Rhetorical Analysis: Interpreting the Art of Rhetoric

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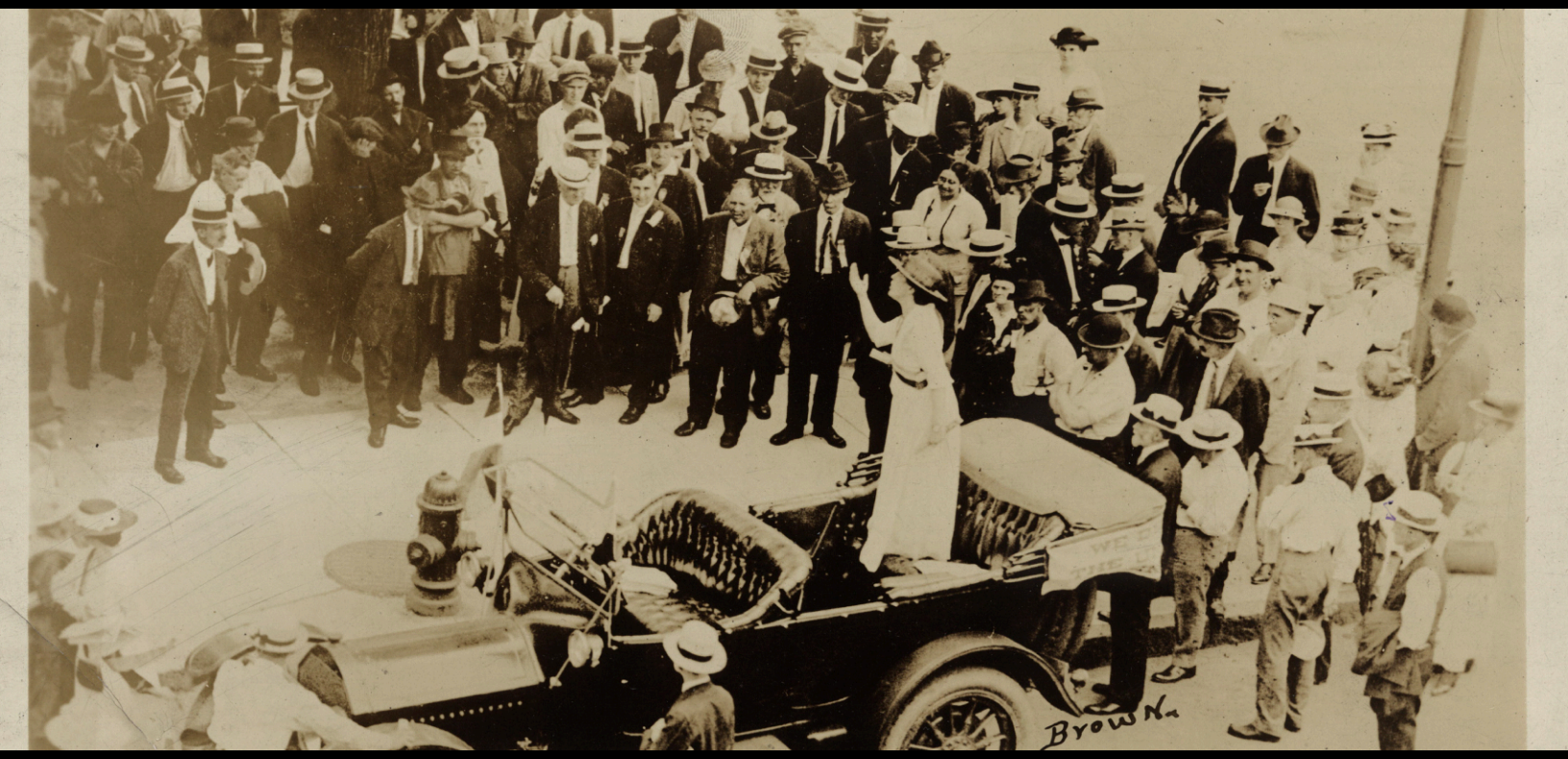


