



Rhetorical Analysis

AP Seminar

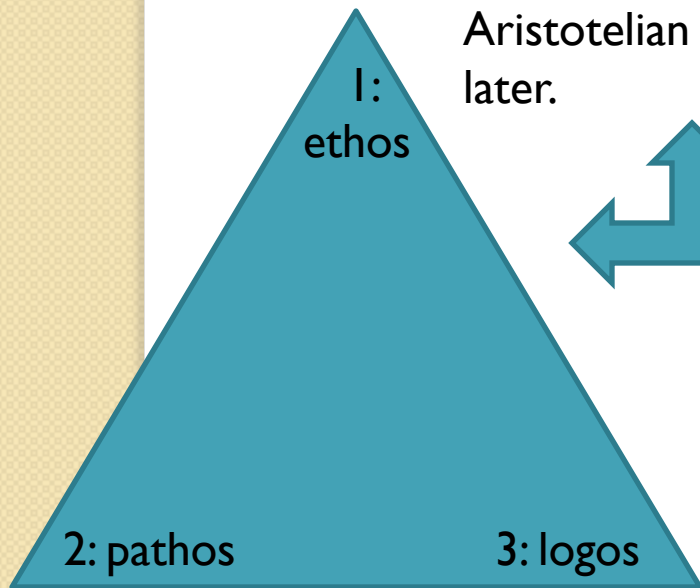
SOAPS

- The first step to effectively analyzing nonfiction is to know certain key background details which will give you the proper context for the analysis.
- An acronym to help you in this first step is:
 - Speaker
 - Occasion
 - Audience
 - Purpose
 - Subject

Speaker

- Who is the speaker? Does the speaker have the **ethos* necessary to deliver information on the topic?

We call this the rhetorical triangle (or Aristotelian triad). We'll get to pathos and logos later.



I: *Ethos - this describes who the speaker is in terms of the subject. The speaker's authority on the topic is called his *ethos*.

Occasion

- What is the reason for giving the speech or the occasion? As in does it correspond with an anniversary, is it at a funeral, is it for a planned conference, and etc. We generally call this the Rhetorical Situation

Rhetorical Situation

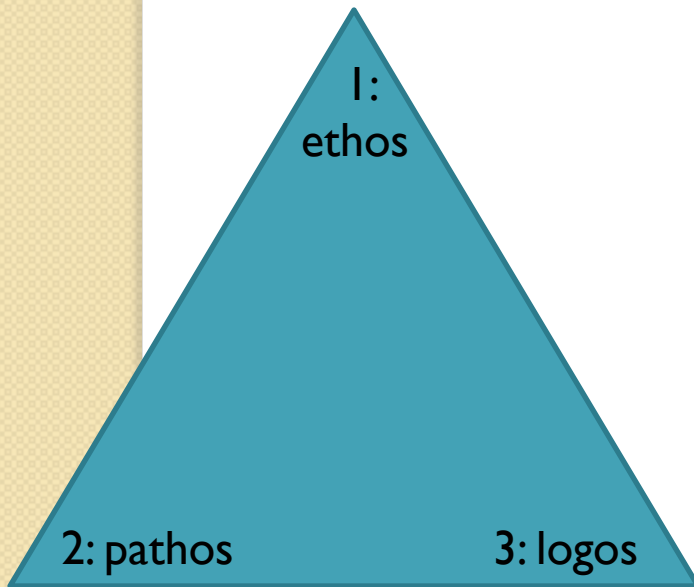
- It's important to note the rhetorical situation. You may also sometimes hear this referenced as the Rhetorical Mode or the Mode of Discourse.
- The primary rhetorical situations you need to be aware of for this course are persuasive, narrative, and expository.

Rhetorical Situation

- Persuasive – writing/speaking that attempts to persuade an audience to invest in a certain perspective
- Narrative – writing/speaking that tells a story usually to invoke a certain emotional response in an audience
- Expository – writing/speaking that intends to inform an audience (should be free of bias)

Audience

- Who is the audience? In order for the audience to care the speaker must establish **pathos*, and this means knowing who is being addressed.



