there being no one able to defend
him from bane of war and ruin. Ah, but he
may nonetheless hear news of you alive,
and so with glad heart hope through all his days
for sight of his dear son, come back from Troy,
while I have deathly fortune. . . .
And he who stood alone among them all,
their champion, and Troy's, ten days ago
you killed him, fighting for his land, my prince, Hector.
It is for him that I have come
among these ships, to beg him back from you,
and I bring ransom without stint.
Achilles, be reverent toward the great gods! And take
pity on me, remember your own father.
Think me more pitiful by far, since I
have brought myself to do what no man else
has done before — to lift to my lips the hand
of one who killed my son.
In this powerfully moving passage, Priam, the speaker, knows that his audience, Achilles, will resist the subject, Priam’s request for his son’s body. He knows that his ethos cannot be his kingship, since he is king of a nearly vanquished country. Thus he assumes the persona of an aging and grieving father and appeals to Achilles by beginning, “Remember your own father.” Knowing that a logical appeal is unlikely to move the rash Achilles, Priam appeals to pathos, reminding the “godlike” warrior that his father’s “years / like mine are many, and he stands upon / the fearful doorstep of old age.” Priam repeats this appeal as he asks for pity, reminding his audience that Achilles’ father can still hope to see his son alive, while Priam cannot. Priam appeals to logos, to Achilles’ reason, when he offers “ransom” and reminds him to “be reverent toward the great gods.” Note that he wisely saves these points for last, after he has engaged Achilles’ emotion. Priam is successful, Homer tells us later, in stirring in Achilles “new longing, and an ache of grief.” Achilles grants Priam’s request.

Arrangement

Another element of rhetoric is the organization of a piece, what classical rhetoricians called arrangement. Whether you’re analyzing a text or writing your own, consider how the essay and its individual paragraphs or sections are arranged. Is the text organized in the best possible way in order to achieve its purpose? An essay always has a beginning, middle, and end: an introduction, developmental paragraphs, and conclusion. But how a writer structures the argument within that framework depends upon his or her intended purpose and effect. In the following sections, we’ll look at a formal classical model of arrangement; then we’ll examine rhetorical patterns of development.

The Classical Model

Classical rhetoricians outlined a five-part structure for an oratory, or speech, that writers still use today, although perhaps not always consciously:

- The introduction (exordium) introduces the reader to the subject under discussion. In Latin, exordium means “beginning a web,” which is an apt description for an introduction. Whether it is a single paragraph or several, the introduction draws the readers into the text by piquing their interest, challenging them, or otherwise getting their attention. Often the introduction is where the writer establishes ethos.

- The narration (narratio) provides factual information and background material on the subject at hand, thus beginning the developmental paragraphs, or establishes why the subject is a problem that needs addressing. The level of detail a writer uses in this section depends largely on the audience’s knowledge of the subject. Although classical rhetoric describes
narration as appealing to logos, in actuality it often appeals to pathos because the writer attempts to evoke an emotional response about the importance of the issue being discussed.

* The confirmation (confirmatio), usually the major part of the text, includes the development or the proof needed to make the writer’s case — the nuts and bolts of the essay, containing the most specific and concrete detail in the text. The confirmation generally makes the strongest appeal to logos.

* The refutation (refutatio), which addresses the counterargument, is in many ways a bridge between the writer’s proof and conclusion. Although classical rhetoricians recommended placing this section at the end of the text as a way to anticipate objections to the proof given in the confirmation section, this is not a hard-and-fast rule. Earlier we analyzed an essay about working mothers in which the author, Jody Heyman, used counterarguments as an overall organization. If opposing views are well known or valued by the audience, a writer will address them before presenting his or her own argument. The counterargument’s appeal is largely to logos.

* The conclusion (peroratio) — whether it is one paragraph or several — brings the essay to a satisfying close. Here the writer usually appeals to pathos and reminds the reader of the ethos established earlier. Rather than simply repeating what has gone before, the conclusion brings all the writer’s ideas together and answers the question, so what? Writers should remember the classical rhetoricians’ advice that the last words and ideas of a text are those the audience is most likely to remember.

An example of the classical model at work is the piece below written in 2006 by Sandra Day O’Connor, a former Supreme Court Justice, and Roy Romer, superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

### Not by Math Alone

Fierce global competition prompted President Bush to use the State of the Union address to call for better math and science education, where there’s evidence that many schools are falling short.

We should be equally troubled by another shortcoming in American schools: Most young people today simply do not have an adequate understanding of how our government and political system work, and they are thus not well prepared to participate as citizens.

This country has long exemplified democratic practice to the rest of the world. With the attention we are paying to advancing democracy abroad, we ought not neglect it at home.
Two-thirds of 12th-graders scored below "proficient" on the last national civics assessment in 1998, and only 9 percent could list two ways democracy benefits from citizen participation. Yes, young people remain highly patriotic, and many volunteer in their communities. But most are largely disconnected from current events and issues.

A healthy democracy depends on the participation of citizens, and that participation is learned behavior; it doesn't just happen. As the 2003 report "The Civic Mission of Schools" noted: "Individuals do not automatically become free and responsible citizens, but must be educated for citizenship." That means civic learning — educating students for democracy — needs to be on par with other academic subjects.

This is not a new idea. Our first public schools saw education for citizenship as a core part of their mission. Eighty years ago, John Dewey said, "Democracy needs to be reborn in every generation and education is its midwife."

But in recent years, civic learning has been pushed aside. Until the 1960s, three courses in civics and government were common in American high schools, and two of them ("civics" and "problems of democracy") explored the role of citizens and encouraged students to discuss current issues. Today those courses are very rare.

What remains is a course on "American government" that usually spends little time on how people can — and why they should — participate. The effect of reduced civic learning on civic life is not theoretical. Research shows that the better people understand our history and system of government, the more likely they are to vote and participate in the civic life.

We need more and better classes to impart the knowledge of government, history, law and current events that students need to understand and participate in a democratic republic. And we also know that much effective civic learning takes place beyond the classroom — in extracurricular activity, service work that is connected to class work, and other ways students experience civic life.

Preserving our democracy should be reason enough to promote civic learning. But there are other benefits. Understanding society and how we relate to each other fosters the attitudes essential for success in college, work and communities; it enhances student learning in other subjects.

Economic and technological competitiveness is essential, and America's economy and technology have flourished
because of the rule of law and the “assets” of a free and open society. Democracy has been good for business and for economic well-being. By the same token, failing to hone the civic tools of democracy will have economic consequences.

Bill Gates — a top business and technology leader — argues strongly that schools have to prepare students not only for college and career but for citizenship as well.

None of this is to diminish the importance of improving math and science education. This latest push, as well as the earlier emphasis on literacy, deserves support. It should also be the occasion for a broader commitment, and that means restoring education for democracy to its central place in school.

We need more students proficient in math, science and engineering. We also need them to be prepared for their role as citizens. Only then can self-government work. Only then will we not only be more competitive but also remain the beacon of liberty in a tumultuous world.

Sandra Day O’Connor retired as an associate justice of the Supreme Court. Roy Romer, a former governor of Colorado, is superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District. They are co-chairs of the national advisory council of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools.

Sandra Day O’Connor and Roy Romer follow the classical model very closely. The opening two paragraphs are an introduction to the main idea the authors develop. In fact, the last sentence is their two-part claim, or thesis: “Most young people today simply do not have an adequate understanding of how our government and political system work, and they are thus not well prepared to participate as citizens.” O’Connor’s position as a former Supreme Court justice establishes her ethos as a reasonable person, an advocate for justice, and a concerned citizen. Romer’s biographical note at the end of the article suggests similar qualities. The authors use the pronoun “we” to refer not only to themselves but to all of “us” who are concerned about American society. The opening phrase “Fierce global competition” connotes a sense of urgency, and the warning that we are not adequately preparing our young people to participate as citizens is sure to evoke an emotional response of concern, even alarm.

In paragraphs 3 to 6 — the narration — the authors provide background information, including facts that add urgency to their point. They cite statistics, quote from research reports, even call on the well-known educator John Dewey. They also include a definition of “civic learning,” a key term in their argument. Their facts-and-figures appeal is largely to logos, though the language of “a healthy democracy” certainly engages the emotions.
Paragraphs 7 to 12 present the bulk of the argument — the confirmation — by offering reasons and examples to support the case that young people lack the knowledge necessary for them to be informed citizens. The authors link civic learning to other subjects as well as to economic development. They quote Bill Gates, chairman of Microsoft, who has spoken about the economic importance of a well-informed citizenry.

In paragraph 13, O’Connor and Romer briefly address a major objection — the refutation — that we need to worry more about math and science education than about civic learning. While they concede the importance of math, science, and literacy, they point out that it is possible to increase civic education without undermining the gains made in those other fields.

The final paragraph — the conclusion — emphasizes the importance of a democracy to a well-versed citizenry, a point that stresses the shared values of the authors with their audience. The appeal to pathos is primarily through the vivid language, particularly the final sentence with its emotionally charged description “beacon of liberty,” a view of their nation that most Americans hold dear.

**Patterns of Development**

Another way to consider arrangement is according to purpose. Is the writer’s purpose to compare and contrast, to narrate an event, to define a term? Each of these purposes suggests a method of organization, or arrangement. These patterns of development include a range of logical ways to organize an entire text or, more likely, individual paragraphs or sections. In the following pages, we’ll discuss the major patterns of development by examining excerpts from the essays in this book.

**Narration**

Narration refers to telling a story or recounting a series of events. It can be based on personal experience or on knowledge gained from reading or observation. Chronology usually governs narration, which includes concrete detail, a point of view, and sometimes such elements as dialogue. Narration is not simply crafting an appealing story; it is crafting a story that supports your thesis.

Writers often use narration as a way to enter into their topics. In the following example, Rebecca Walker tells a story about her son to lead into her explanation of why she put together the anthology *Putting Down the Gun* (p. 412).

The idea for this book was born one night after a grueling conversation with my then eleven-year-old son. He had come home from his progressive middle school unnaturally quiet and withdrawn, shrugging off my questions of concern with uncharacteristic irritability. Where was the sunny, chatty boy I dropped off that morning? What had befallen him in the perilous halls of middle school? I backed off but kept a close eye on him, watching for clues.
After a big bowl of his favorite pasta, he sat on a sofa in my study and read his science textbook as I wrote at my desk. We both enjoyed this simple yet profound togetherness, the two of us focused on our own projects yet palpably connected. As we worked under the soft glow of paper lanterns, with the heat on high and our little dog snoring at his feet, my son began to relax. I could feel a shift as he began to remember, deep in his body, that he was home, that he was safe, that he did not have to brace to protect himself from the expectations of the outside world.

Walker brings her audience into her experience with her son by narrating step-by-step what happened and what she noticed when he returned from school. It’s not only a personal story but also one that she will show has wider significance in the culture. Narration has the advantage of drawing readers in because everyone loves a good story.

**Description**

Description is closely allied with narration because both include many specific details. However, unlike narration, description emphasizes the senses by painting a picture of how something looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels. Description is often used to establish a mood or atmosphere. Rarely is an entire essay descriptive, but clear and vivid description can make writing more persuasive. By asking readers to see what you see and feel what you feel, you make it easy for them to empathize with you, your subject, or your argument. In the following example from “Serving in Florida” (p. 179), Barbara Ehrenreich describes her coworkers:

I make friends, over time, with the other “girls” who work my shift: Nita, the tattooed twenty-something who taunts us by going around saying brightly, “Have we started making money yet?” Ellen, whose teenage son cooks on the graveyard shift and who once managed a restaurant in Massachusetts but won’t try out for management here because she prefers being a “common worker” and not “ordering people around.” Easy-going fiftyish Lucy, with the raucous laugh, who limps toward the end of the shift because of something that has gone wrong with her leg, the exact nature of which cannot be determined without health insurance. We talk about the usual girl things — men, children, and the sinister allure of Jerry’s chocolate peanut-butter cream pie.

Ehrenreich’s primary purpose here is to humanize her coworkers and make her readers understand their struggle to survive on the minimum wage. To achieve this, she makes them specific living-and-breathing human beings who are “tattooed” or have a “raucous laugh.”

Narration and description often work hand in hand, as in the following paragraph from “Shooting an Elephant” (p. 979) by George Orwell. The author nar-
rates the death throes of the elephant in such dense and vivid detail that we mourn the loss and realize that something extraordinary has died, and the narrator (Orwell), like all of us, is diminished by that passing — which is the point Orwell wants us to understand:

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick — one never does when a shot goes home — but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunked, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time — it might have been five seconds, I dare say — he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed to have a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

Note the emotionally charged language, such as "devilish roar of glee," and the strong verbs such as "slobbered," "did not collapse but climbed." Note the descriptive details: "jolt," "sagging," "drooping," "desperate slowness." The language is so vivid that we feel as though a drawing or painting is emerging with each detail the author adds.

**Process Analysis**

Process analysis explains how something works, how to do something, or how something was done. We use process analysis when we explain how to bake bread or set up an Excel spreadsheet, how to improve a difficult situation or assemble a treadmill. Many self-help books are essentially process analysis. The key to successful process analysis is clarity: it's important to explain a subject clearly and logically, with transitions that mark the sequence of major steps, stages, or phases of the process.

In the essay "Transsexual Frogs" (p. 655), Elizabeth Royte uses process analysis to explain the research of Tyrone Hayes, a biologist at the University of California at Berkeley investigating the impact of the pesticide atrazine.
The next summer Hayes headed into the field. He loaded a refrigerated 18-wheeler truck with 500 half-gallon buckets and drove east, followed by his students. He parked near an Indian farm, a Wyoming river, and a Utah pond, filled his buckets with 18,000 pounds of water, and then turned his rig back toward Berkeley. He thawed the frozen water, poured it into hundreds of individual tanks, and dropped in thousands of leopard-frog eggs collected en route. To find out if frogs in the wild showed hermaphroditism, Hayes dissected juveniles from numerous sites. To see if frogs were vulnerable as adults, and if the effects were reversible, he exposed them to atrazine at different stages of their development.

In this example, Royte explains how something was done, that is, the actual physical journey that Hayes took when he “headed into the field”: he traveled from California to Indiana, Wyoming, Utah, and back to California. The verbs themselves emphasize the process of his work: he “loaded,” “parked,” “filled,” “turned... back,” “thawed,” “poured,” and “dropped.”

Exemplification

Providing a series of examples — facts, specific cases, or instances — turns a general idea into a concrete one; this makes your argument both clearer and more persuasive to a reader. A writer might use one extended example or a series of related ones to illustrate a point. You’re probably familiar with this type of development. How many times have you tried to explain something by saying, “Let me give you an example”?

Aristotle taught that examples are a type of logical proof called induction. That is, a series of specific examples leads to a general conclusion. If you believe, for example, that hip-hop culture has gone mainstream, you might cite a series of examples that leads to that conclusion. For example, you could discuss hip-hop music in chain-store advertising, the language of hip-hop gaining widespread acceptance, and entertainers from many different backgrounds integrating elements of hip-hop into their music.

In the following paragraph from “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” (p. 89), Francine Prose establishes the wide and, she believes, indiscriminate range of readings assigned in high school classes by giving many examples of those her own sons have read:

My own two sons, now twenty-one and seventeen, have read (in public and private schools) Shakespeare, Hawthorne, and Melville. But they’ve also slogged repeatedly through the manipulative melodramas of Alice Walker and Maya Angelou, through sentimental middlebrow favorites (To Kill a Mockingbird and A Separate Peace), the weaker novels of John Steinbeck, the fantasies of Ray Bradbury. My older son spent the first several weeks of sophomore English discussing the class’s summer assignment, Ordinary People, a
weeper and former bestseller by Judith Guest about a "dysfunctional" family recovering from a teenage son's suicide.