FIGURE 9.1 To be effective, persuasive speeches depend on rhetoric. In this photograph, suffragist Elsie Hill (1883–1970) speaks forcefully to a street gathering in St. Paul, Minnesota, in July 1916. When advocating for women's suffrage, Hill, like other orators, relied on rhetorical strategies to persuade audiences that might have disagreed with her platform. Conversely, some audience members could recognize her strategies and know how she was using language to persuade them. Those people, consciously or not, were engaged in rhetorical analysis. (credit: "Elsie Hill speaking [at street meeting in St. Paul, Minn., during Prohibition Party convention that endorsed a plank advocating a suffrage amendment, July 1916]" by Harris & Ewing, Washington, D.C./Wikimedia Commons/ Library of Congress, Public Domain)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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INTRODUCTION Because humans exist in social situations, communication has always been a part of what it means to be human. Basic forms of communication, such as smiling or adopting certain physical stances, may be considered instinctive. However, when language began to replace sounds and gestures, communication became more specific. People used language to give and seek information, to express and react to emotions,

and to persuade others to think or act in certain ways.

Beginning with the ancient Greeks, a large part of language education has focused on the ability to persuade. The Greeks used the word *rhetoric*, which originally meant "the act of speaking a language," and expanded its importance to include a focus on situations in which language was used for a persuasive purpose: to motivate an audience to action.

These ideas became central to Greek culture and patterns of behavior that characterized their way of life. This chapter will address persuasive techniques: how people use words to influence, lead, create new understanding, and rouse others to action. Your writing task will be to identify, explain, and analyze the strategies a particular writer uses to persuade readers. Analyzing the rhetorical strategies of other writers will help you develop your writing identity as you learn to incorporate some of these strategies into your own work while rejecting others.

9.1 Breaking the Whole into Its Parts

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify and explain ethos, logos, pathos, and kairos.
- Identify and analyze logical fallacies used in persuasion.
- Explain how rhetorical strategies are used in real-life situations.

Communicative situations nearly always contain **rhetoric**, the craft of persuading through writing or speaking. Think of your earliest instances of communication with parents or caregivers. Before you were proficient in language, you learned to navigate situations with your other senses, such as sight, sound, and touch. Consider people's facial expressions and tones of voice. How did you know when they were pleased, displeased, or confused by your actions? The emphasis is on the word *how*, because the *how* is what starts you on the path of analyzing the forms, intent, and effectiveness of communication. The point is that even facial expressions and tones of voice serve communicative functions and contain a rhetoric that one can observe, process, and analyze.

Now, as an adult, you have learned to use rhetoric to be persuasive and to recognize when others are trying to persuade you. Imagine the following situation. A basic question arises among roommates: *Where should we go for dinner?* Your roommates want to go to Emiliano's Pizza Pavilion again, and their reasoning seems sound. First, having tried all pizza places in town, they know Emiliano makes the tastiest pizza—just the right combination of spices, vegetables, and cheese, all perfectly baked in the right oven at the right temperature. Furthermore, the pizza is fairly cheap and probably will provide leftovers for tomorrow. And they add that you don't really want to stay home all alone by yourself.

You, on the other hand, are less keen on the idea; maybe you're tired of Emiliano's pizza or of pizza in general. You seem resistant to their suggestion, so they continue their attempts at persuasion by trying different tactics. They tell you that "everyone" is going to Emiliano's, not only because the food is good but because it's *the* place to be on a Thursday evening, hoping that others' decisions might convince you. Plus, Emiliano's has "a million things on the menu," so if you don't want pizza, you can have "anything you want." This evidence further strengthens their argument, or so they think.

Your roommates continue, playing on your personal experience, adding that the last time you didn't join them, you went somewhere else and then got the flu, so you shouldn't make the same mistake twice. They add details and try to entice you with images of the pizza—a delicious, jeweled circle of brilliant color that tastes like heaven, with bubbling cheese calling out to you to devour it. Finally, they try an extreme last-ditch accusation. They claim you could be hostile to immigrants such as Emiliano and his Haitian and Dominican staff, who are trying to succeed in the competitive pizza market, so your unwillingness to go will hurt their chances of

making a living.

