

WHAT IS RHETORIC?

Rhetorical triangle

SOAPSTonE

SMELL

Basic rhetorical structures

What is rhetoric?

- “The faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.”
- Aristotle

ANALYZING A PIECE THROUGH
A RHETORICAL LENS...

What is a rhetorical situation?

- All authors write within a particular situation and make strategic choices based on that situation. This will likely make more sense once we've worked through the various components of a "situation."

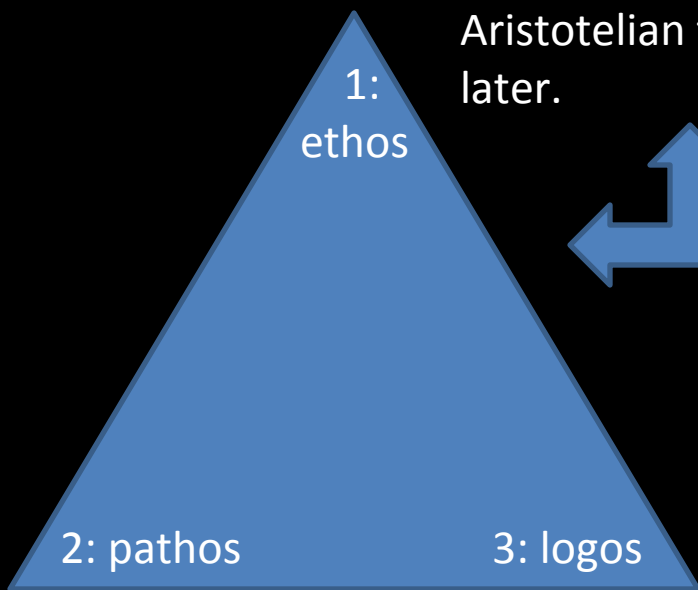
SOAPSTonE

- 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
 - Tone
 - Exigence

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.



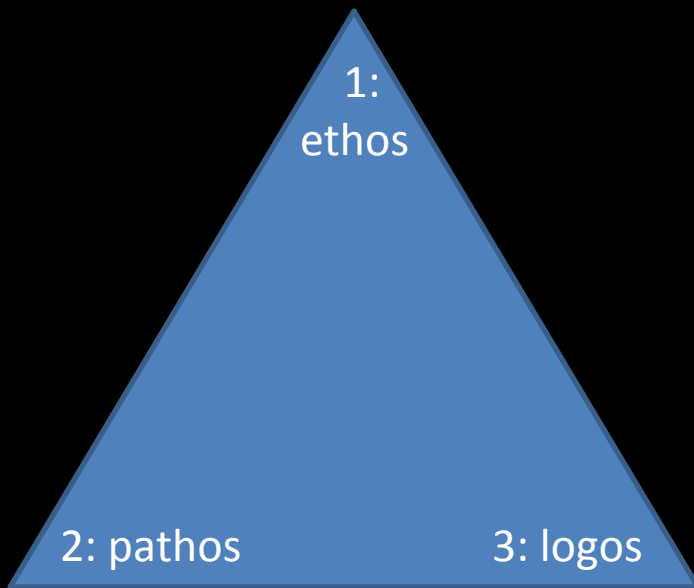
1: *Ethos - this describes who the speaker is in terms of the subject. The speaker's authority on the topic is called his *ethos*.

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.
- It's important to note the rhetorical situation. You may also sometimes hear this referenced as the Rhetorical Mode or the Mode of Discourse.

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.



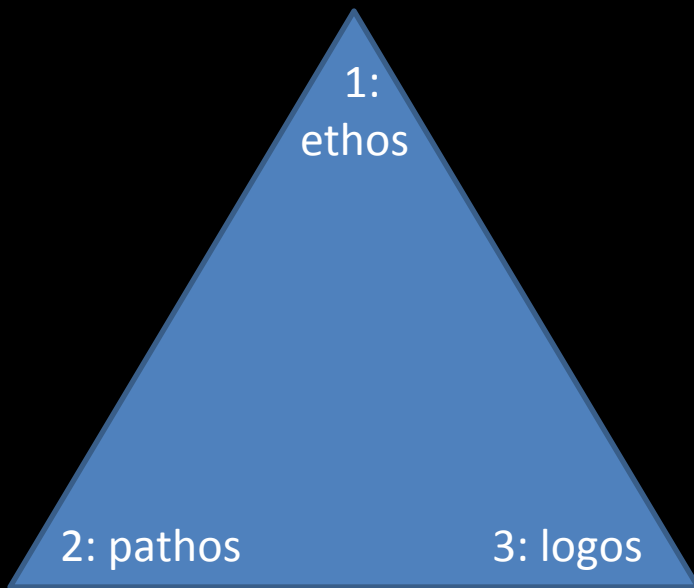
2: *Pathos – this involves creating an attachment to the subject matter by appealing to the emotions of the listener.