Prose develops her point by giving examples of authors, novels, and types of novels. But only in the case of Ordinary People does she discuss the example. The others are there to support her point about the rather random nature of books assigned in high school classrooms.

In the following paragraph, instead of giving several examples, Prose uses one extended example to make the point that even so-called great literature is often poorly taught. Note how she mines the example of Huckleberry Finn to discuss the various objections and concerns she has about teaching:

It's cheering that so many lists include The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn — but not when we discover that this moving, funny novel is being taught not as a work of art but as a piece of damning evidence against that bigot, Mark Twain. A friend's daughter's English teacher informed a group of parents that the only reason to study Huckleberry Finn was to decide whether it was a racist text. Instructors consulting Teaching Values Through Teaching Literature will have resolved this debate long before they walk into the classroom to supervise "a close reading of Huckleberry Finn that will reveal the various ways in which Twain undercuts Jim's humanity: in the minstrel routines with Huck as the 'straight man'; in generalities about Blacks as unreliable, primitive and slow-witted. . . ."

By examining one case in depth — Huckleberry Finn — Prose considers the novel itself, ways it is taught, and the suggestions in one book of how to teach it. Note that she might have brought in other examples, treating each briefly, but focusing on one book allows her to examine the issue more closely.

**Comparison and Contrast**

A common pattern of development is comparison and contrast: juxtaposing two things to highlight their similarities and differences. Writers use comparison and contrast to analyze information carefully, which often reveals insights into the nature of the information being analyzed. Comparison and contrast is often required on examinations where you have to discuss the subtle differences or similarities in the method, style, or purpose of two texts.

In the following excerpt from "Walking the Path between Worlds" (p. 300), Lori Arviso Alvord compares and contrasts the landscape and culture of her home in the Southwest with that of New England and Dartmouth College:

My memories of my arrival in Hanover, New Hampshire, are mostly of the color green. Green cloaked the hillsides, crawled up the ivied walls, and was reflected in the river where the Dartmouth crew students sculled. For
a girl who had never been far from Crownpoint, New Mexico, the green felt incredibly juicy, lush, beautiful, and threatening. Crownpoint had had vast acreage of sky and sand, but aside from the pastel scrub brush, mesquite, and chamiso, practically the only growing things there were the tiny stunted pines called pinion trees. Yet it is beautiful; you can see the edges and contours of red earth stretching all the way to the boxshaped faraway cliffs and the horizon. No horizon was in sight in Hanover, only trees. I felt claustrophobic.

If the physical contrasts were striking, the cultural ones were even more so. Although I felt lucky to be there, I was in complete culture shock. I thought people talked too much, laughed too loud, asked too many personal questions, and had no respect for privacy. They seemed overly competitive and put a higher value on material wealth than I was used to. Navajos placed much more emphasis on a person's relations to family, clan, tribe, and the other inhabitants of the earth, both human and nonhuman, than on possessions. Everyone at home followed unwritten codes for behavior. We were taught to be humble and not to draw attention to ourselves, to favor cooperation over competition (so as not to make ourselves "look better" at another's expense or hurt someone's feelings), to value silence over words, to respect our elders, and to reserve our opinions until they were asked for.

In the first paragraph, Arviso emphasizes the physical details of the landscape; so her comparison and contrast relies on description. In the second paragraph, she is more analytical as she examines the behavior. Although she does not make a judgment directly, in both paragraphs she leads her readers to understand her conclusion that her New Mexico home — the landscape and its inhabitants — is what she prefers.

Comparisons and contrasts, whether as a full essay or a paragraph, can be organized in two ways: subject-by-subject or point by point. In a subject by subject analysis, the writer discusses all elements of one subject, then turns to another. For instance, a comparison and contrast of two presidential candidates by subject would present a full discussion of the first candidate, then the second candidate. A point-by-point analysis is organized around the specific points of a discussion. So, a point-by-point analysis of two presidential candidates might discuss their education, then their experience, then the vision each has for the country. Arviso uses point-by-point analysis as she first compares and contrasts the landscapes and then the cultures of both places.

**Classification and Division**

It is important for readers as well as writers to be able to sort material or ideas into major categories. By answering the question, What goes together and why?
writers and readers can make connections between things that might otherwise seem unrelated. In some cases, the categories are ready-made, such as single, married, divorced, or widowed. In other cases, you might be asked either to analyze an essay that offers categories or to apply them. For instance, you might classify the books you’re reading in class according to the categories Francis Bacon defined: “Some books are meant to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

Most of the time, a writer’s task is to develop his or her own categories, to find a distinctive way of breaking down a larger idea or concept into parts. For example, in “Politics and the English Language” (p. 529), George Orwell sets up categories of imprecise and stale writing: “dying metaphors,” “operators of verbal false limbs,” “pretentious diction,” and “meaningless words.” He explains each in a paragraph with several examples and analysis. Classification and division is not the organization for his entire essay, however, because he is making a larger cause-and-effect argument that sloppy language leads to sloppy thinking; nevertheless, his classification scheme allows him to explore in a systematic way what he sees as problems.

In Amy Tan’s essay “Mother Tongue” (p. 542) she classifies the “Englishes” she speaks into categories of public and private spheres:

Recently, I was made keenly aware of the different Englishes I do use. I was giving a talk to a large group of people, the same talk I had already given to half a dozen other groups. The nature of the talk was about my writing, my life, and my book, The Joy Luck Club. The talk was going along well enough, until I remembered one major difference that made the whole talk sound wrong. My mother was in the room. And it was perhaps the first time she had heard me give a lengthy speech, using the kind of English I have never used with her. I was saying things like “The intersection of memory upon imagination” and “There is an aspect of my fiction that related to thousand and thus” — speech filled with carefully wrought grammatical phrases, burdened, it suddenly seemed to me, with nominalized forms, past perfect tenses, conditional phrases, all the forms of standard English that I had learned in school and through books, the forms of English I did not use at home with my mother.

Just last week, I was walking down the street with my mother, and I again found myself conscious of the English I was using, the English I do use with her. We were talking about the price of new and used furniture and I heard myself saying this: “Not waste money that way.” My husband was with us as well, and he didn’t notice any switch in my Englishes. And then I realized why. It’s because over the twenty years we’ve been together I’ve often used that same kind of English with him, and sometimes he even uses it with me. It has become our language of intimacy, a different sort of English that related to family talk, the language I grew up with.
Tan does not start out by identifying two categories, but as she describes them she classifies her “Englishes” as the English she learned in school and in books and the language of intimacy she learned at home.

**Definition**

So many discussions depend upon definition. In examining the benefits of attending an Ivy League school, for instance, we need to define *Ivy League* before we can have a meaningful conversation. If we are evaluating a program’s *success*, we must define what qualifies as success. Before we can determine whether certain behavior is or is not *patriotic*, we must define the term. Ratings systems for movies must carefully define *violence*. To ensure that writers and their audiences are speaking the same language, definition may lay the foundation to establish common ground or identifying areas of conflict.

Defining a term is often the first step in a debate or disagreement. In some cases, definition is only a paragraph or two that clarify terms, but in other cases, the purpose of an entire essay is to establish a definition. In Jane Howard’s essay “In Search of the Good Family” (p. 283), she explores the meaning of *family*, a common enough term, yet one she redefines. She opens by identifying similar terms: “Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family.” She contrasts the traditional “blood family” with “new families . . . [that] consist of friends of the road, ascribed by chance, or friends of the heart, achieved by choice.” She develops her essay by first establishing the need we all have for a network of “kin” who may or may not be blood relatives. Then she analyzes ten characteristics that define a family. Here is one:

Good families prize their rituals. Nothing welds a family more than these. Rituals are vital especially for clans without histories because they evoke a past, imply a future, and hint at continuity. No line in the seder service at Passover reassures more than the last: “Next year in Jerusalem!” A clan becomes more of a clan each time it gathers to observe a fixed ritual (Christmas, birthdays, Thanksgiving, and so on), grieves at a funeral (anyone may come to most funerals; those who do declare their tribalness), and devises a new rite of its own. Equinox breakfasts can be at least as welding as Memorial Day parades. Several of my colleagues and I used to meet for lunch every Pearl Harbor Day, preferably to eat some politically neutral fare like smorgasbord, to “forgive” our only ancestrally Japanese friend, Irene Kubota Neves. For that and other things we became, and remain, a sort of family.

Howard explains the purpose of rituals in her opening paragraph and then provides specific examples to explain what she means by *rituals*. She offers such a variety of them that her readers cannot fail to understand the flexibility and openness she associates with her definition of *family*. 
Cause and Effect

Analyzing the causes that lead to a certain effect or, conversely, the effects that result from a cause is a powerful foundation for argument. Rachel Carson's case for the unintended and unexpected effects of the pesticide DDT in *Silent Spring* is legendary (p. 798). Although she uses a number of different methods to organize and develop her analysis, this simple — or not so simple — causal link is the basis of everything that follows. On a similar topic, Terry Tempest Williams in “The Clan of One-Breasted Women” (p. 816) proceeds from the effect she sees — the breast cancer that has affected the women in her family — to argue that the cause is environmental.

Since causal analysis depends upon crystal clear logic, it is important to carefully trace a chain of cause and effect and to recognize possible contributing causes. You don't want to jump to the conclusion that there is only one cause or one result, nor do you want to mistake an effect for an underlying cause. In “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (p. 260), for instance, Martin Luther King Jr. points out that his critics had mistaken a cause for an effect: the protests of the civil rights movement were not the cause of violence but the effect of segregation.

Cause and effect is often signaled by a why in the title or the opening paragraph. In “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” (p. 89), Francine Prose sets out what she believes are the causes for high school students’ lack of enthusiasm for reading: “Given the dreariness with which literature is taught in many American classrooms, it seems miraculous that any sentient teenager would view reading as a source of pleasure.” In the following paragraph, she explains the positive effects of reading classical literature:

Great novels can help us master the all-too-rare skill of tolerating — of being able to hold in mind — ambiguity and contradiction. Jay Gatsby has a shady past, but he's also sympathetic. Huck Finn is a liar, but we come to love him. A friend's student once wrote that Alice Munro's characters weren't people he'd choose to hang out with but that reading her work always made him feel “a little less petty and judgmental.” Such benefits are denied to the young reader exposed only to books with banal, simple-minded moral equations as well as to the students encouraged to come up with reductive, wrong-headed readings of multilayered texts.

In her analysis, Prose argues for the positive effects of reading canonical literature, and she provides several examples. She concludes by pointing out that teaching less challenging works, or teaching more challenging works without acknowledging their complexity, has the effect of encouraging unclear or superficial thinking.
ASSIGNMENT

Reread Jody Heyman’s essay “We Can Afford to Give Parents a Break” (p. 6), and discuss the patterns of development she uses. Which of these patterns prevails in the overall essay? Which does she use in specific sections or paragraphs?

When Rhetoric Misses the Mark

Not every attempt at effective rhetoric hits its mark. Actually, whether a speech or letter or essay is rhetorically effective is often a matter of opinion. When former president Bill Clinton addressed the nation on August 17, 1998, he described his relationship with Monica Lewinsky as “not appropriate.” Some found the speech effective, while others thought he had not been sufficiently apologetic or even contrite. (Audio and full text of the speech is at <bedfordstmartins.com/languageofcomp>.)

In 2006, at the funeral of Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King Jr., a number of those who eulogized her also spoke about racism, the futility of the war in Iraq, and military spending that exceeded funding for the poor. Some listeners criticized such discussions, arguing that a funeral held in a church should acknowledge only the life and accomplishments of the deceased; others asserted that any occasion honoring the commitment of Mrs. King and her husband to racial and economic justice was an appropriate venue for social criticism.

A famous example of humorously ineffective rhetoric is the proposal of Mr. Collins to the high-spirited heroine Elizabeth Bennet in the nineteenth-century novel Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen. Mr. Collins, a foolish and sycophantic minister, stands to inherit the Bennet estate; thus he assumes that any of the Bennet sisters, including Elizabeth, will be grateful for his offer of marriage. So he crafts his offer as a business proposal that is a series of reasons. Following is a slightly abridged version of Mr. Collins’s proposal:

My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly — which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness... But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible, when the melancholy event takes place — which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive,
my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with; and that one thousand pounds in the 4 per cents, which will not be yours till after your mother’s decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproof shall ever pass my lips when we are married.

Mr. Collins appeals to logos with a sequence of reasons that support his intent to marry: ministers should be married, marriage will add to his happiness, and his patroness wants him to marry. Of course, these are all advantages to himself. Ultimately, he claims that he can assure Elizabeth “in the most animated language of the violence of [his] affection,” yet he offers no language at all about his emotional attachment. Finally, as if to refute the counterguardian that she would not reap many benefits from the proposed alliance, he reminds her that her financial future is grim unless she accepts his offer and promises to be “uniformly silent” rather than to remind her of that fact once they are married.

Where did he go wrong? Without devaluing the wry humor of Austen in her portrayal of Mr. Collins, we can conclude that at the very least he failed to understand his audience. He offers reasons for marriage that would have little appeal to Elizabeth, who does not share his businesslike and self-serving assumptions. No wonder she can hardly wait to extricate herself from the exchange or that he responds with shocked indignation.

Understanding your audience is just as important in visual texts, especially ones meant to be humorous. Consider the accompanying cartoon by Roz Chast that was published in the New Yorker. Its humor depends upon the artist’s confidence that her audience is familiar with popular culture, Greek mythology, and the Bible. Chast’s point is that the ancient legends and stories many of us hold sacred might be considered as sensational as the highly dramatic, often amazing headlines of the National Enquirer; however, this would be lost on someone unfamiliar with her three sources. She even pokes gentle fun at the publication by dating it May 17, 8423, B.C. (even though it costs a rather contemporary fifty cents).

The headline “Woman Turns into Pillar of Salt!” alludes to the story in Genesis of Lot’s wife defying warnings not to look back on the destruction of the kingdom of Sodom and Gomorrah. The reference to the man living in the whale’s stomach is to the biblical story of Jonah. The bottom left story alludes to the ancient Greek myth that Athena sprang fully grown (and in full armor) from the head of her father Zeus. And the headline on the bottom right refers to Cerberus, the three-headed dog who guards the entrance to Hades.

The cartoon would lack its amusing punch if the audience did not understand the references to the popular newspaper that specializes in sensational stories, as well as characters and stories from the Bible and Greek mythology.
Following are four texts related to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997. Divorced from England’s Prince Charles, she was the mother of Princes William and Harry. During her life the princess was known for both her philanthropy and her scandal-plagued marriage. The first text here is a news report from the British Broadcasting Company on the morning of Diana’s death. The second is the televised speech Queen Elizabeth gave several days later. The third is the eulogy Lord Spencer, Diana’s brother, delivered at her funeral service. The fourth is an entry in <www.wikipedia.com>. Discuss the purpose of each text and how the interaction of speaker, audience, and subject affects the text. Consider how effective each text is in achieving its purpose.
Princess Diana Dies in Paris Crash

BBC, August 31, 1997

Diana, Princess of Wales, has died after a car crash in Paris. She was taken to hospital in the early hours of Sunday morning where surgeons tried for two hours to save her life but she died at 0300 BST.