However, because you know something about rhetoric and how your roommates are using it to persuade, you can deconstruct their reasoning, some of which is flawed or even deceptive. Your decision is up to you, of course, and you will make it independent of (or dependent on) these rhetorical appeals and strategies.

Rhetorical Strategies

As part of becoming familiar with rhetorical strategies in real life, you will recognize three essential building blocks of rhetoric:

- **Ethos** is the presentation of a believable, authoritative voice that elicits an audience's trust. In the case of the pizza example, the roommates have tried all other pizzerias in town and have a certain expertise.
- **Pathos** is the use of appeals to feelings and emotions shared by an audience. Emiliano's pizza tastes good, so it brings pleasure. Plus, you don't want to be all alone when others are enjoying themselves, nor do you want to feel responsible for the pizzeria's economic decline.
- **Logos** is the use of credible information—facts, reasons, examples—that moves toward a sensible and acceptable conclusion. Emiliano's is good value for the money and provides leftovers.

In addition to these strategies, the roommates in the example use more subtle ones, such as personification and sensory language. **Personification** is giving an inanimate object human traits or abilities (the cheese is calling out). **Sensory language** appeals to the five senses (a delicious, jeweled circle of brilliant color).

Logical Fallacies

Familiar with the three main rhetorical strategies and literary language, you also recognize the "sneakier" uses of flawed reasoning, also known as **logical fallacies**. Some of the roommates' appeals are based on these fallacies:

- **Bandwagon:** argument that everyone is doing something, so you shouldn't be left behind by not doing it too. "Everyone" goes to Emiliano's, especially on Thursdays.
- **Hyperbole:** exaggeration. Emiliano's has "a million things on the menu," and you can get "anything you want."
- **Ad hominem:** attacking the person, not the argument. Because you are hesitant about joining your roommates, you are accused of hostility toward immigrants.
- **Causal fallacy:** claiming or implying that an event that follows another event is the result of it. Because you ate elsewhere, you got the flu.
- **Slippery slope:** argument that a single action could lead to disastrous consequences. If Emiliano's misses your business, they may go bankrupt.

In a matter of minutes, your roommates use all these strategies to try to persuade you to act or to agree with their thinking. Identifying and understanding such strategies, and others, is a key element of critical thinking. You can learn more about logical fallacies at the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (https://openstax.org/r/Purdue_University_Online).

Kairos

As a whole, rhetoric also depends on another Greek rhetorical strategy, **kairos**. Kairos is the idea that timing is important in trying to persuade an audience. An appeal may succeed or fail depending on when it is made. The moment must be right, and an effective communicator needs to be aware of their audience in terms of kairos. Going back to the roommates and pizza example, kairos might be an influence in your decision; if you were tired of pizza, had to save money, or wanted to study alone, your roommates would have less chance of persuasion. As a more serious example, if a recent series of car accidents has caused serious injuries on the freeway, an audience might be more receptive to a proposal to reassess speed limits and road signage. Awareness of rhetorical strategies in everyday situations such as this will help you recognize and evaluate them in matters ultimately more significant than pizza.

9.2 Trailblazer

Rhetorical Analysis Trailblazer: Jamil Smith

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a text.
- Identify and analyze rhetorical strategies.

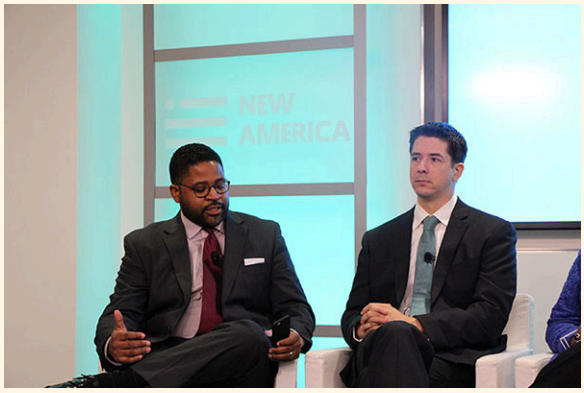


FIGURE 9.2 Jamil Smith, left (credit: "The Color of Debt: Investigating Debt Collection and the Racial Wealth Gap" by New America/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

"No matter what you do, you have to be able to process information and think critically."