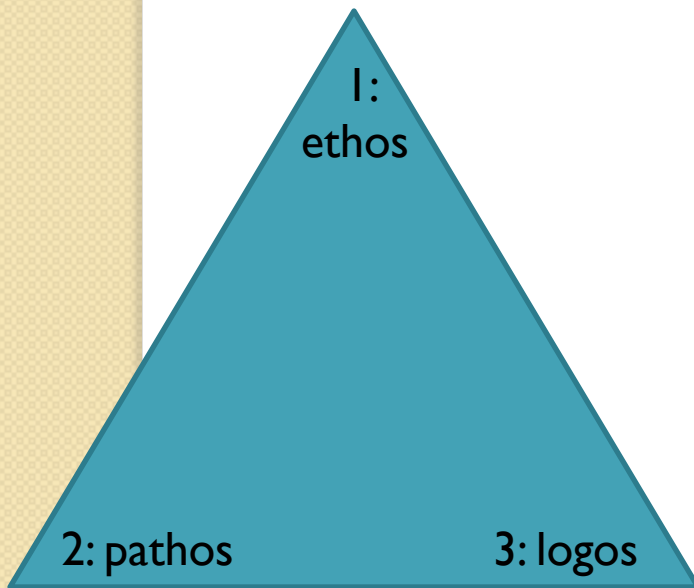
2: *Pathos – this involves creating an attachment to the subject matter by appealing to the emotions of the listener.

Purpose

- Why is the speech being given? In most cases a speech is intended to persuade, but in some cases it could simply be to inform or entertain. It's important to know the distinction, and one way to determine the purpose is to analyze the speech for its rhetorical devices (don't worry, we'll get to these later in the year).

Subject

- What is the subject of the speech? What, exactly, is it about? The facts or details are the **logos*.



3: *Logos – the facts or details in an argument that give the argument credibility.

SMELL

- Ultimately you will need to pull together what you discovered through your SOAPS and DIDLS analysis in order for you to be able to cogently discuss all elements of analysis and how they work to further the author's purpose.
- An acronym to help you in this type of analysis is:

Sender/receiver relationship

Message

Evidence

Logic

L



Sender/Receiver Relationship

- Who is the speaker? Who is the audience? What is the tone directed from one to the other?

Message

- What is the content and/or claim?

Evidence

- What evidence is provided and to what extent? Is it reliable?

Logic

- What is the quality of reasoning? What types of appeals are being used? It's important here to note any logical fallacies. While there are many logical fallacies (faulty logic), the following slides highlight some of the more common ones for which to look.

Logical Fallacies

Personal Attack (*Argumentum Ad Hominem*, literally, "argument toward the man."):

- Attacking the people who make an argument, rather than discussing the argument itself. This practice is fallacious because the personal character of an individual is logically irrelevant to the truth or falseness of the argument itself.

Logical Fallacies

Argumentum ad Populum (Literally "Argument to the People):

- Using an appeal to popular assent, often by arousing the feelings and enthusiasm of the multitude rather than building an argument. There are three basic approaches: bandwagon (everyone is doing it); snob (only the best people are doing it); and patriotic (only good Americans are doing it).

Logical Fallacies

Appeal to Improper or False Authority
(*Argumentum Ad Verecundium*, literally "argument from that which is improper"):

- An appeal to an improper authority, such as a famous person or a source that may not be reliable. This fallacy attempts to capitalize upon feelings of respect or familiarity with a famous individual. It is not fallacious to refer to an admitted authority if the individual's expertise is within a strict field of knowledge

Logical Fallacies

- Appeal to Emotion** (*Argumentum Ad Misericordiam*, literally, "argument from pity"):
- An emotional appeal concerning what should be a logical issue during a debate. While pathos generally works to reinforce a reader's sense of duty or outrage at some abuse, if a writer tries to use emotion merely for the sake of getting the reader to accept what should be a logical conclusion, the argument is a fallacy.