In a statement Buckingham Palace said the Queen and the Prince of Wales were “deeply shocked and distressed.” Prince Charles broke the news of their mother’s death to Princess William and Harry at Balmoral Castle in Scotland where the royal family had been spending the summer.

The accident happened after the princess left the Ritz Hotel in the French capital with her companion, Dodi Al Fayed — son of Harrods owner, Mohammed Al Fayed. Dodi Al Fayed and the vehicle’s driver were also killed in the collision in a tunnel under the Place de l’Alma in the centre of the city.

The princess’ Mercedes car was apparently being pursued at high speed by photographers on motorbikes when it hit a pillar and smashed into a wall. Mr. Al Fayed and the chauffeur died at the scene but the princess and her bodyguard were cut from the wreckage and rushed to hospital. The French authorities have begun a criminal investigation and are questioning seven photographers.

Tributes to the princess have been pouring in from around the world. Speaking from his home in South Africa, the princess’ brother, Lord Charles Spencer, said his sister had been “unique.” While it was not the time for recriminations there was no doubt the press had played a part in her death, the earl added.

Hundreds of mourners have gathered at the princess’ London home, Kensington Palace, and many have laid flowers at the gates.

Queen Elizabeth’s Televised Speech

September 5, 1997

Watch it on the Web: bedfordstmartins.com/languageofcomp

Since last Sunday’s dreadful news we have seen, throughout Britain and around the world, an overwhelming expression of sadness at Diana’s death. We have all been trying in our different ways to cope. It is not easy to express a sense of loss, since the initial shock is often succeeded by a mixture of other feelings: disbelief, incomprehension, anger — and concern for those who remain.

We have all felt those emotions in these last few days. So what I say to you now, as your queen and as a grandmother, I say from my heart.

First, I want to pay tribute to Diana myself. She was an exceptional and gifted human being. In good times and bad, she never lost her capacity to smile and laugh, nor to inspire others with her warmth and kindness.
I admired and respected her — for her energy and commitment to others, and especially for her devotion to her two boys. This week at Balmoral, we have all been trying to help William and Harry come to terms with the devastating loss that they and the rest of us have suffered.

No one who knew Diana will ever forget her. Millions of others who never met her, but felt they knew her, will remember her. I for one believe that there are lessons to be drawn from her life and from the extraordinary and moving reaction to her death.

I share in your determination to cherish her memory.

This is also an opportunity for me, on behalf of my family, and especially Prince Charles and William and Harry, to thank all of you who have brought flowers, sent messages, and paid your respects in so many ways to a remarkable person. These acts of kindness have been a huge source of help and comfort.

Our thoughts are also with Diana’s family and the families of those who died with her. I know that they too have drawn strength from what has happened since last weekend, as they seek to heal their sorrow and then to face the future without a loved one.

I hope that tomorrow we can all, wherever we are, join in expressing our grief at Diana’s loss, and gratitude for her all-too-short life. It is a chance to show to the whole world the British nation united in grief and respect.

Earl Spencer’s Eulogy for Diana
September 6, 1997

I stand before you today, the representative of a family in grief, in a country in mourning, before a world in shock.

We are all united, not only in our desire to pay our respects to Diana but rather in our need to do so. For such was her extraordinary appeal that the tens of millions of people taking part in this service all over the world, via television and radio, who never actually met her, feel that they, too, lost someone close to them in the early hours of Sunday morning. It is a more remarkable tribute to Diana than I can ever hope to offer her today.

Diana was the very essence of compassion, of duty, of style, of beauty. All over the world, she was a symbol of selfless humanity. All over the world, a standard bearer for the rights of the truly downtrodden, a very British girl who transcended nationality. Someone with a natural nobility who was classless and who proved in the last year that she needed no royal title to continue to generate her particular brand of magic.

Today is our chance to say thank you for the way you brightened our lives, even though God granted you but half a life. We will all feel cheated, always, that you were taken from us so young, and yet we must learn to be grateful
that you came along at all. Only now that you are gone do we truly appreciate what we are now without and we want you to know that life without you is very, very difficult.

We have all despairs at our loss over the past week and only the strength of the message you gave us through your years of giving has afforded us the strength to move forward. There is a temptation to rush to canonize your memory; there is no need to do so. You stand tall enough as a human being of unique qualities not to need to be seen as a saint. Indeed, to sanctify your memory would be to miss out on the very core of your being; your wonderfully mischievous sense of humor, with a laugh that bent you double. Your joy for life, transmitted wherever you took your smile and the sparkle in those unforgettable eyes. Your boundless energy which you could barely contain. But your greatest gift was your intuition and it was a gift you used wisely. This is what underpinned all your other wonderful attributes, and if we look to analyze what it was about you that had such a wide appeal, we find it in your instinctive feel for what was really important in all our lives.

Without your God-given sensitivity, we would be immersed in greater ignorance at the anguish of AIDS and HIV sufferers, the plight of the homeless, the isolation of lepers, the random destruction of land mines. Diana explained to me once that it was her innermost feelings of suffering that made it possible for her to connect with her constituency of the rejected.

And here we come to another truth about her. For all the status, the glamour, the applause, Diana remained throughout a very insecure person at heart, almost childlike in her desire to do good for others so she could release herself from deep feelings of unworthiness, of which her eating disorders were merely a symptom. The world sensed this part of her character and cherished her for her vulnerability, while admiring her for her honesty.

The last time I saw Diana was on July 1, her birthday, in London, when, typically, she was not taking time to celebrate her special day with friends but was guest of honor at a special charity fundraising evening. She sparkled, of course, but I would rather cherish the days I spent with her in March when she came to visit me and my children in our home in South Africa. I am proud of the fact, apart from when she was on display meeting President [Nelson] Mandela, we managed to contrive to stop the ever-present paparazzi from getting a single picture of her — that meant a lot to her.

These were days I will always treasure. It was as if we had been transported back to our childhood, when we spent such an enormous amount of time together — the two youngest in the family. Fundamentally, she had not changed at all from the big sister who mothered me as a baby, taught with me at school and endured those long train journeys between our parents’ homes with me at weekends.

It is a tribute to her level-headedness and strength that despite the most bizarre life imaginable after her childhood, she remained intact, true to herself.
There is no doubt that she was looking for a new direction in her life at this time. She talked endlessly of getting away from England, mainly because of the treatment that she received at the hands of the newspapers.

I don’t think she ever understood why her genuinely good intentions were sneered at by the media, why there appeared to be a permanent quest on their behalf to bring her down. It is baffling.

My own and only explanation is that genuine goodness is threatening to those at the opposite end of the moral spectrum. It is a point to remember that of all the ironies about Diana, perhaps the greatest was this — a girl given the name of the ancient goddess of hunting was, in the end, the most hunted person of the modern age.

She would want us today to pledge ourselves to protecting her beloved boys, William and Harry, from a similar fate, and I do this here, Diana, on your behalf. We will not allow them to suffer the anguish that was used regularly to drive you to tearful despair.

And, beyond that, on behalf of your mother and sisters, I pledge that we, your blood family, will do all we can to continue the imaginative way in which you were steering these two exceptional young men, so that their souls are not simply immersed by duty and tradition but can sing openly, as you planned. We fully respect the heritage into which they have both been born and will always respect and encourage them in their royal role, but we, like you, recognize the need for them to experience as many different aspects of life as possible to arm them spiritually and emotionally for the years ahead. I know you would have expected nothing less from us.

William and Harry, we all care desperately for you today. We are all chewed up with the sadness at the loss of a woman who was not even our mother. How great your suffering is, we cannot even imagine.

I would like to end by thanking God for the small mercies he has shown us at this dreadful time. For taking Diana at her most beautiful and radiant and when she had joy in her private life.

Above all, we give thanks for the life of a woman I am so proud to be able to call my sister — the unique, the complex, the extraordinary and irreplaceable Diana, whose beauty, both internal and external, will never be extinguished from our minds.

Wikipedia entry for Princess Diana (accessed September 15, 2006)

On 31 August 1997 Diana was involved in a car accident in the Pont de l’Alma road tunnel in Paris, along with her new lover Dodi Al-Fayed, and their driver Henri Paul. Their Mercedes crashed on the thirteenth pillar of the tunnel. Fayed’s bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones was closest to the point of impact and yet the only survivor of the crash, since he was the only occupant of the car
who was wearing a seatbelt. Henri Paul and Dodi Fayed were killed instantly. Diana, unbelted in the back seat, slid forward during the impact and "submerged" under the seat in front, causing massive internal bleeding. She was transported to the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital where, despite lengthy resuscitation attempts, she died. Her funeral on 6 September 1997 was broadcast and watched by over 1 billion people worldwide.

Controversy
The death of Diana has been the subject of widespread theories, supported by Mohamed Al-Fayed, whose son died in the accident. These were rejected by French investigators and British officials, who stated that the driver, Henri Paul, was drunk and on drugs. Among Mr. Fayed's suggestions were that Diana was pregnant by Dodi at the time of her death and that Dodi had just bought her an engagement ring, although witnesses to autopsies reported that the princess had not been pregnant and the jeweller cited by Mr. Fayed denied knowledge of the engagement ring. Nonetheless, in 2004 the authorities ordered an independent inquiry by Lord Stevens, a former chief of the Metropolitan Police, and he suggested that the case was "far more complex than any of us thought" and reported "new forensic evidence" and witnesses [Telegraph, May 2006]. The inquiry is expected to report its findings in 2007. The French authorities have also decided to reopen the case.

Several press photos were taken of the crash scene within moments of the crash. On 13 July 2006 Italian magazine Chi published photographs showing Diana in her "last moments" despite an unofficial blackout on such photographs being published. The photographs were taken minutes after the accident and show the Princess slumped in the back seat while a paramedic attempts to fit an oxygen mask over her face. The photographs were also published in other Italian and Spanish magazines and newspapers.

The editor of Chi defended his decision by saying he published the photographs for the "simple reason that they haven't been seen before" and that he felt the images do not disrespect the memory of the Princess. The British media publicly refused to publish the images, with the notable exception of The Sun, which printed the picture but with the face blacked out.

Final Resting Place
Princess Diana's final resting place is said to be in the grounds of Althorp Park, her family home. The original plan was for her to be buried in the Spencer family vault at the local church in nearby Great Brington, but Diana's brother, Charles, the 9th Earl Spencer, said that he was concerned about public safety and security and the onslaught of visitors that might overwhelm Great Brington. He decided that he wanted his sister to be buried where her grave could be easily cared for and visited in privacy by her sons and other relatives.
Lord Spencer selected a burial site on an island in an ornamental lake known as The Oval within Althorp Park's Pleasure Garden. A path with 36 oak trees, marking each year of her life, leads to the Oval. Four black swans swim in the lake, symbolizing sentinels guarding the island. In the water there are several water lilies. White roses and lilies were Diana's favorite flowers. On the southern verge of the Round Oval sits the Summerhouse, previously in the gardens of Admiralty House, London, and now serving as a memorial to Princess Diana. An ancient arboretum stands nearby, which contains trees planted by Prince William and Prince Harry, other members of her family and the princess herself.
Close Reading:  
The Art and Craft of Analysis

Do you ever wonder how your teachers can teach the same books year after year and not be bored by them? One reason is that the works we study in school have many layers of meaning, revealing something new each time we read them. That quality is what distinguishes them from literary potato chips, writings that are satisfying — even delicious — but offer little nutritional value. A mystery or a romance may absorb us completely, but usually we do not read it a second time.

How do you find the “nutritional value” in the books, stories, essays, and poems you study in school? Your teacher may lead you through a work, putting it in context, focusing your attention on themes and techniques, asking for a response. Or, you might do these things yourself through a process called close reading, or analysis of a text. When you read closely, you develop an understanding of a text that is based first on the words themselves and then on the larger ideas those words suggest. That is, you start with the small details, and as you think about them, you discover how they affect the text’s larger meaning. When you write about close reading, you start with the larger meaning you’ve discovered and use the small details — the language itself — to support your interpretation.

As with any skill, close reading becomes easier with practice, but it’s important to remember that we use it unconsciously — and instantaneously — every day as we respond to people and situations. We are aware of the interaction of subject, speaker, and audience (remember the rhetorical triangle in Chapter 1?), and we instinctively respond to the context and purpose of our interactions. We also consider style: body language, gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, volume, sentence structure, colloquialisms, vocabulary, and more. And when we recount a conversation or describe a situation, we often analyze it in the same way we would write about a text we have read closely.

Take a look at the concluding paragraphs of “Where Nothing Says Everything,” an essay by Suzanne Berne about visiting Ground Zero, the site of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, several months after September 11,
2001. In the essay, which appeared in the New York Times travel section in April 2002, Berne writes that she had trouble getting a ticket to the official viewing platform, so she went into a deli that advertised a view of Ground Zero from its second floor. She brought her sandwich upstairs to a table next to a large window.

And there, at last, I got my ticket to the disaster.

I could see not just into the pit now, but also its access ramp, which trucks had been traveling up and down since I had arrived that morning. Gathered along the ramp were firefighters in their black helmets and black coats. Slowly they lined up, and it became clear that this was an honor guard, and that someone’s remains were being carried up the ramp toward the open door of an ambulance.

Everyone in the dining room stopped eating. Several people stood up, whether out of respect or to see better, I don’t know. For a moment, everything paused.

Then the day flowed back into itself. Soon I was outside once more, joining the tide of people washing around the site. Later, as I huddled with a little crowd on the viewing platform, watching people scrawl their names or write “God Bless America” on the plywood walls, it occurred to me that a form of repopulation was taking effect, with so many visitors to this place, thousands of visitors, all of us coming to see the wide emptiness where so many were lost. And by the act of our visiting — whether we are motivated by curiosity or horror or reverence or grief, or by something confusing that combines them all — that space fills up again.

Using what you learned in Chapter 1, you can probably identify the passage’s context and purpose: the writer, not a New Yorker, visits Ground Zero and is awed by the emptiness that was once the World Trade Center; her purpose is to describe the experience to readers who seven months later still feel the immediacy of that September morning.

You can analyze the passage through the rhetorical triangle, considering the interaction of subject, speaker, and audience. Berne’s audience, readers of the travel section of a national newspaper, may be planning their own visit and thus may be interested in her personal experience. You can also consider the ways Berne appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos. She establishes ethos by actually going to Ground Zero, not simply musing about it; her emotion-laden subject appeals to pathos; and in an original way, she uses logos, or logic, to show that visitors to the site are repopulating the area that was decimated on September 11.

And there’s more. Using close-reading techniques, we can also examine Berne’s style. Doing so provides information about the choices she makes at the word and sentence levels, some of which we may use to further analyze this piece.
Analyzing Style

Just as we pay attention to more than the spoken words during a conversation, when we read closely, we look beyond the words on the page. And just as we notice body language, gestures, facial expressions, and volume in our conversations, we can understand a text better by examining its tone, sentence structure, and vocabulary. These elements make up the style of the written piece and help us to discover layers of meaning. Style contributes to the meaning, purpose, and effect of a text, whether it is visual or written.

Look back at the excerpt from Berne’s essay. Here are some questions about style that might come to mind based on your first impressions of the passage:

• Why is the first paragraph one sentence?
• In that paragraph, why does Berne call the empty space “the disaster”?
• Why does the third sentence begin with “Gathered” rather than “Firefighters”?
• What examples of figurative language appear in the fourth paragraph?
• Does the word huddled in the fourth paragraph remind you of anything else you’ve read?
• What is the effect of the dashes in the final sentence?