Whose Rhetoric?

Jamil Smith (b. 1975) is a well-recognized print and television journalist and commentator on politics, culture, and sports. He has won three Emmys for sports journalism and is best known for his articles in *Rolling Stone* and the *New Republic* and as a producer for MTV News, CNN, MSNBC, and *The Rachel Maddow Show*.

Smith grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, where he attended Shaker Heights High School. He has often written about Cleveland and his work there with the Minority Achievement Committee (MAC), which pairs accomplished minority achievers with their younger peers to encourage greater participation in education. Smith graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1997 with a degree in English.

Smith often focuses on the full range of Black life in culture, politics, sports, and media. In guest appearances and interviews, he emphasizes the overriding need for minority journalists to use rhetorical powers of persuasion and to assert their place alongside traditionally White-dominated media voices. When Smith became senior editor at the *New Republic* in 2015, he explained his task as being "to help usher this magazine into a different era" (Connor). He recognized his presence there as an opportunity for his writing to serve as a moving force for social change and even the radical transformation of American journalism.

For the February 19, 2018, cover story of *Time* magazine, Smith wrote an extensive essay on the film *Black Panther* (2018) and its significance for Black American culture. The superhero film, based on a Marvel Comics story, grossed about $1.3 billion and was hailed as one of the outstanding films of the year, winning three Oscars out of a total of seven nominations. In his essay, Smith attaches great importance to the movie for its ability to address "what it means to be black in both America and Africa—and, more broadly, in the world" (Smith, "Revolutionary").

Smith used the film as a vehicle for expressing his belief in the compelling role that representation—being a presence, even an unexpected one—plays in communication. He has stated in an interview, "I really truly believe in the power of storytelling." His fervor and commitment to creating a new understanding of Black life are based on his taking the personal risk to establish credibility as someone proudly unafraid to open himself to the audience: "My mission is to reflect the experiences of and tell the stories of people who have been ignored and erased" (Smith, "Cleveland").

In his writings, Smith uses ethos to portray himself as a Black Clevelander, well acquainted with discrimination and prejudice, who speaks personally from his experiences and seeks to reach the general population as a whole. Smith wishes for readers to feel, as he does, that life needs to be complex, with "infinite versions" of the self, from executives to garbage collectors and all positions in between. He says that most White people know this already and see it reflected in films that represent their lives, but Black Americans have not yet experienced this and consequently are emotionally "poorer" without the "boundless" paths that White people have open to them (Smith, "Revolutionary").

Smith's review of *Black Panther*, which garnered an award from the New York chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, also relies on Smith's knowledge of culture and history. For example, he points out that the character King T'Challa, introduced in Marvel Comics in 1966, reappears in the film at a time when the United States still has not met demands for equal opportunities. Smith capsulizes the aims and key events of the Black Power movement of the 1960s and names its leaders. He also quotes the Federal Reserve statistic that in 2016, a typical Black family "had a median net worth of $17,600," whereas a White family "had a median net worth of $171,000." He uses such statistics to claim that the movie conceives and portrays a world in which Black people have the resources to "level the playing field" worldwide (Smith, "Revolutionary").

Given Smith's position and recognition in the journalistic profession, readers find his cultural criticism of subjects in Black life and culture both logical and convincing. The example of Smith as a **cultural critic**—a person who writes opinion pieces about the art, music, movies, and books of a particular culture—is especially relevant in contemporary times. As people's lives change continually, new influences on culture may emerge from the margins and come to be recognized. Language changes are a leading indicator of social change as well, especially in audiences that themselves are not one-dimensional and will interpret the language differently. In time, as with trends and fashions, diverse rhetoric may change a society and become widely accepted and even emulated. In this light, read Jamil Smith's entire review (https://openstax.org/r/review1).

