

Guide 2: The Rhetorical Situation**WHAT IS RHETORIC?**

Rhetoric is “the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.”

Analyzing Rhetoric

1. Identify the relationship between the speaker, subject, and audience—often, much of this information can be found in the prompt of a Q2 essay.
2. As you read the passage, chunk by primary points. This can be determined by asking yourself, “What is the author pointing out to the audience?”. There may be one primary point for several paragraphs.
3. Take note of textual evidence that appeals ethically, logically or emotionally to the audience or strengthens the speaker’s credibility.
4. Examine the speaker’s purpose for writing the passage. Consider which primary points best support his/her purpose

Rhetorical Appeals

There are three main types of rhetorical appeals that speakers and writers make. These appeals are the result of rhetorical choices that an author makes within a text.

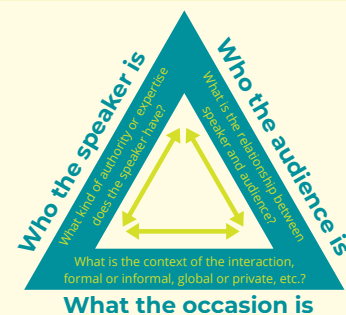
APPEAL TO AUTHORITY	APPEAL TO EMOTION	APPEAL TO LOGIC
When appealing to authority, the author can present details or evidence of any of the following to establish their own credibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience • Moral character • Credentials • Accolades 	An author or speaker can effectively accomplish their goal by making their audience feel any one of a wide variety of emotions, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sympathy • Sadness • Anger • Joy • Pride • Fear 	This appeal can be accomplished by supplying any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts • Statistics or data • Evidence • Rational and logical argument

Writing the Analysis

Inadequate: Lincoln begins his speech by using ethos. He tells his audience that “at this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first.” This makes the audience trust him.

Sophisticated: To begin his speech, Lincoln apprises the audience of his executive experience and acknowledges that there is “less occasion” for long dialogue. This salutation mirrors the morale of the war-ravaged country and entices his audience to continue to listen to a “detail of a course” that hopes to repair the nation.

The preceding examples were constructed from Abraham Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Speech.” You can visit the prompt and the passage on page 2 of the document found at https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/apc/eng_lang_frq_02_10330.pdf

**MAIN IDEA, PURPOSE, AND TONE**

Whether analyzing a multiple-choice passage or a free response question, there are three general characteristics that you must examine.

Main Idea

- Refers to the content of the passage.
- Answers the question “What is this passage about?”

Purpose

- Related to Main Idea, but not the same.
- Answers the question “What does the speaker hope to accomplish through the main idea?”

Tone

- Refers to the author’s attitude about their subject.
- As you read through the passage, circle any extreme words, and look for images and associations and consider how the collection of tone words affect the audience? How would that effect help the speaker achieve his purpose?

When writing a rhetorical analysis, it is important to address how a writer’s rhetorical choices affect the audience by appealing to one of these six universal topics.

- Moral
- Spiritual
- Political
- Social
- Psychological
- Historical

Justification: In the first example, the student states that Lincoln “uses ethos.” This is common mistake – a speaker cannot “use” ethos (or logos or pathos for that matter); however, a speaker will make a choice that establishes credibility with the audience. A sophisticated writer analyzes how a rhetorical choice creates a logical or emotional impact on an audience and examines what sort of assumptions a writer made about his audience to make such an appeal successful.