You may notice that these questions fall into two categories: the choice of words and how the words are arranged. We call the choice of words diction and the arrangement of words syntax. Sometimes we talk about style as a matter of tropes and schemes. A trope is essentially artful diction. A trope could be a metaphor, a simile, personification, and hyperbole. A scheme is artful syntax. Parallelisms, juxtapositions, and antitheses are common schemes.

Here are some questions to ask when you analyze diction:

1. Which of the important words in the passage (verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs) are general and abstract? Which are specific and concrete?
2. Are the important words formal, informal, colloquial, or slang?
3. Are some words nonliteral or figurative, creating figures of speech such as metaphors?

When you analyze syntax, you might ask:

1. What is the order of the parts of the sentence? Is it the usual (subject-verb-object), or is it inverted?
2. Which part of speech is more prominent — nouns or verbs?
3. What are the sentences like? Are they periodic (moving toward something important at the end) or cumulative (adding details that support an important idea in the beginning of the sentence)?
4. How does the sentence connect its words, phrases, and clauses?
These first-impression questions can be categorized as shown in the accompanying table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST-IMPRESSION QUESTIONS</th>
<th>DICTION</th>
<th>SYNTAX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is the first paragraph one sentence?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the effect of the dashes in the final sentence?</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you can answer these questions, you will be well on your way toward an analysis of an author’s style and how that style is part of the text’s message.

**Talking with the Text**

By now, you may be wondering how to generate your own questions to do a close reading. Just start by paying close attention to the choices a writer makes in the way he or she connects subject, speaker, and audience, as well as the choices the writer makes about style. Remember that style is a subset of rhetoric — it is a means of persuasion.

Let’s look at three different approaches to close reading a passage by Joan Didion about California’s Santa Ana winds from her essay “Los Angeles Notebook.” As you interact with the text, keep in mind that you’re not only identifying techniques and strategies, but you are also analyzing their effect. In other words, how do Didion’s choices in diction and syntax help her achieve a particular purpose? To answer this, you must determine what the purpose is, what the choices are, and what effect those choices create.

There is something uneasy in the Los Angeles air this afternoon, some unnatural stillness, some tension. What it means is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the
Cajon and San Gorgonio Passes, blowing up sand storms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point. For a few days now we will see smoke back in the canyons, and hear sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too. We know it because we feel it. The baby frets. The maid sulks. I rekindle a waning argument with the telephone company, then cut my losses and lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply mechanistic view of human behavior.

I recall being told, when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach that the Indians would throw themselves into the sea when the bad wind blew. I could see why. The Pacific turned ominously glossy during a Santa Ana period, and one woke in the night troubled not only by the peacocks screaming in the olive trees but by the eerie absence of surf. The heat was surreal. The sky had a yellow cast, the kind of light sometimes called "earthquake weather." My only neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and there were no lights at night, and her husband roamed the place with a machete. One day he would tell me that he had heard a trespasser, the next a rattlesnake.

“On nights like that,” Raymond Chandler once wrote about the Santa Ana, “every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands’ necks. Anything can happen.” That was the kind of wind it was. I did not know then that there was any basis for the effect it had on all of us, but it turns out to be another of those cases in which science bears out folk wisdom. The Santa Ana, which is named for one of the canyons it rushes through, is a foehn wind, like the foehn of Austria and Switzerland and the bamsin of Israel. There are a number of persistent malevolent winds, perhaps the best known of which are the mistral of France and the Mediterranean sirocco, but a foehn wind has distinct characteristics: it occurs on the leeward slope of a mountain range and, although the air begins as a cold mass, it is warmed as it comes down the mountain and appears finally as a hot dry wind. Whenever and wherever foehn blows, doctors hear about headaches and nausea and allergies, about “nervousness,” about “depression.” In Los Angeles some teachers do not attempt to conduct formal classes during a Santa Ana, because the children become unmanageable. In Switzerland the suicide rate goes up during the foehn, and in the courts of some Swiss cantons the wind is considered a mitigating circumstance for crime. Surgeons are said to watch the wind, because blood does not clot normally during a foehn. A few years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions. No one seems to know exactly why that should be; some talk about friction and others suggest solar disturbances. In any case the positive ions are
there, and what an excess of positive ions does, in the simplest terms, is make people unhappy. One cannot get much more mechanistic than that.

**Annotation**

One technique you can use is *annotation*. Annotating a text requires reading with a pen or pencil in hand. If you are not allowed to write in your book, write on Post-it notes. As you read, circle words you don’t know, or write them on the Post-it notes. Identify main ideas — *thesis statements, topic sentences* — and also words, phrases, or sentences that appeal to you or that you don’t understand. Look for figures of speech, or tropes, such as metaphors, similes, and personification — as well as *imagery* and detail. If you don’t know the technical term for something, just describe it. For example, if you come across an adjective-and-noun combination that seems contradictory, such as “meager abundance,” and you don’t know that the term for it is *oxymoron*, you might still note the juxtaposition of two words that have opposite meanings. Use the margins or Post-it notes to ask questions or to comment on what you have read. In short, as you read, listen to the voice in your head, and write down what that voice is saying.

Following is an annotated version of the Didion passage:

There is something *measy* in the Los Angeles air this afternoon, some *unnatural stillness, some tension*. What it means is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast *whining down* through the Cajon and San Gorgonio Passes, blowing up sand storms out along *Route 66*, drying the hills and the nerves to *flash point*. For a few days now we will *see* smoke back in the canyons, and *hear* sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too. We know it because we *feel* it. *The baby frets, The maid sulks.* I rekindle a waning argument with the telephone company, then cut my losses and lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply *mechanistic* view of human behavior.

I recall being told, when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach, that the Indians would throw themselves into the sea when the bad wind blew. I could see why. The Pacific turned *ominously glossy* during a Santa Ana
period, and one woke in the night troubled not only by the
peacocks screaming in the olive trees but by the eerie absence
of surf. The heat was surreal. The sky had a yellow cast, the
kind of light sometimes called “earthquake weather.” My
only neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and
there were no lights at night, and her husband roamed the
place with an ax. One day he would tell me that he had
heard a trespasser the next a rattlesnake.

“On nights like that,” Raymond Chandler once wrote
about the Santa Ana, “every booze party ends in a fight. Meek
little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their
husbands’ necks. Anything can happen.” That was the kind of
wind it was. I did not know then that there was any basis for
the effect it had on all of us, but it turns out to be another of
those cases in which science bears out folk wisdom. The
Santa Ana, which is named for one of the canyons it rushes
through, is a foehn wind, like the foehn of Austria and
Switzerland and the hamsin of Israel. There are a number of
persistent malevolent winds, perhaps the best known of
which are the mistral of France and the Mediterranean
sirocco, but a foehn wind has distinct characteristics: it
occurs on the leeward slope of a mountain range and, 
although the air begins as a cold mass, it is warmed as it
comes down the mountain and appears finally as a hot dry
wind. Whenever and wherever foehn blows, doctors hear
about headaches and nausea and allergies, about “nervous-
ness,” about “depression.” In Los Angeles some teachers do
not attempt to conduct formal classes during a Santa Ana
because the children become unmanageable. In Switzerland
the suicide rate goes up during the foehn, and in the courts
of some Swiss cantons the wind is considered a mitigating
circumstance for crime. Surgeons are said to watch the wind,
because blood does not clot normally during a foehn. A few
years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during
such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede
them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to
negative ions. No one seems to know exactly why that should
be; some talk about friction and others suggest solar disturbances. In any case the positive ions are there, and what an excess of positive ions does, in the simplest terms, is make people unhappy. One cannot get much more mechanistic than that.

Dialectical Journal

Another way to interact with a text is to keep a dialectical journal, or double-entry notebook. Dialectical journals use columns to represent visually the conversation between the text and the reader. Let's look at a dialectical journal set up with note taking on the left (in this case, sections of the text you think are important) and with note making on the right (your comments).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOTE TAKING</th>
<th>PARA.</th>
<th>NOTE MAKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What it means is that tonight a Santa Ana will begin to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the Cajon and San Gorgonio Passes, blowing up sand storms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“drying the hills and the nerves” — example of zeugma, makes connection between nature and human behavior. Long sentence winding to the end — a “flash point” — like the winds whining down the passes and causing humans to act crazy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“On nights like that,” Raymond Chandler once wrote about the Santa Ana, “every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands’ necks. Anything can happen.”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chandler, who wrote crime fiction, was known for his hard-boiled style and cynicism. His quotation offers another image that supports Diction’s view of the Santa Ana winds’ effects on human behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever and wherever sueblow blows, doctors hear about headaches and nausea and allergies, about “nervousness,” about “depression.” In Los Angeles some teachers do not attempt to conduct formal classes during a Santa Ana, because the children become unmanageable. In Switzerland the</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>These are impressive reports, from all over the world, and they make Diction’s argument about the effects of winds on behavior convincing. They’re basically a list — they could almost be bullet points.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
suicide rate goes up during the foehn, and in the courts of some Swiss cantons the wind is considered a mitigating circumstance for crime. Surgeons are said to watch the wind, because blood does not clot normally during a foehn.

A few years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions.

Breaking the text into small sections helps you notice the details in Didion’s writing: specific word and sentence choices. For example, she connects two seemingly different things in the same grammatical construction (“drying the hills and the nerves”; the technical name for this figure of speech is *zeugma*). She also alludes to crime writer Raymond Chandler, to facts, even to some scientific data. Collecting these bits of information from the text and considering their impression on you prepares you to answer the following questions about Didion’s style: What effect is she striving for? How does the effect serve the purpose of her writing?

**Graphic Organizer**

A third way to organize your thoughts about a specific text is to use a graphic organizer. Your teacher may divide the text for you, or you may divide it yourself as you begin your analysis. Use the paragraph divisions in the text as natural breaking points, or perhaps consider smaller sections that reveal interesting stylistic choices. Although a graphic organizer takes time to complete, it lets you gather a great deal of information to analyze as you prepare to write an essay.

The accompanying graphic organizer below asks you to copy something the writer has said, then restate it in your own words; next you analyze how the writer makes the point and what the effect on the reader is. Note that you become increasingly analytical as you move across the columns to the right.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUOTATION</th>
<th>PARAPHRASE OR SUMMARIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is something uneasy in the Los Angeles air this afternoon, some</td>
<td>The winds are creepy. They bring sand storms and cause fires. People know they're</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unnatural stillness, some tension. What it means is that tonight a</td>
<td>coming without being told because babies and maids act strange. The speaker picks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Ana will begin to blow. a hot wind from the northeast whining</td>
<td>a fight and then gives up. The Santa Ana winds make us aware that human behavior can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down through the Cajon and San Gorgonio Passes, blowing up sand storms</td>
<td>be explained in terms of physical causes and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to flash point.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For a few days now we will see smoke back in the canyons, and hear</td>
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<td>sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is</td>
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<td>due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too.</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>mechanistic view of human behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I recall being told, when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living</td>
<td>Diction talks about her early experiences with the winds, plus the folklore about</td>
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<tr>
<td>on an isolated beach, that the Indians would throw themselves into the</td>
<td>them. She mentions things that seem weird — peacocks screeching and a very quiet</td>
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<tr>
<td>sea when the bad wind blew. I could see why. The Pacific turned</td>
<td>ocean. She says her neighbors are strange too: one stays indoors, and the other</td>
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<tr>
<td>ominously shiny during a Santa Ana period, and one woke in the night</td>
<td>walks around with a big knife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>troubled not only by the peacocks screaming in the olive trees but by</td>
<td></td>
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<td>the eerie absence of surf. The heat was surreal. The sky had a yellow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>cast, the kind of light sometimes called “earthquake weather.” My only</td>
<td></td>
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<td>neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and there were no</td>
<td></td>
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<td>lights at night, and her husband roamed the place with a machete. One</td>
<td></td>
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<td>day he would tell me that he had heard a trespasser, the next a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>rattlesnake.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Strategy or Style Element</td>
<td>Effect or Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personification: the wind whines</td>
<td>Giving the wind a human quality makes it even more threatening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative sentence</td>
<td>Makes her point by accumulating details about what it means that the Santa Ana is beginning to blow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two short sentences: “The baby frets. The maid sulks.”</td>
<td>Those simple sentences reduce human behavior to irrefutable evidence. We can’t argue with what we see so clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“rekindle”</td>
<td>Though she’s talking about restarting an argument with the phone company, the word makes us think of starting a fire, like the wind does up in the hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate clause in the middle of that first sentence: “when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach.”</td>
<td>The clause accentuates Didion’s isolation and because it’s so long almost makes her experience more important than the Indians who threw themselves into the ocean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“peacocks screaming in the olive trees”</td>
<td>Kind of an upside-down image. Peacocks are usually regal and elegant; these are screaming. Also olive trees are associated with peace (the olive branch). Supports the idea that the Santa Ana turns everything upside down. “And” as the coordinating conjunction makes the wife hiding and the husband with the machete equally important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound sentence: My only neighbor would not come out of her house for days, and there were no lights at night, and her husband roamed the place with a machete.</td>
<td>“Machete” is associated with revolutions in banana republics, vigilantes. Suggests danger.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUOTATION</th>
<th>PARAPHRASE OR SUMMARIZE</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;On nights like that,&quot; Raymond Chandler once wrote about the Santa Ana, &quot;every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands' necks. Anything can happen.&quot; That was the kind of wind it was. I did not know then that there was any basis for the effect it had on all of us, but it turns out to be another of those cases in which science bears out folk wisdom.</td>
<td>Didion quotes a writer who describes the effects of the wind as causing women to want to kill their husbands. She says that folklore sometimes has a basis in science. The Santa Ana, which is named for one of the canyons it rushes through, is a foehn wind, like the foehn of Austria and Switzerland and the homain of Israel... A few years ago an Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds, but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions. This section gives scientific facts about the Santa Ana wind, including its generic name, foehn. Didion names other winds like it in other parts of the world, but says the foehn has its own characteristics. She names some of the effects the foehn has on people in various places.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The following essay analyzes how Joan Didion creates a sense of foreboding that, in turn, helps her to develop her argument about the winds’ effects on human behavior.

**Joan Didion’s Santa Ana Winds:**

**A Mechanistic View of Nature**

by Jane Knobler

The ominous description of Los Angeles preceding the arrival of the Santa Ana wind, juxtaposed with a scientific-sounding explanation develops Joan Didion’s view that human behavior is basically a result of mechanics. She recreates the tense, stifling atmosphere that precedes the wind and argues that its effect on the people of Los Angeles can be explained by science. The eerie atmosphere, like a 1930s detective film based on a Raymond Chandler novel, highlights the strangeness of a wind affecting behavior even before the wind has begun to blow.

The effect of Didion's diction in the first part of the essay is to create foreboding: terror is just over the horizon. The wind cranks the nerves to a "flash point," causing arguments to be "rekindle[d]"; one needs a "machete" for protection. The reader is reminded of the ease with which disaster visits the West Coast. Forest fires, mudslides, snakebite, murder can happen in a moment.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rhetorical Strategy or Style Element</th>
<th>Effect or Function</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allusion to Raymond Chandler</td>
<td>Chandler, who wrote crime fiction, was known for his hard-boiled style and cynical views. The allusion to Chandler helps create the ominous tone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complex sentence: “There are a number of persistent malevolent winds, perhaps the best known of which are the *mistral* of France and the Mediterranean *sirocco*, but a *foothill wind* has distinct characteristics: it occurs on the *lee* of a mountain range and, although the air begins as a cold mass, it is warmed as it comes down the mountain and appears finally as a hot dry wind.”