Another important figure you may wish to explore is Ta-Nehisi Coates (https://openstax.org/r/Ta-Nehisi). Coates is a leading journalist and creative writer whose *Black Panther* graphic novels, written for Marvel Comics, closely parallel the film. His use of rhetorical language particular to the Black experience in America has won numerous awards and recognition. You can read more about Coates in Memoir Trailblazer: Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Jamil Smith use contemporary culture to make persuasive points?
2. How has Smith established credibility with readers?
3. In what ways does Smith appeal to readers' emotions?
4. How does Smith's use of logos support his claims of racial inequality?

9.3 Glance at Genre: Rhetorical Strategies

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify key rhetorical strategies that authors use to persuade readers.
- Analyze texts to demonstrate understanding of key rhetorical concepts.
- Identify genre conventions and explain how they are shaped by purpose, culture, and expectation.

Rhetorical analysis is the **genre**, or type of writing, that examines the way writers and speakers use language to influence readers. Rather than describing or summarizing content—the *what* of characters or themes—rhetorical analysis focuses on the individual parts of a text to show *how* language works to create the effects the writer wants. In other words, in addition to content, writers use rhetorical strategies to deliver and strengthen their ideas and thus influence their readers. A rhetorical analysis should, therefore, address the **rhetorical situation**, or conditions of communication that surround the rhetoric. These consist of the author (who), message (what), readers (to whom), purpose (why), means (how), context (where and when), and culture (community).

Culture refers to the way of life that a defined group of people establish. Their beliefs, laws, customs, and habits represent them as a group and may provide a signature to identify who they are and what they have accomplished. Rhetorical analysis must take these factors into full consideration, especially because cultural patterns are constantly changing and evolving with new knowledge and behaviors. Moreover, culture will vary greatly from group to group. Subgroups within a larger culture—for example, minorities within a majority population—may have distinct expressions of culture. When rhetorical analysis approaches language of a particular culture, questions may arise about who is best equipped to do the analysis and on what criteria, based on time and place.

Writers of rhetorical analyses consider these elements carefully and ask questions based on them. *What are the goals of the author of the text? What factors are at play in the author's choice of strategies used to make a rhetorical impact? What may occur in the interaction between the writer and reader? Will readers approach the piece neutrally, with no previous opinions? Are they likely to agree because they are of the same opinion, or are they hostile and ready to reject the arguments? Have they heard or read the ideas before? Will the ideas be too radical or too familiar? Are readers likely to see the author as sharing the field with them or as a stranger who must win their confidence?*

The Workings of Rhetorical Analysis

The aim of rhetorical analysis is not to find agreement with or praise for the writer, although either may be implied or stated. The essential task of analyzing requires a detachment that will convince the readers of the *validity* and *effectiveness* (or lack thereof) of the writing by identifying the writer's tools and what they accomplish.

As you formulate your rhetorical analysis, be aware of the following approaches and strategies that writers use to persuade an audience. Your goal will be to identify them in your analysis, explain their use, and evaluate their effectiveness.

- **Establishing credibility.** Writers include their credentials or experience with the subject to ensure that readers will take them seriously as someone who knows what they're talking about. To reinforce their authority, they cite reliable sources as support for their points.
- **Sharing personal experience.** Sharing a personal experience related to the subject enhances credibility and may also appeal to readers' emotions.
- **Targeting emotional concerns.** By specifically addressing those incidents or outcomes that readers may fear or desire, the author can rally them to take a particular position. Emotional concerns also include appeals to the five senses and to broader sentiments such as love, loyalty, anger, justice, or patriotism.

- **Using devices that draw attention to claims.** These include literary devices such as parallelism, repetition, and rhetorical questions that writers and speakers use to emphasize points and unify a text.
- **Supporting claims with convincing evidence.** Ways of supporting claims include quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing expert opinions; relating anecdotes and examples; and citing appropriate statistics and facts.
- **Acknowledging the opposition.** If a writer makes a point of explaining other groups' positions carefully and respectfully, readers from those groups, as well as the target audience, are more likely to be responsive to the writer. By acknowledging the opposition, writers show they have considered opposing views and can then demonstrate that their position is preferable.
- **Questioning the motivation of the opposition.** By exposing others' possibly conflicting interests, the writer can undermine the credibility of an opponent's character or argument.