Purpose

- Why is the speech being given? What is the message in that letter? What are they trying to sell you in that ad? In many cases the works you read are persuasive, 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.

Subject

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



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

Tone

- Tone is the attitude(s) of a writer/orator toward a subject and/or audience. In written composition, tone is generally conveyed through diction and assumptions, both those that are included and those that aren't.

Exigence

- In rhetoric, exigence is the issue, problem, situation, context, etc. that provides the impetus for an author to write or speak on a given topic within that rhetorical situation.

SMELL

- Ultimately you will need to pull together what you discovered through your SOAPS analysis and then take it a step further into the relationships 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:
 - S**ender/receiver relationship
 - M**essage
 - E**vidence
 - L**ogic
 - L**anguage

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?
- What is the line of reasoning?
- Does the author include concessions?
Counterarguments?

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?
- This is where you will begin to identify the author's choice of schemes, tropes, diction, and syntax and explain WHY he/she made those stylistic choices in regard to his/her rhetorical situation.

Schemes

- Figures of speech that deal with word order, syntax, letters, and sounds. Schemes create balance, interruption, omission, or repetition.

Tropes

- Figures of speech with an unexpected twist in the meaning of words, Tropes create comparison, word play, overstatement, understatement, or management of meaning.

Diction

- In all forms of writing and speaking authors choose particular words to convey a specific effect and meaning to the reader. Diction is employed to communicate ideas and impressions, to evoke emotions, and to convey an author's view of the truth to the reader.

Syntax

- In much the same way that authors consider their word choice very carefully they also consider how the words are arranged. The construction of the sentences is referred to as syntax.

Syllogism

- A form of argument introduced by Aristotle that consists of three levels: a major premise, a minor premise, and conclusion.
- ***Premise*** – a statement of fact.

Syllogistic Structure

Example: of a syllogistic argument

- **Major Premise:** Everybody who believes in Santa Claus is childish.
*(The major premise should be a universal statement.
“Everybody...)*
- **Minor premise:** Jane believes in Santa Claus.
*(The Minor premise should be a limitation or qualification
of the major premise.: “Jane” ...)*
- **Conclusion:** Therefore Jane is childish.
*(The conclusion must follow from the combination of the
major and minor premise for it to be a valid syllogism.)*

Enthymeme

- An enthymeme is like a syllogism. It must be based on a premise. The difference between the syllogism and the enthymeme is that the major premise can be implied.

Enthymematic Structure

Example of an enthymematic argument

- Since you have worn only shorts and t-shirts in the three years I have known you, you must not like to dress elegantly.
 - Major Premise is understood: People who mostly wear shorts and t-shirts do not like to dress elegantly.
 - Minor Premise is stated: you have only worn shorts and t-shirts in three years.
 - The conclusion: you must not like to dress elegantly.

Deductive Arguments

- A deductive argument is structured with the major and minor premises first followed by the conclusion. This structure is also sometimes referred to as periodic structure.

Inductive Arguments

- An inductive argument is structured with the conclusion first followed by the major and minor premises. This structure is also sometimes referred to as loose structure.

WRITING A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS...

Open Thesis

- A thesis statement that tells the reader only the position on a topic.
- Ex. Florida is a better place to live than Washington state.

Closed Thesis

- A thesis statement that tells the reader both your position and the reasons for your position.
- Ex. Due to the cost of living discrepancy and the incessant rainy weather, Florida is a better place to permanently reside than Washington state.

A note about the thesis...

- As per College Board:
 - An acceptable thesis “responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that analyses the writer’s rhetorical choices.”

Analysis

- As per College Board:
 - “For the purposes of scoring, analysis means explaining the rhetorical choices an author makes in an attempt to convey a message, achieve a purpose, or develop an argument.”

Line of Reasoning

- As per College Board:
 - “For the purposes of scoring, a line of reasoning is the coherent presentation of claims, evidence, and commentary working together in the service of an argument.”

Thesis + Line of Reasoning + Conclusion

Intro: Rhetorical Precip

Body #1: Claims (what)

Evidence (how)

Commentary (why)

*Repeat until fully analyzed

Conclusion: So what? What is the purpose of the author's rhetorical choices in regard to the rhetorical situation?