The details accumulate, ending in “hot dry wind” to create a picture of the “persistent malevolent wind.”

The word choice in the second part of the essay is more scientific; Didion provides names for these dangerous winds as well as statistics and facts about the “suicide rate,” “unmanageable” children, and a “mitigating circumstance for crime.” She supports her view that living in Los Angeles requires an understanding that human behavior is often out of our control. The dark atmosphere the Santa Ana wind creates has concrete, dire consequences that can be reported in terms of misbehavior and death. The vivid description of the impending terror that precedes the Santa Ana wind is highlighted when it is followed by the facts about the evil wind.

Didion’s choice and accumulation of detail also heighten the sense of foreboding. The coming of the wind has negative effects on the baby who “frets” and the maid who “sulks”; it causes the “eerie absence of surf.” The world is in an unnatural state. One cannot trust one’s expectations or perceptions. The long cumulative sentence that describes the “persistent malevolent winds” begins by naming other winds, moves to the wind’s beginning as a “cold mass,” and ends with the increasingly frightening “hot dry wind.” Those last three words reinforce what is “malevolent” in the beginning of the sentence. The wind’s “positive ions” seem at first a scientific explanation, but a second look shows them to be another perversion of nature. Wind should be cool; this wind blows hot. Something positive should bring happiness. These positive ions make us unhappy. Nature is a force to be reckoned with; all of our good intentions cannot stand up to the Santa Ana wind.

The evil Santa Ana winds have a negative effect on human behavior. When they are coming, the only course is to take to one’s bed. Otherwise, one may risk behaving
badly or becoming the victim of someone else’s bad behavior. It won’t be our fault. It will be the fault of the Santa Ana winds.

* ASSIGNMENT *

The following observation of the wind comes from the 1545 book Toxophilus by English scholar Roger Ascham, who served as tutor to Princess Elizabeth, later Elizabeth I. Although Ascham, like Didion, contemplates the effect of unusual winds, the writing is vastly different in some measure because of the more than 400 years between the pieces. Use one of the close reading techniques we’ve discussed — annotation, dialectical journal, or graphic organizer — to analyze the Ascham text. Explain how the technique you selected helped to make Ascham more accessible to a twenty-first-century reader.

To see the wind, with a man his eyes, it is impossible, the nature of it is so fine, and subtle; yet this experience of the wind had I once myself, and that was in the great snow that fell four years ago: I rode in the highway between Topcliffe-upon-Swale, and Borrow Bridge, the way being somewhat trodden afore, by wayfaring men. The fields on both sides were plain and lay almost yard deep with snow, the night afore had been a little frost, so that the snow was hard and crust above. That morning the sun shone bright and clear, the wind was whistling aloft, and sharp according to the time of the year. The snow in the highway lay loose and trodden with horse feet: so as the wind blew, it took the loose snow with it, and made it so slide upon the snow in the field which was hard and crust by reason of the frost overnight, that thereby I might see very well the whole nature of the wind as it blew that day. And I had a great delight and pleasure to mark it, which maketh me now far better to remember it. Sometime the wind would be not past two yards broad, and so it would carry the snow as far as I could see. Another time the snow would blow over half the field at once. Sometime the snow would tumble softly, by and by it would fly wonderful fast. And this I perceived also, that the wind goeth by streams and not whole together. For I should see one stream within a score on me, then the space of two score no snow would stir, but after so much quantity of ground, another stream of snow at the same very time should be carried likewise, but not equally. For the one would stand still when the other flew apace, and so continue sometime swiftly, sometime slowlier, sometime broader, sometime narrower, as far as I could see. Nor it flew not straight, but sometime it crooked this way, sometime that way, and sometime it ran round about in a compass. And sometime the snow would be lift clean from the ground and up into the air, and by and by it would be all clapped to the ground as though there had been no wind at all, straightaway it would rise and fly again.

And that which was the most marvel of all, at one time two drifts of snow flew, the one out of the West into the East, the other out of the North into the
East and I saw two winds by reason of the snow the one cross over the other, as it had been two highways. And again I should hear the wind blow in the air, when nothing was stirred at the ground. And when all was still where I rode, not very far from me the snow should be lifted wonderfully. This experience made me more marvel at the nature of the wind, than it made me cunning in the knowledge of the wind: but yet thereby I learned perfectly that it is no marvel at all though men in a wind lose their length in shooting, seeing so many ways the wind is so variable in blowing.

Analyzing a Visual Text

Many of the same tools of rhetorical analysis and close reading that we have practiced on written texts are also useful for detecting the underlying messages in visual texts, such as advertisements. Let’s look at the accompanying ad for the Dodge Durango.

The rhetorical triangle still applies: what are the relationships among the text’s subject (a powerful sport utility vehicle), its audience (the potential SUV buyer), and the speaker (in this case, the artwork and words)? The advertisement appeals to ethos in the text at the top left: it banks on associations to Dodge cars and trucks — power, dependability, toughness. Its appeal to pathos plays on our notion of the cheeseburger as a guilty pleasure; we’re meant to associate tofu with wimpy, energy-efficient cars. As for logos, the Durango is affordable; it makes sense to own one. Why not enjoy life, drive an affordable SUV, and eat big juicy cheeseburgers?

When we analyze a visual text, we still look at the words, both individually and in the way they are placed on the page. And we study the images the same way.

Look at the text on the top left part of the ad.

Dodge Durango. This is the most affordable SUV with a V-8. Dodge Durango. With nearly four tons of towing, this baby carries around chunks of those wimpy wanna-bes in its tailpipe.

Note the aggressive tone. How is that sense of aggressiveness created? It may be the repetition of “Dodge Durango” with its hard consonant sounds; it may be the prepositional phrase announcing that the vehicle can tow four tons. It’s a “baby” that carries “chunks” of its competitors in its tailpipe. The use of the colloquialism “baby” contrasts nicely with the image of the car as a predator eating the competition. The owner of a Dodge Durango will be the kind of person whose car is his or her “baby” and who is the leader of the pack, not one “of those wimpy wanna-bes.”

The Dodge logo — a ram’s head — and the slogan “grab life by the horns” appears at the top right of the ad. Both the image and the words play with the
connotations of horns: strength, masculinity, and noise. The imperative sentence is a call to action that can be paraphrased as “Don’t be a wimp! Enjoy life now!”

The photo, however, is less aggressive. Perhaps it is a pitch to the rising number of female car buyers. In fact, the photo shows a man and a woman in the car, pulling a vintage Airstream motor home, thus suggesting not only a family atmo-
sphere but also good taste, as Airstreams are collectibles. Though the front of the Dodge Durango is outsized, a reminder of the power under the hood, the ocean and sky in the background temper the aggressiveness of the looming SUV; it looks like a beautiful day for a cool couple with great taste to be out for a ride.

Finally, the text at the bottom of the ad has yet another message. The large white letters on the dark road are boldly designed but the message is gentle and even funny. "[B]ig fat juicy cheeseburger" acknowledges our natural desire for pleasures that are not always healthy. But who can resist when the alternative is tofu? The antecedent of it in it's is, of course, the SUV, but the pronoun suggests an understanding, an insider's wink.

So what is the advertisement's message? Or are there a few different messages? If you were to write an essay analyzing the "language" of the visual text, you might consider a thesis that argues for the ad's multiple messages. Here's one example:

The Dodge Durango ad balances aggressiveness with humor; it appeals to men and women with its reminder that life is too short not to enjoy its guilty pleasures.

• ASSIGNMENT •

Find an ad that either appeals to you or provokes you, and analyze it as we have done with the Durango ad.

From Analysis to Essay: Writing about Close Reading

The more we examine the elements of diction and syntax and consider their effects, the deeper our understanding of an essay, a speech, or a visual text becomes. We also have to reach that deeper understanding when we write about rhetoric and style, or we will end up merely summarizing rather than analyzing the strategies a writer uses to achieve a particular purpose.

Let's take one text — President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address — through the various stages: from reading it, to analyzing it, to writing about it. Given on a cold January afternoon in 1961, the address was hailed as a return to the tradition of political eloquence. It offers great pleasures to students of rhetoric, rewarding the close reader's efforts with details large and small that lend themselves to analysis, that inspire imitation, and that have withstood the test of time. As you read the speech for the first time, consider the notion maintained by the ancient Romans and Greeks that eloquence is indispensable to politics. When you read it a second time, have a conversation with the text by annotating it, creating a dialectical journal, or using a graphic organizer.
Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, Reverend Clergy, fellow citizens:

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom — symbolizing an end as well as a beginning — signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe — the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans — born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage — and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge — and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do — for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom — and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required — not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge — to convert our good words into good deeds — in a new alliance for
progress — to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know that this Hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support — to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective — to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak — and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.

We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.

But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course — both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind's final war.

So let us begin anew — remembering on both sides that civility is not a
sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms — and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations.

Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah — to "undo the heavy burdens ... (and) let the oppressed go free."

And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor, not a new balance of power, but a new world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this Administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.
In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again — not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are — but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation" — a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility — I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it — and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

Let's look at the big ideas in Kennedy's inaugural address by going back to the Aristotelian triangle. The speaker, the youngest U.S. president, the country's first Roman Catholic president, having won by a small margin, makes his subject common heritage and purpose, human rights and obligations, rather than policy. Thus, his appeal is less to logos, or logic, than it is to pathos (connecting with his audience emotionally) and to ethos (establishing his own ethical credentials). The audience — those there on that icy morning and the millions watching on television — is vast and diverse. The speech is short, only 1,343 words; its length is, perhaps, the new president's nod to the live audience standing in the cold on the Capitol grounds. Kennedy appeals to pathos, in part, by reaching his audience psychologically, asking them to consider what they can do for their country. He establishes ethos by offering America as a partner with the "citizens of the world"
to champion the "freedom of man." Now it's your turn to analyze the specific language and arrangement of the speech and to consider the tone that results.

**ASSIGNMENT**

Annotate the inaugural address by John F. Kennedy, or use a graphic organizer or a dialectical journal. Once you've identified the diction and syntax, answer the following close-reading questions. Consider how Kennedy's diction and syntax create the tone of the speech. Also consider how you can use Kennedy's tone as a basis for an essay on the speech.

**Diction**

1. Why are so many of the words abstract? How do words like freedom, poverty, devotion, loyalty, and sacrifice set the tone of the speech?
2. Find examples of formal rhetorical tropes such as metaphor and personification.
3. Does Kennedy use any figures of speech that might be considered clichés? Which metaphors are fresher? Is there a pattern to their use?
4. Do any words in the speech seem archaic, or old-fashioned? If so, what are they? What is their effect?

**Syntax**

1. The speech is a succession of twenty-eight short paragraphs. Twelve paragraphs have only one sentence, eight have two, and six have three sentences. Why do you think Kennedy used these short paragraphs?
2. The speech contains two extremes of sentence length, ranging from eighty words (para. 4) to six words (para. 6). A high proportion of the sentences are on the short side. Why?
3. More than twenty sentences are complex sentences — that is, sentences that contain a subordinate clause. How do complex sentences suggest hidden energy?
4. The speech has many examples of antithesis in parallel grammatical structures: "To those old allies; "to those new states"; "If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich"; and of course, "[A]sk not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country." What does this use of opposites suggest about the purpose of Kennedy's speech?
5. Why is the dominance of declarative sentences, which make statements, appropriate in an inaugural address?
6. Paragraph 24 consists of two rhetorical questions. How do they act as a transition to Kennedy’s call for action?

7. Find examples of rhetorical schemes such as anaphora (the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines) andzeugma (use of two different words in a grammatically similar way but producing different, often incongruous, meanings).

8. Consider the speech’s many examples of parallelism: “born in this country, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage”; “pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe”. How do they lend themselves to Kennedy’s purpose?

9. Kennedy uses hortative sentences (language that urges or calls to action) in paragraphs 2–21: “let us,” “Let both sides.” Later, in paragraphs 26–27, he uses the imperative: “ask” and “ask not.” What is the difference between the two forms, and why did he start with one and end with the other?

Look at your answers to the preceding questions. Even if you weren’t able to answer them all, you may be able to see one or more patterns.

Kennedy’s address is formal; the archaic diction (asunder, foe, writ, forebears) underscores the formality. The figures of speech make traditional yet powerful connections — tyranny and iron, power and tiger, poverty and chains — and they are a strong source of emotional persuasion. Such figures of speech as personification (“our sister republics”) elevate the speech to a grand style. The “beachhead of cooperation” pushing back the “jungle of suspicion” is especially rich and vivid.

The speech’s syntax reveals other meanings and adds to the development of the speech’s tone. Formality is sustained by a scheme such as anaphora: “Not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are.” The many examples of parallelism and especially the antitheses — “If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich,” juxtaposing the many and the few, the poor with the rich — are intended to unite disparate groups and also to reassure the country that despite Kennedy’s narrow margin of victory, he will be everyone’s president.

This short address covers a lot of ground. Each of its short paragraphs reveals another one of Kennedy’s principles or promises — an early version of what we now call bullet points. There are a variety of sentence types: many are very short, declarative sentences; a few are compound; and more than twenty are complex. Beginning a sentence with a subordinate clause allows steam to build and energizes the sentence’s main idea. The speech is a call to action, but Kennedy uses hortatory forms (“let us”) more than imperatives (“ask” and “ask not”); his intention is to persuade rather than coerce. And the rhetorical questions in paragraph 24 are also reminders that the young president was building consensus rather than dictating. Finally, many sentences begin with coordinating conjunctions,
such as so, for, and but. These transitional words move us smoothly from one sentence into the next and represent continuity — the passing of the torch — in the same way an inauguration helps the country make the transition to a new era.

So how do you come up with an idea for an essay about Kennedy's rhetoric and style? One approach is to identify the passage's tone, which is the feeling behind the words. Tone is closely connected to attitude, the speaker's feelings about the subject matter and the audience. And both tone and attitude are created by diction and syntax. His attitude is one of respect for the grand occasion, its history, and the legacy it is carrying forward. The tone of his speech is a combination of respectful eloquence and youthful idealism.

Following is a possible thesis for an essay that synthesizes the preceding observations on Kennedy's inaugural address:

While the speech's respectful eloquence is appropriate for the occasion of an inauguration, its youthful energy and look to the future make it distinctly John F. Kennedy's.

Your close reading has probably revealed all or most of the significant rhetorical and stylistic features in Kennedy's speech. Recognizing the tropes and schemes in a text as rich as this one is good; identifying their purpose and effect is very good. It's fine, for example, if you know that when Kennedy enjoins his listeners to "ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country," he is employing antithetos. It would be better though to explain what the statement does in the speech and how it is likely to affect the audience. Writing an excellent essay takes you a step further, from stating that to explaining how.

Consider what an analysis does. A mere dissection or a disassembly separates something into its component parts, but an analysis explains how it works. This applies as much to a written text as it does to a biological specimen or a machine. In other words, in your essay you should not only describe what the speaker (or writer) is saying, but you should also explain how the diction and syntax serve the speaker's (or writer's) purpose, enrich the text, and affect the audience. You should also consider the rhetorical triangle as it applies to your own compositions: the relationship that you, the speaker, have with your subject and with your audience. Craft your writing so that it deserves to be read and so that it will engage your reader. If you think it's not quite as eloquent as President Kennedy's, don't worry; you're on your way.