Logical Fallacies

Hasty Generalization (*Dicto Simpliciter*, also called “Jumping to Conclusions”):

- Mistaken use of inductive reasoning when there are too few samples to prove a point. In understanding and characterizing general situations, a logician cannot normally examine every single example. However, the examples used in inductive reasoning should be typical of the problem or situation at hand.

Logical Fallacies

Red Herring:

- A red herring is a deliberate attempt to change the subject or divert the argument from the real question or issue at hand to some other irrelevant side-point.

Logical Fallacies

Straw Man Argument:

- A subtype of the red herring, this fallacy includes any lame attempt to "prove" an argument by overstating, exaggerating, or over-simplifying the arguments of the opposing side. When a writer makes a cartoon-like caricature of the opposing argument, ignoring the real or subtle points of contention, and then proceeds to knock down each "fake" point one-by-one, he has created a straw man argument.

Logical Fallacies

The "Slippery Slope":

- a **non sequitur** in which the speaker argues that, once the first step is undertaken, a second or third step will inevitably follow

Logical Fallacies

- Either/Or Fallacy** (also called "the Black-and-White Fallacy" and "False Dilemma"):
- This fallacy occurs when a writer builds an argument upon the assumption that there are only two choices or possible outcomes when actually there are several. Outcomes are seldom so simple.

Language

- What stylistic and rhetorical devices are being employed? How do these affect the author's ability to get his or message across to the audience? Again, there are many rhetorical devices, but the following include many of the most common to pay attention to while you analyze for purpose.

Diction

- *Jargon* consists of words and expressions characteristic of a particular trade, profession, or pursuit.

Diction

- *Denotation* is the exact, literal definition of a word independent of any emotional association or secondary meaning.
- *Connotation* is the implicit rather than explicit meaning of a word and consists of the suggestions, associations, and emotional overtones attached to the word.
- Consider *house* and *home*. Although both indicate a dwelling in which one resides (the *denotation*), *home* has a much warmer feel or *connotation*.

Diction

- **Invective:** Insulting, abusive, or highly critical language used in a speech or in a piece of writing.
- **Encomium:** A speech or piece of writing that praises someone or something highly.

Syntax

- Telegraphic-shorter than five words
- Long and involved-thirty or more words in length
- Consider why an author would choose to use one type of sentence over another.

Figurative language

- Metaphor – a trope that associates two distinct things without using a connective word (one thing becomes the other such as “he is a snake”)

Figurative language

- Simile – a trope that associates two distinct things by using a connective word such as like or as (“he is *like* a snake”)

Figurative language

- Personification – a trope in which human characteristics are bestowed upon anything nonhuman (saying that (love is blind”))

Figurative language

- Synecdoche – a trope in which a part of something is used to represent the whole or, occasionally, the whole is used to represent a part (referring to a car as a “set of wheels”)

Figurative language

- Metonymy – a trope in which one thing is represented by another that is commonly and often physically associated with it (calling a monarch a “crown” for example)

Other Devices to Note

- Allusion: an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly.
- Repetition: Duh. This can take many forms. The repetition of a letter or phoneme. The repetition of a word or phrase. The repetition of a sentence. The repetition of concepts. The purpose is to draw attention to the sound/word/sentence/concept to encourage it's memorization by the audience.

Satire

- While it's unlikely you'll encounter satire if you research properly, it's still important to recognize it just in case. Horatian satire is easier to spot because it's funny. Juvenalian satire is a little more difficult because it appears to be serious. Pay attention for verbal irony, litotes, hyperbole, and incongruities.

Satire

- Verbal Irony: when language expresses something contrary to the truth or the opposite of the what the speaker appears to actually mean. May often be sarcastic, but not always.
- Litotes: ironic understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative. (Try the onion flavored ice cream. *You won't be sorry!*)
- Hyperbole: an exaggerated claim not meant to be taken literally.
- Incongruities: not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings or other aspects of something.

The End ;)

- You're job this year is not necessarily to to analysis a piece for its use of language, but being able to skillfully analyze a piece will make establishing purpose, lens, and perspective a lot easier!