• ASSIGNMENT •

Using the preceding thesis or creating your own, write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies John F. Kennedy uses in his inaugural address to achieve his purpose.
Glossary of Selected Tropes and Schemes

John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address is almost a textbook of stylistic devices. The following brief glossary of terms gives examples from Kennedy’s speech.

**alliteration** Repetition of the same sound beginning several words in sequence

*Let us go forth to lead the land we love.*

**allusion** Brief reference to a person, event, or place, real or fictitious, or to a work of art

*Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah.*

**anaphora** Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines

*not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are.*

**antimetabole** Repetition of words in reverse order

*[A]sk not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.*

**antithesis** Opposition, or contrast, of ideas or words in a balanced or parallel construction

*We shall support any friend, oppose any foe.*

**archaic diction** Old-fashioned or outdated choice of words

*beliefs for which our forebears fought*

**asyncteton** Omission of conjunctions between coordinate phrases, clauses, or words

*We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.*

**cumulative sentence** Sentence that completes the main idea at the beginning of the sentence, and then builds and adds on

*But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present course — both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind’s final war.*

**hortative sentence** Sentence that exhorts, advises, calls to action

*Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.*

**imperative sentence** Sentence used to command, enjoin, implore, or entreat

*My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.*

**inversion** Inverted order of words in a sentence (variation of the subject-verb-object order)

*United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do.*
juxtaposition  Placement of two things closely together to emphasize comparisons or contrasts
  [W]e are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth . . . that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans — born in this century. [emphasis added]

metaphor  Figure of speech that says one thing is another in order to explain by comparison
  And if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion.

metonymy  Using a single feature to represent the whole
  In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course.

oxymoron  Paradoxical juxtaposition of words that seem to contradict one another
  But this peaceful revolution.

parallelism  Similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses
  Let both sides explore . . . Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals . . . Let both sides seek to invoke . . . Let both sides unite to heed.

periodic sentence  Sentence whose main clause is withheld until the end
  To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support.

personification  Attribution of a lifelike quality to an inanimate object or idea
  with history the final judge of our deeds

rhetorical question  Figure of speech in the form of a question posed for rhetorical effect rather than for the purpose of getting an answer
  Will you join in that historic effort?

zeugma  Use of two different words in a grammatically similar way but producing different, often incongruous, meanings
  Now the trumpet summons us again — not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are — but a call to bear the burden.
Synthesizing Sources:
Enter the Conversation

All writers draw on the work of others as they develop their own positions, regardless of their topic. Whether you are explaining your opinion about an issue specific to your community such as whether the prom should be abolished, or you are developing a position on a larger, more controversial issue such as the AIDS epidemic in Africa, you should know as much as possible about the topic. Rather than make a quick response that reflects an opinion based only on what you already know, you must research and read sources — what others have written. Then you can develop your own informed opinion, a measured response that considers multiple perspectives and possibilities.

Essentially, research into sources lets you enter the conversation that society is having about your topic. What have other schools decided about the prom? Why? Have some developed alternative events? What has been the response? What responsibility does the United States have to help control AIDS epidemics in other countries? What preventive measures are working to slow the spread of AIDS?

To answer questions posed by your topic and to develop new questions, locate and read such sources as articles, editorials, and reports. Don’t look for a pro-and-con debate that represents only polarized views; instead, explore a range of viewpoints.

You already use sources quite naturally. For example, when you decide to purchase a computer, you gather information by exploring different sources. Before choosing between a Mac and a PC, you might consult Consumer Reports in print or online. You would compare prices. You’d ask your friends for their opinions, and you might go to a computer store and talk with the experts. You might read reviews online, or use forums as a quick source for many opinions. You go through this process when making a big decision, such as choosing a college, or a relatively minor one, such as deciding which movie to see. The final result of your inquiry might not be an essay, but you are joining a conversation that is already ongoing.

You’ll do something similar as you approach the readings in this textbook. For example, when you read “Mother Tongue,” Amy Tan’s essay about bias against
nonnative English speakers, you may have a similar story to add or an experience that contrasts with hers. When you consider Ralph Waldo Emerson’s definition of what constitutes a true education, you might enter the conversation by pointing out the shortcomings in the classes you’ve taken; or you might suggest that Emerson’s perspective is dated and doesn’t apply to today’s schools. You enter the conversation by carefully reading and understanding the writer’s perspective and ideas, by examining your own ideas in light of the writer’s, and by synthesizing these views into a more informed position than the one you began with.

**Types of Support**

When writing essays, particularly persuasive ones, you should use many types of information to support your argument. You will make your position more specific—and more convincing—by adding details and examples. You might cite, or refer to, an *anecdote*—that is, a brief story that illustrates a point you are making. An anecdote can be about a personal experience or about something that happened to someone else. For instance, if you are writing about the pros and cons of single-sex schools, you might cite your own experience in an all-boys or all-girls classroom.

You might also develop your ideas with *facts*—information that is verifiable through general sources, such as an encyclopedia, a history book, or a biographical dictionary. The dates of Jimmy Carter’s presidency, the number of American soldiers killed on D-Day, the years that Nelson Mandela was in prison, for example, are the kinds of facts that work as examples but do not require you to state where you located them.

A third kind of information is *quantitative data*, especially statistical information. Often quantitative data is more than just numbers. You might report on trends, such as high-school graduation rates over the last ten years, by including such variables as males versus females, urban versus suburban schools, or American versus Japanese schools. In most cases, you should **document**—that is, give credit to—the sources where you find this information.

Another valuable kind of information is *expert testimony*. In an essay on the impact of video games on preschool children, for example, you might cite a neurologist, pediatrician, or psychologist who has written on the topic. You could quote the expert directly or put his or her points in your own words by summarizing or paraphrasing them. Citing anecdotes, facts, statistics, and experts is one way to appeal to logos. In addition, documenting such information establishes your ethos. You may not be a neurologist, but when you cite one and then document who the neurologist is or where you found his or her observation, you demonstrate a serious approach to the topic at hand; you show you understand the conversation in process.
Writers at Work

In this section, we’ll examine the way four authors develop their ideas or positions by using anecdotes, facts, quantitative data, expert testimony, or a combination of these. In The Cheating Culture, author David Callahan argues, “In one area of American life after another — sports, business, law, education, science, medicine — more people seem to be cutting corners.” He cites an anecdote about LeBron James, which was much talked about in 2003.

A leading high school basketball player named LeBron James, the next Michael Jordan some say, shows up one day at his school in Akron driving a new $50,000 Hummer H2 sports utility vehicle crammed with three TVs. The Ohio High School Athletic Association immediately launches an investigation, suspecting that the Hummer is a gift from a sports agent or university recruiter. James denies everything. “My mom gave it to me,” he says. Few believe that James’s middle-class mother can afford a top-of-the-line Hummer, but no one can prove a violation of state rules. It’s a typical episode in the money-saturated world of collegiate and professional sports, where recruiting violations, drug use, and other kinds of cheating — like Sammy Sosa’s corked bat — are pervasive.

The anecdote supports Callahan’s argument that cheating is pervasive, with appeals to logos, pathos, and ethos. The facts (James got a Hummer) and quantitative data (the cost of the Hummer) appeal to logos because of the improbability of a middle-class person being able to afford a Hummer. The anecdote also appeals to pathos because the possibility that LeBron James, a popular athlete, cheated is likely to evoke an emotional response from readers. Callahan’s marshaling of supporting evidence establishes ethos; the reader is ready to accept his bigger argument that cheating is pervasive.

In her book, Nickel and Dimed, Barbara Ehrenreich discusses the difficulty that rich people have understanding what it takes to live on the minimum wage. To explain why they might have such difficulty, she cites two articles published in the New York Times, including one by an expert on the topic.

In a 2000 article on the “disappearing poor,” journalist James Fallows reports that, from the vantage point of the Internet’s nouveaux riches, it is “hard to understand people for whom a million dollars would be a fortune ... not to mention those for whom $246 is a full week’s earning.” Among the reasons he and others have cited for the blindness of the affluent is the fact that they are less and less likely to share spaces and services with the poor. As public schools and other public services deteriorate, those who can afford to do so send their children to private schools and spend their off-hours in private
spaces — health clubs, for example, instead of the local park. They don't ride on public buses and subways. They withdraw from mixed neighborhoods into distant suburbs, gated communities, or guarded apartment towers; they shop in stores that, in line with the prevailing “market segmentation,” are designed to appeal to the affluent alone. Even the affluent young are increasingly unlikely to spend their summers learning how the “other half” lives, as lifeguards, waitresses, or housekeepers at resort hotels. The New York Times reports that they now prefer career-relevant activities like summer school or interning in an appropriate professional setting to the “sweaty, low-paid and mind-numbing slots that have long been their lot.”

In her book, Ehrenreich documents at the bottom of the page exactly where and when the Times article appeared. How do these sources support Ehrenreich's position on “the blindness of the affluent”? First, both add credibility to her argument. The New York Times and the journalist James Fallows are both known for in-depth research and reporting. Second, by using direct quotations, Ehrenreich shows that she's not just giving us her personal viewpoint but one that is supported by the findings of others who have investigated this topic.

In the book's conclusion, Ehrenreich writes, “According to a recent poll conducted by Jobs for the Future, a Boston-based employment research firm, 94 percent of Americans agree that ‘people who work full-time should be able to earn enough to keep their families out of poverty.’” She could have simply said, “Most people think that those with full-time jobs should be able to earn enough to keep themselves and their families out of the category of poverty.” Instead, she documents the source of her information and provides a statistic — 94 percent. This adds the authority of a research study to her argument and strengthens her appeals to ethos and logos.

In some instances, such as the following excerpt from “The Clan of One-Breasted Women,” documented sources can act as counterweight to an emotional example or anecdote. Author Terry Tempest Williams is writing about a volatile issue — the effect of nuclear testing on the health of citizens — and her viewpoint is highly personal because several women in her family have suffered from breast cancer. By providing full information about her sources in her notes, Williams guards against being accused of making up or exaggerating information, or expressing an opinion that has no basis in fact.

Much has been written about this “American nuclear tragedy.” Public health was secondary to national security. The Atomic Energy Commissioner, Thomas Murray, said, “Gentlemen, we must not let anything interfere with this series of tests, nothing.”

Again and again, the American public was told by its government, in spite of burns, blisters, and nausea. “It has been found that the tests may be conducted with adequate assurance of safety under conditions prevailing at the bombing reservations.” Assuaging public fears was simply a matter of
public relations. "Your best action," an Atomic Energy Commission booklet read, "is not to be worried about fallout." A news release typical of the times stated, "We find no basis for concluding that harm to any individual has resulted from radioactive fallout."  

On August 30, 1979, during Jimmy Carter's presidency, a suit was filed entitled "Irene Allen vs. the United States of America." Mrs. Allen was the first to be alphabetically listed with twenty-four test cases, representative of nearly 1200 plaintiffs seeking compensation from the United States government for cancers caused from nuclear testing in Nevada. 

Irene Allen lived in Hurricane, Utah. She was the mother of five children and had been widowed twice. Her first husband with their two oldest boys had watched the tests from the roof of the local high school. He died of leukemia in 1956. Her second husband died of pancreatic cancer in 1978. 

In a town meeting conducted by Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, shortly before the suit was filed, Mrs. Allen said, "I am not blaming the government, I want you to know that, Senator Hatch. But I thought if my testimony could help in any way so this wouldn't happen again to any of the generations coming up after us... I am really happy to be here this day to bear testimony of this."

4. Ibid., 109. 
5. Town meeting held by Senator Orrin Hatch in St. George, Utah, April 17, 1979, transcript 26–28.

In the essay, Williams includes the above references for the sources she cites in the text.

Sources should enhance, not replace, your argument. As you include different sources, you may start to feel that the ideas of others are so persuasive that you have nothing new to say. Or you may think that the more sources you cite, the more impressed your reader, especially your teacher, will be. But make no mistake: while sources inform your own ideas, support or illustrate them, or demonstrate your understanding of opposing views, what you have to say is the main event; your position is central.

In the following example, Laura Hillenbrand, author of Seabiscuit, a Pulitzer Prize–winning book about a champion racehorse who beat the odds, maintains her own voice throughout. She validates her statements by identifying her sources in a section at the end of the book, but whether she is quoting directly or paraphrasing, she never gets lost in the sources or allows them to overwhelm her ideas.

To pilot a racehorse is to ride a half-ton catapult. It is without question one of the most formidable feats in sport. The extraordinary athleticism of the jockey is unparalleled: A study of the elements of athleticism conducted
by Los Angeles exercise physiologists and physicians found that of all major sports competitors, jockeys may be, pound for pound, the best overall athletes. They have to be. To begin with, there are the demands on balance, coordination, and reflex. A horse's body is a constantly shifting topography, with a bobbing head and neck and rolling muscle over the shoulders, back, and rump. On a running horse, a jockey does not sit in the saddle, he crouches over it, leaning all of his weight on his toes, which rest on the thin metal bases of stirrups dangling about a foot from the horse's topline. When a horse is in full stride, the only parts of the jockey that are in continuous contact with the animal are the insides of the feet and ankles — everything else is balanced in midair. In other words, jockeys squat on the pitching backs of their mounts, a task much like perching on the grille of a car while it speeds down a twisting, potted freeway in traffic. The stance is, in the words of University of North Carolina researchers, "a situation of dynamic imbalance and ballistic opportunity." The center of balance is so narrow that if jockeys shift only slightly rearward, they will flip right off the back. If they tip more than a few inches forward, a fall is almost inevitable. A thoroughbred's neck, while broad from top to bottom, is surprisingly narrow in width, like the body of a fish. Pitching up and down as the horse runs, it offers little for the jockey to grab to avoid plunging to the ground and under the horse's hooves.

Jockey (video), Tel-Air Productions, 1980.

At the end of Seabiscuit, Hillenbrand includes the above information about the sources she cites. The first item is a videotape about the study by Los Angeles exercise physiologists and physicians; the second is an article in a medical journal.

**ASSIGNMENT**

The following selection comes from the best-selling 2000 book, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community by Harvard professor Robert D. Putnam. In this passage Putnam discusses the nature of television in American life, but not in the usual way. Putnam is not attacking its influence on our attention span; he is not claiming anything about how it's dumbing us down. Rather, he is interested in how TV affects our relationship with our community.

Read the passage carefully, noting Putnam's citation of sources and his footnotes regarding those sources. Then answer the questions that follow.

Most studies estimate that the average American now watches roughly four hours per day, very nearly the highest viewership anywhere in the world. Time
researchers John Robinson and Geoffrey Godbey, using the more conserva-
tive time diary technique for determining how people allocate their time, offer
an estimate closer to three hours per day but conclude that as a primary activ-
ity, television absorbed almost 40 percent of the average American’s free time
in 1995, an increase of roughly one-third since 1965. Between 1965 and
1995 we gained an average of six hours a week in added leisure time, and
we spent almost all of those additional hours watching TV. In short, as Robin-
son and Godbey conclude, “Television is the 800-pound gorilla of leisure
time.”13

Moreover, multiple sets per household have proliferated: by the late
1990’s three-quarters of all U.S. homes had more than one set, allowing ever
more private viewing. The fraction of sixth-graders with a TV set in their bed-
room grew from 6 percent in 1970 to 77 percent in 1999. (Two kids in three
aged 8–18 say that TV is usually on during meals in their home.) At the same
time, during the 1980s the rapid diffusion of videocassette players and video
games into American households added yet other forms of “screen time.”
Finally, during the 1990s personal computers and Internet access dramatically
broadened the types of information and entertainment brought into the Ameri-
can home.14

The single most important consequence of the television revolution has
been to bring us home. As early as 1982, a survey by Scripps-Howard
reported that eight out of the ten most popular leisure activities were typically
based at home. Amid all the declining graphs for social and community
involvement traced in the DDB Needham Life Style surveys from 1975 to
1999, one line stands out: The number of Americans who reported a prefer-
ence for “spending a quiet evening at home” rose steadily. Not surprisingly,
those who said so were heavily dependent on televised entertainment.15
While early enthusiasts for this new medium spoke eagerly of television as an
“electronic hearth” that would foster family togetherness, the experience of the
last half century is cautionary.

Social critic James Howard Kunstler’s polemic is not far off target:

The American house has been TV-centered for three generations. It is the
focus of family life, and the life of the house correspondingly turns inward,
away from whatever occurs beyond its four walls. (TV rooms are called
“family rooms” in builders’ lingo. A friend who is an architect explained to
me: “People don’t want to admit that what the family does together is
watch TV.”) At the same time, the television is the family’s chief connection
with the outside world. The physical envelope of the house itself no longer
connects their lives to the outside in any active way; rather, it seals them
off from it. The outside world has become an abstraction filtered through
television, just as the weather is an abstraction filtered through air condi-
tioning.16
Notes

13. Data in this paragraph exclude time when television is merely on in the background. Comstock, *Evolution of American Television*, 17, reports that “on any fall day in the late 1980s, the set in the average television owning household was on for about eight hours.” According to Eurodata TV (One Television Year in the World: Audience Report, April 1999), the United States ranks third out of forty-seven nations in viewing hours per day, behind only Japan and Mexico. Thanks to Pippa Norris for advice about the media and participation. Robinson and Godbey, *Time for Life*, 136–153, 340–341.

14. Statistical Abstract of the United States (various years); Kids & Media @ The New Millennium (Menlo Park, Calif.: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 1999), 13.

15. Where Does the Time Go? *The United Media Enterprises Report on Leisure in America* (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association, 1983), 10; author’s analysis of DDB Needham Life Style archive. Preference for a quiet evening at home rose from 68 percent in 1975 to 77 percent in 1999. Those who agreed were also more likely to agree that “TV is my primary form of entertainment.”


Questions

1. How does Robert Putnam establish credibility?

2. Among the names in the Notes — Comstock, Robinson, Godbey, Needham, and Kunstler — which ones are cited in the selection? Match the names with their texts.

3. In footnote 13, Putnam identifies three separate sources. What effect does the additional information have?

4. What is the purpose of footnote 14? Why does it include information that may seem obvious to the reader?

5. How does Putnam use the source given in footnote 15 to support his claim about the relationship between TV watching and staying at home?

6. James Howard Kunstler’s view is more extreme than Putnam’s. How does citing Kunstler affect Putnam’s argument?

7. What do Putnam’s notes and sources suggest about his research?
The Relationship of Sources to Audience

If you were writing an in-class essay, would you take the time to put together a bibliography? Of course not. But you would prepare a bibliography for a formal research paper because that writing has a different purpose and the audience has different expectations. A writer must analyze the rhetorical situation in order to determine what is appropriate, even when it comes to sources and documentation. (See The Rhetorical Triangle, p. 3.)

Now let’s consider a topic and examine how sources were used and identified for three different audiences. The following excerpts are from three pieces about the contemporary author Edwidge Danticat, whose short story “New York Day Women” is included in Chapter 6.

The first example is a newspaper article written for a general audience, casual readers interested primarily in personal information about Danticat. Note that the quotations are from interviews conducted with her and with people who have known her rather than statistics or other more formal evidence. The author’s in-text citations include enough information about the sources to show that they have the credibility to speak about Danticat’s past.

Paul Moses, “Haitian Dream, Brooklyn Memory”
New York Newsday, 21 May 1995

Guidance counselor Mariann Finn recalled Danticat, who graduated in 1986 from Clara Barton High School as a very quiet and family-oriented young lady. “She pretty much stood in the background, very shy, extremely reticent about speaking up,” she said. Then she saw Danticat on the MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, speaking out on immigration issues: “I said this is not the Edwidge I knew, by no means.”

Danticat got her bachelor’s degree from Barnard College and then a master of Fine Arts degree from Brown University — the novel was her thesis — before returning home to live with her parents and brothers....

Danticat’s work has been “extremely well received in the Caribbean community, especially in the Haitian community,” said Regine Latortue, chairwoman of the Africana Studies Department and professor of comparative black literature at Brooklyn College.

The next example is the introduction from a piece in a literary magazine for writers. The audience expects a more formal approach. Consequently, the type of evidence that author Renée Shea uses is more formal and wide-ranging; she cites information from a number of other publications, including newspapers, magazines, and literary journals. Shea’s documentation style is more formal as well. She uses in-text documentation that includes titles and, in some cases, dates for her sources.
Renée Shea, “Traveling Worlds with Edwidge Danticat”
Poets & Writers Magazine, January/February 1997

Within the past two years, Haitian-born Edwidge Danticat has published her first novel Breath, Eyes, Memory (Soho Press, 1994) and Krik? Krak!, a short story collection (Soho Press, 1995), both to reviews running from favorable to raves. Vintage Books published a “Reading Group Guide” for the popular Breath, Eyes, Memory, and Krik? Krak! hasn’t stopped winning prizes: a finalist for the National Book Award in 1995 and People Magazine’s choice as one of the “Best of Pages” for that same year. Danticat is proving The New York Times right on target in its inclusion of her in a November 1994 article entitled “30 artists, 30 and under . . . likely to (gasp!) change the culture for the next 30 years.” Last summer in Newsweek an article on the new American identity began: “Thomas Wolfe, shake hands with Edwidge Danticat, your spiritual heir.” And Granta magazine named Danticat among the 20 “Best of Young American Novelists.” She has been featured in Elle, Essence, Ms. and Mirabella magazines and was the focus of major articles in The Boston Globe, San Francisco Guardian, Washington Post, San Antonio Express, and The Miami Herald, where she made front-page news under the banner headline “The Healing Art of Writing.” In 1995, she inaugurated a literary series on emerging women writers sponsored by the National Museum of Women in the Arts. . . In 1996, Danticat spent a semester teaching at New York University. She has done book tours in the U.S. and abroad, and students are writing about her. She speaks at professional meetings as well as high school graduations. Danticat has not just arrived: she presides.

The third example is from the academic journal Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism. For this audience of scholars and researchers, the author chooses other scholarly works as her sources and documents them thoroughly, providing parenthetical documentation for many sources and including a lengthy endnote offering further commentary on a key point the author, Valérie Loichot, is making.

Valérie Loichot, “Edwidge Danticat’s Kitchen History”

Another split no longer in value in the context of Caribbean American women is between the private and the political. The communal memory that is passed on from mothers to daughters is not only that of good cookin’ but also that of political activism: “In this ma world you got to take yuh mouth and make a gun!” (Marshall 1983, 7). This discourse of empowerment, as Marshall describes, takes place in the kitchen. Danticat’s heroines, like Mar-
shall's, participate in this politicizing of the private kitchen. Writing, perceived as a humiliating "spit in [the] face" or as a degrading "dark rouge" by the mothers, becomes a war mask that daughters put on the palimpsest of their mothers' indelible text: their cooking history.

Unifying the themes of gender and physical and cultural healing, Danticat's writing is described alternatively as cooking or as a female activity. It is writing which, like Marshall's, originated in the mother's kitchen: "Your mother, she introduced you to the first echoes of the tongue you now speak when at the end of the day she would braid your hair while you sat between her legs, scrubbing the kitchen pots" (Danticat 1996, 224). It brings the memory of the past just like cooking does, it braids women together just like food reunites them in an action of solidarity:

When you write, it's like braiding your hair... some of the braids are long, others are short. Some are thick, others are thin. Some are heavy, others are light, like the diverse women in your family. Those fables and metaphors, those similes and those soliloquies, whose diction and je ne sais quoi daily slip into your survival soup, by way of their finger (Danticat 1996, 220).

The action of cooking, in this dense paragraph, is presented as the writing of a collectivity, the difficult braiding of histories of women. Writing is a "survival soup" made by these women's hands. Chancy shows that Caribbean women escape what she calls "culture-lacune" "through the written text, through the actualization of identity in language, the world of words shaping a new reality within the inviolable space of the imagination" (1997, 115). The action of cooking projected within Danticat's novel doubles and reinforces this liberating function of writing.

16. For Jeffrey Pilcher (¿Qué Vivian los Tamales! 1998), women cooks participate directly in the construction or "imagination," to use Benedict Anderson's term, of the Mexican nation. Since culinary products are central to nation building, "by proclaiming their culinary patriotism, women have established their claim to citizenship, and thereby gained a basis for political participation."... Danticat's novel certainly leads in that direction since remaining Haitian in exile relies heavily on speaking Creole and cooking Haitian. For a more explicit equivalence between food and nation building, see Ntozake Shange's If I Can Cook You Know God Can (1998) where the author proves by food the existence of an African American nation....

As you can see, the type of evidence and the way it is documented depends on audience and situation.
ASSIGNMENTS

Columnists for print and online publications comment on culture and current events. They establish a viewpoint and style. One of their rhetorical strategies is their use of sources, which is dictated in part by their audience. Using a minimum of four columns by one writer, analyze the columnist's audience by examining the type of sources he or she uses. You might consider syndicated columnists such as Richard Rodriguez, George Will, Ellen Goodman, William Safire, Maureen Dowd, or David Brooks, or a sportswriter, a movie or music reviewer, or a columnist in a local publication.

The Synthesis Essay

What do sources have to do with the writing you are doing? The texts we have examined in this chapter were written by journalists, professors, and scholars; the sources they use and the ways they document them are appropriate for their audiences. In school, you have probably written a "synthesis essay," which requires you to use outside sources, sources that have been assigned to you, or sources that are part of your classroom readings. Keep in mind that your goal is the same as that of the more experienced writers: to use sources to support and illustrate your own ideas and to establish your credibility as a member of the academic community that values the "conversation" created by different voices. Whether your teacher wants you to make informal in-text citations or to use formal in-text parenthetical documentation and an end-of-paper Works Cited list, as prescribed by the Modern Language Association (MLA), you must document sources to give credit where credit is due.

In the following brief essay, college freshman Domenek Hawkins responds to a controversial topic in 2006: the Spanish version of the U.S. national anthem. For an in-class writing assignment, she was given three articles on the topic and asked to develop her own position on whether "Nuestro Himno" should be accepted as an alternative to "The Star-Spangled Banner" at ceremonial events. Because she is using three specific sources that her teacher already knows, she does not provide formal in-text documentation, but she does list the sources at the end of the essay. Note that Domenek's own ideas and opinions dominate the essay; the sources support and inform, but they do not overwhelm.

Nuestro Himno

Domenek Hawkins

As a person of mixed race, I proudly support both of my countries. My coffee skin tones lead most people to assume I am African American, but only those who know me realize that I am, in fact, an Afro-Latina who represents La Republica Dominicana as well
as the United States of America. I am a bilingual Spanish-English person who loves to listen to la bachata and merengue y salsa as much as rap, R & B, and soul. Sometimes living in the U.S. makes it seem difficult to preserve who I am and where I come from because America — a home for many immigrants — does not seem to welcome cultural diversity. Embracing the Spanish version of “The Star-Spangled Banner” would be a step in the right direction toward full acceptance of differences.

The editorial in the Herald News speaks for many people who believe that everyone should speak English, and that those who do not are being disrespectful. This article asserts that immigrants and others who call America their new home must observe “boundaries — and the national anthem is one.” Those who oppose the so-called Spanish national anthem see “The Star-Spangled Banner” as a sacred icon of the English language. They apparently see learning the English words as a test of loyalty.

I agree with one point made in this editorial, that “Learning the national anthem in English is a tribute to the history of this nation.” However, couldn’t singing it in Spanish be the first step toward learning it in English? One of the problems I’ve seen in my own family is mastering English. My brother Jesus recently came to the U.S., and as he would say, “My English es no very good looking.” It helps him to be around people who speak both English and Spanish, as I do, because he can switch as he learns more English words and expressions. It would be easier for people like my brother and my abuelita (my grandmother) to learn “The Star-Spangled Banner” in Spanish first and then in English. Then they would understand the meaning even before they understood the English words.

According to David Goldstein, a reporter for The Seattle Times, this is not the first time our national anthem has been translated. In 1919 there was a Spanish version, and he points out that the Library of Congress Web site has “vintage translations in Polish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Armenian, among others. A little Googling will turn up versions in Samoan and Yiddish, too.” It seems that this opposition to “El Nuestro Himno” might be related to the current controversy over immigration laws rather than a real concern over the purity of the words to a patriotic song.

I feel that hearing a Spanish version of the national anthem on ceremonial occasions will benefit all citizens of the U.S. by letting freedom ring in diverse voices. I want to ask those who are opposed to “El Nuestro Himno,” who it is hurting. It is “a respectful, recognizable, stirring version of a familiar song” (Washington Post editorial) — a song that I believe shows the gratitude of immigrants to the United States of America for opening its doors and giving them opportunities that they were not offered in other countries. America should welcome the gesture!

Works Cited


Domenek has used all three sources to add authority to her viewpoint, yet she emphasizes her personal experience and involvement as a bicultural, bilingual person. She opens with an anecdote about her own heritage, which leads to her thesis, or claim. In the second paragraph, she presents objections to this position, and she opens the third paragraph by conceding one of the points of a counter-argument. She uses that point to develop her own argument: that a Spanish version allows those not proficient in English to understand the spirit of the national anthem, that there have already been many translations, and that accepting “El Nuestro Himno” symbolizes acceptance of diversity. Domenek returns to her personal experience in both her development and conclusion. Throughout the essay, she cites other writers, yet she never forfeits or dilutes her own ideas. She has entered the conversation as an informed and reasonable voice.

Conversation

Focus on Community Service

In this section, we will walk you through the process of writing a synthesis essay: understanding the assignment, analyzing a series of readings, and writing an argument using them.

Following is the type of prompt you may encounter. It asks you to write a synthesis essay.

Using the following documents on community service requirements in high schools, write an essay explaining whether you believe that high schools in general — or your specific school or district — should make community service mandatory. Incorporate references to or quotations from a minimum of three of these sources in your essay.

Before reading the texts, think about how the sources will help you fulfill the assignment. As we’ve discussed, sources can illustrate or support your own ideas. If you think that community service requirements are worthwhile, then you can look to your sources to help you make that point. But it’s important that you do not reject texts that do not support your position or are not directly relevant to it. In fact, you might use a text that presents an opinion in opposition to yours as a counterargument, and then concede and refute it. Most important, keep an open mind while you read the sources so your thesis shows that you understand the complexity of the subject of community service.
1. From *Millennials Rising*

NEIL HOWE AND WILLIAM STRAUSS

The definition of “community service” has morphed from one generation to the next, dating back to World War II. For the Silent [generation that came of age in the 1940s], community deed-doing was channeled by the Selective Service law, which pushed young males toward socially acceptable deferments such as teaching, science, or even marriage. For leading-edge Boomers, the term “community service” often meant cleaning hospital bedpans to avoid Vietnam — or for the more radically minded, spurring oppressed neighborhoods to vent their grievances against the “establishment.” When the draft ended, in 1973, first-wave Boomers had eliminated mandatory civic duty for their later cohorts and the generation to follow. Growing up in the era of the Volunteer Army, Gen Xers developed their own ethic of volunteerism, de-emphasizing great crusades in favor of simple acts of charity to help needy people. For teenagers, “community service” came to mean punishment for drunk drivers and Breakfast Club miscreants.

By the Millennial era [people born between 1982 and 2002], the notion of volunteering gave way to a more compulsory “service learning,” which is now often required for graduation from middle or high school. Bolstered by Acts of Congress in 1990 and 1993, which created the Learn and Serve America program, the integration of community service with academic study has spread to schools everywhere. From 1984 to 1999, the share of high schools offering any kind of community service program grew from 17 to 83 percent, and the share with “service learning” grew from 9 to 46 percent. Two-thirds of all public schools at all grade levels now have students engaged in community work, often . . . as part of the curriculum.

A new Millennial service ethic is emerging, built around notions of collegial (rather than individual) action, support for (rather than resistance against) civic institutions, and the tangible doing of good deeds. Surveys show that five of every six Millennials believe their generation has the greatest duty to improve the environment — and that, far more than older people, Millennials would impose extra civic duties on themselves, including taxes to achieve results.

2. **Community Service Mission Statement**

THE DALTON SCHOOL (A SMALL PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL)

Community Service is something that needs to be done. Community Service situates our moral center; it teaches us through experience — about the relationship between empathy and responsibility, about what it takes to be part of a community, in essence, about being human. Inherent in the notion of community
service are the feelings of optimism and empowerment: we are optimistic that the world can change for the better and when empowered to effect that change, we as individuals can make a difference. There are no more important lessons that we can learn and teach.

For Survival

We are members of many communities: family, school, neighborhood, city, country, religion, and ethnic group. It is from these communities that we gain our sustenance. We must each play a role in contributing to our communities so that these communities can continue to survive and prosper. Benevolent action is essential to the survival and prosperity of any community. We must engage in community service because it needs to be done and because we need our communities to survive.

For a Moral Center

Community Service is vital to the healthy community. A community that takes without giving back, that is indifferent to the needs of its fellow members, that is only concerned with individual measures of success, is a weak, unsound community. The strength of a community can be found in its moral center; the ability to articulate and act upon a defined moral center will fortify a community. The moral center of a community, that place where we can find the values of empathy, compassion, and caring, is the basis for civic responsibility and the success of that community.

For Personal Enrichment

Doing Community Service is empowering. When an individual goes out in the world and interacts with other people in the spirit of bettering, that individual makes a contribution and will feel a sense of accomplishment.

We are reminded all too often of the cynicism, indifference, and isolation that exists in our society. Community Service, the taking of physical action, reminds us of our connection and ability to connect. It is important to study the great actions of others, but participating in community service enables the individual to learn for himself and to teach herself.

For the Institutional Community

Our school is a place of learning; we need to integrate the ideals of Community Service into our academic curriculum. Because Community Service embodies experiential learning, locating a moral center, community health, because it is about empowerment and making the world a better place, because these issues are at the core of being, we need to do it. The desire to act comes from a pride,
caring, and respect for a community. Community Service must be harnessed to foster a sense of community in a school, a neighborhood, and beyond.

3. Volunteer Work Opens Teen’s Eyes to Nursing

***THE DETROIT NEWS, APRIL 16, 2005***

If you asked 13-year-olds to make a list of their favorite after-school activities, visiting with the elderly probably wouldn’t be a top choice. But it would be for John Prueter, son of Keith and Barbara Prueter of Essexville, who says he’d spend time with older generations every day if he could.

“All the older people are nice people,” he said. “They like to see young people come visit in these homes.” Prueter, a seventh-grader at Cramer Junior High School, spends much of his after-school time at the Alterra Sterling House, an assisted-living home in Hampton Township.

Prueter got into volunteering with the elderly almost two years ago when his great-grandmother, Mable Post, suffered a stroke. Always close to her, Prueter visited her regularly when she was in the hospital. After 100 days, she was transferred to Alterra, where she still lives. Now, instead of coming just to visit a relative, he comes to volunteer and visit with everyone. He is the youngest of Alterra’s regular volunteers and one of the most frequent visitors.

Prueter spends his time there helping with activities such as cooking and gardening, playing games with residents and just chatting with them. He speaks to the residents on a level that makes them feel good, said Pam O’Laughlin, executive director for Alterra’s Bay City campus. “He has a unique ability to communicate with these folks,” she said. “He’s not timid. They look forward to him coming.” Prueter sometimes takes the residents small gifts, such as cake on a birthday, and often calls them when he cannot come in.

He’s willing to help Alterra’s staff with any activities, O’Laughlin said. For example, he helped residents make cheesecakes for Easter. He helps with gardening and crafts, and calls the bingo games each Sunday. He also helps with mail delivery, assists nurses and helps residents get ready for special trips or concerts.

Virginia Ball, an 85-year-old resident, says Prueter visits with her regularly when he stops in. He runs and answers her phone when he hears it ringing down the hall and helps out with other tasks. “He’ll offer to fold laundry,” she said. But if there is nothing to do to help, Prueter will just sit in her room and chat. “He seems to enjoy talking to older people,” Ball said.

His service at Alterra earned him an outstanding youth volunteer award from Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6950. Prueter wants to be in the marching band when he moves up to Garber High School. But he says he doesn’t plan on letting practice get in the way of his visits to Alterra. Even after high school, Prueter hopes to continue working with the elderly by studying nursing. He says he became interested in the field because of his volunteer work.

His dream job, he says, is working where he volunteers now.
4. **In the Good Name of Community Service**
   (summary)

**TARA BAHRAMPOUR, WASHINGTON POST, MARCH 7, 2005**

Willie Grothman and Tim Phang of Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia have formed a student service organization called the Willie Grothman Club, which involves community service without minimum hours or mandatory attendance or even formal enrollment. Anyone can join, even if only to participate in a single activity. They have held ten events, many of which have involved walking — for AIDS, for the homeless and for breast cancer in an event in which they took turns walking relays all night around a track in the rain. The group plans to go bowling soon to benefit cystic fibrosis research. For such events they collect pledges of money from friends and family members for each mile walked or each bowling pin knocked over.

Club members remind potential recruits that besides offering a chance to be helpful and make friends, participation in the Willie Grothman Club looks good on college applications. “All the college people I’ve been talking to have been fairly impressed,” Grothman said. To add luster to that aura, they are generous in bestowing titles and offices. “I won’t lie — I mean, we created a lot of positions,” Grothman said. “But when you’re putting it on a college application, you want to at least have an officer position.” He admits that the club began “as a ridiculous joke,” but is proud that “we made something of it, which is more than a lot of school clubs do.”

5. **Mandatory Volunteerism**

**ARTHUR STUKAS, MARK SNYDER, AND E. GIL CLARY**

**PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE, JANUARY 1999**

Two studies suggest that community service requirements can have negative effects on students’ intentions to volunteer freely in the future but only when students feel that they aren’t ready to volunteer or that the requirement is too controlling. Students who are ready to volunteer should be less influenced by requirements to serve.

Students who were not “ready” to volunteer were less affected by the free choice condition — that is, researchers were able to persuade them to volunteer while making sure that they still felt that it was their free choice and they were more likely to want to volunteer in the future than “not ready” students who had been required. Students were just as likely to want to continue volunteering after being required as after having a free choice to volunteer. To avoid the negative effects of mandatory volunteer programs on students’ motivation, institutions should design these programs to contain an element of free choice and to offer
programs that allow students to choose the type of volunteer activity they will engage in or allow them to combine personal interests and skills with their service requirements. Researchers found that students who initially did not want to volunteer found that they actually enjoyed helping others if requirements were applied gently and with their input and involvement in the process.

6. Volunteer (cartoon)

*EASY TO USE!*  
*NO BITTER AFTERTASTE!*  
*CONVENIENT!*  
*BURNS CALORIES!*

**VOLUNTEER**

NOW AVAILABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY! TRY SOME!
7. From *Youth Attitudes toward Civic Education and Community Service Requirements* (graphs)

MARK HUGO LOPEZ, THE CENTER FOR INFORMATION AND RESEARCH ON CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT, 2002

**Graph 1** Attitudes toward Requiring Community Service for a High School Diploma, by Age

![Bar Graph](image)

- **age 15-17**: 32% favorable, 66% unfavorable
- **age 18-20**: 45% favorable, 53% unfavorable
- **age 21-32**: 48% favorable, 49% unfavorable
- **age 23-25**: 49% favorable, 48% unfavorable

Graph 2: Attitudes toward Requiring Community Service for a High School Diploma, by Level of Educational Success


Identifying the Issues: Recognizing Complexity

To engage your audience, present your position as reasonable, and perhaps valuable, in a voice that is reasoned, sincere, and informed, using the classic appeals to ethos, logos, and pathos. Written argument, after all, is not likely to change the view of the reader, at least not radically or immediately. Rather, a compelling argument leaves the reader thinking, questioning, considering, and reconsidering.

Keep in mind that the reasonable voice is usually a qualified one, one that is both challenged and informed by others. To write a qualified argument, you must anticipate objections to your position and recognize and respect the complexities of your topic. A reasonable voice recognizes that there are more than two sides to an issue, more than pro–con — which is the written equivalent of a shouting match — but multiple perspectives.

Careful reading has already revealed some of the complexities of required community service. Let’s explore a few.
• Source 1, the excerpt from *Millennials Rising*, points out that legislation supports “the integration of community service with academic study.” This raises the question of whether required community service should be part of a student’s course work.

• Source 2, the mission statement from a small private school, offers an argument based on morality, a sense of responsibility, and belonging to a community. However, the statement is from a small private school. Might this influence its wider application?

• Source 3, “Volunteer Work Opens Teen’s Eyes to Nursing,” is quite positive and possibly persuasive if you are writing in support of community service. However, it focuses on the experience of a seventh-grader, which might not be relevant to high schools.

• Source 4, “In the Good Name of Community Service,” is a good counter-example to Source 3. It reports on the cynical attitude of students who develop community service efforts specifically to bolster their college applications. Granted, this particular case does not involve a required community program, but it could be argued that such exploitation might be encouraged by a requirement that some will satisfy only for their own gain.

• Source 5, “Mandatory Volunteerism” from *Psychological Science*, reports research showing that requiring activities that should be voluntary discourages future involvement in those activities, making it less likely that community service will be a lifelong habit.

• Source 6, “Volunteer” the flyer, emphasizes an upbeat, try-it-you’ll-like-it advertising claim. It could be interpreted as questioning the motivation for performing community service or even whether “mandatory volunteering” is an oxymoron.

• Source 7, the graphs from a study by Mark Hugo Lopez, a researcher from the University of Maryland, raises further questions about required community service. Graph 1 shows that support for requiring such service is weakest among those currently in school and is evenly split among those over the age of twenty-one. Does this finding suggest that community service is “good medicine” for high school students, who will eventually appreciate the experience? Graph 2 shows that young people with greater levels of education (completion of a BA or some college work, as opposed to only a high school education) are more likely to support a community service requirement in high schools.

**Formulating Your Position**

Before you formulate your position, it may be helpful to take stock of the issues. In analyzing the texts on community service, the following issues emerge:
• Does requiring community service devalue it?
• Does requiring it discourage future participation?
• Does the positive experience that most volunteers have offset their initial reluctance to participate?
• How does the structure of the community service program — is it part of academic study? are there choices? — affect its perceived value?
• Can such a requirement be safeguarded from exploitation for an individual’s personal gain? If so, how?
• What values about community and education underlie a service requirement?
• What influence does socioeconomic situation play in such a requirement? For example, if students need to earn money, can required community service programs be designed to accommodate them?
• How does a school system determine how many hours of service to require?

These questions — and others you might have — illustrate the complexity of the issue and ensure that you do not develop an argument that is one-sided or even polarized between yes and no. Instead, you are now prepared to write a documented essay that reflects the complexities surrounding the topic.

With these questions and issues in mind, you can begin to formulate a thesis, or claim, that captures your position on the topic. Consider the following working thesis statements:

• Community service can be extremely valuable in the development of both character and academics, but the negative effects of forcing students to participate by making such programs a graduation requirement offset the benefits.
• Though students may not recognize the value of community service until later in life, High School should require community service to instill a sense of civic responsibility and encourage a lifelong habit of helping others.
• High schools should encourage students to participate in community service and reward those who do so without making participation mandatory for graduation.
• Required community service programs are beneficial to both the individuals who participate and the communities being served, as long as students have some choice in the type of service they engage in.

Although you might want to tailor these working thesis statements to use in your essay, each one suggests a clear focus while acknowledging the complexities of the issue.
Incorporating Sources: Inform Rather than Overwhelm

Once you have formulated your thesis, you will develop your ideas by incorporating sources into your essay. Don't simply summarize or paraphrase a series of texts, but rather cite sources — by paraphrasing or quoting directly — in the service of your own argument. As emphasized throughout, you do not want to represent ideas or words as your own if they are not: give credit where it is due. But you're in charge of the sources, not the other way around.

In the following pages, we consider two uses of sources for an essay on community service. Here is a sample paragraph that takes a positive view of the long-term benefits of community service.

Participation in community service contributes to a person’s belief that he or she can make a positive change in the world. According to the excerpt from "Millennials Rising," five out of six Millennials, the youngest generation, “believe their generation has the greatest duty to improve the environment” and would accept additional “civic duties” to bring about needed change. Furthermore, those who have achieved educational success tend to support a community service requirement in high school, according to a study of attitudes toward community service conducted by University of Maryland researcher Mark Hugo Lopez. That finding suggests that people who pursue their education through college perceive community service as a positive influence in their experience, perhaps even one that has promoted their educational goals.

The preceding paragraph uses direct quotations and paraphrases from Millennials Rising, and an analysis of one of the graphs from Lopez’s study. Notice that the sources are identified within the text.

In the following paragraph, a source is used as the counterargument. Note the concession and refutation.

The ideal of community service often falls short of the reality. A school may institute required community service with the optimistic belief that students will develop a sense of responsibility toward others and feel a connection to others whose immediate situation is dissimilar to theirs. The Dalton School, a small private high school, developed a mission statement that includes utopian goals, such as community service, as a means toward “empowerment” and a belief that “the world can change for the better.” It asserts that community service will “foster a sense of community in a school, a neighborhood, and beyond.” While those lofty goals may be achieved at least to some extent in certain situations, the practical reality is far different in most cases. Students may simply “put in their time” because the service is a graduation requirement, or they may actually exploit the requirement for their own gain. An article in the Washington Post reported on students in a Virginia high school, for instance, who formed their own clubs, with many
officer positions, in order to impress college admissions committees. They “empowered”
themselves, though hardly in the idealistic way described in the mission statement.

Note that the mission statement was cited to develop the counterargument —
that required community service builds a citizenry of people committed to recipro-
cal responsibilities and confident of their ability to make a difference. After the
concession — “those lofty goals may be achieved at least to some extent in certain
situations” — the paragraph continues as a refutation, which also includes a re-
ference to another text.

As you go through the readings and other texts in the following chapters, you
will join conversations on a range of topics, reflecting on and integrating the
ideas of others from different times and places into your own thinking and writ-
ing. Each chapter includes a section called Conversation in which you will prac-
tice this skill with a series of texts (including visuals) related to the theme of the
chapter. Keep in mind the rhetorical triangle; the traditional appeals to logos,
pathos, and ethos; and your skill at close reading.

Now, enter the conversations.