In addition to these, writers may use more questionable rhetorical devices to persuade readers. While the techniques of each strategy differ, all lead away from the actual argument and seek to persuade through means other than reasonable, logical thought. Such strategies include bandwagon, ad hominem (name-calling), bait and switch, and more. Recall the roommates' use of some of these in their efforts at persuasion in Breaking the Whole into Its Parts.

Rhetorical Strategies in Advertising and Public Policy

The strategies and other devices of rhetorical writing that are open to analysis are present in many types of communication, including multimodal examples such as advertisements that combine visuals with carefully crafted texts, dialogue, and voice-over.



FIGURE 9.3 M&Ms (credit: "Plain M&Ms Pile" by Evan-Amos/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

Look at the M&Ms commercial, for example, in this collection (https://openstax.org/r/this-collection) of Super Bowl ads. Starting at minute 4:57, the prize-winning ad for M&Ms initially shows the widely recognizable candy in its multiple colors as both speaking cartoon figures and symbols of human behavior. The simple pitch: when people have offended others in one of a range of interpersonal blunders, the candy is offered as a peace offering. For example, the first image shows a man on a plane bumping into another passenger's seat, causing him to spill his drink. The offender then offers the passenger a package of M&Ms. What is the rhetorical strategy behind the situation and the gesture? The ad appeals to pathos in the sense that people feel the need

to be liked. Despite the humorous twist in the comment that he kicked the seat on purpose, the offending man nonetheless doesn't want to be disliked. Nor do the others who commit other blunders. The sense of taste—sweetness—also comes into play, appealing to the senses, as does the sense of sight in the images of the colorful candy.

Furthermore, placing the ad during the Super Bowl targets an audience of game watchers whose ages, interests, and habits have been studied. They may be in a snacking frame of mind, so the appeal of candy is timely (kairos). The ad combines sophistication, appropriate adult behavior, and childishly amusing animation and personification. Seeing the product makes it more memorable. On the other hand, note the subtle use of the bandwagon fallacy: different people in different situations are doing the same thing—offering M&Ms. The bandwagon implication is that if you do something you're sorry for or should be sorry for (or even if you don't), giving out M&Ms is the way to apologize and be likable. Because travelers, businesspeople, the religiously observant, and others from different walks of life are doing it, so should you.



FIGURE 9.4 Smokey Bear has been the symbol of wildfire prevention since 1944. (credit: "Dear Smokey" by Rudy Wendelin/Special Collections, USDA National Agricultural Library, Public Domain)

Figure 9.4 is an image from the U.S. Forest Service that also reflects the use of rhetorical strategies. Smokey Bear is a symbol created in 1944 to raise awareness of the danger of forest fires. Images of this gentle, personified bear are often accompanied by the slogan "Remember . . . only you can prevent forest fires" or a variation of it. The image shows Smokey dressed in rolled-up jeans, a name belt, and a ranger's hat. He is reading letters delivered by a mail truck and sent to his own ZIP code, 20252, from children and adults promising to cooperate with his environmental efforts. The entire image is among the most recognizable of American cultural symbols.

The continuing identification of the bear and his appeal over decades is an example of the powerful use of rhetorical devices that speak without seeming to become dated and lose impact. First, a wild and dangerous animal is personified and made credible so that the credibility (ethos) of Smokey as a domesticated father figure with a fuzzy, playful cub climbing on the family mailbox removes any sense of danger and instead makes him into a believable voice for safety. No humans are emphasized in the illustration; the mail truck is seen only in the distance after having delivered another stack of fan mail. Other small animals are present in the background, as are familiar household items such as a shovel, a mailbox, an American flag, a boat on crystal clear water, and the playful images of the ranger's hat and rolled-up jeans on crossed legs. The drawing features bright primary colors and the dark forest green of bountiful nature. The print medium in the center of the illustration, the sign reading "Prevent forest fires," unifies the visual.

Because the images are emotionally accessible to children as well as adults, they appeal to widely shared pathos. The unspoken implication is that preventing forest fires will allow these young animals and forest plants to live rather than die in a carelessly started—and deadly—fire. In addition, it will allow human life to continue safely and pleasurably, as viewers can see, far in the background, people sailing and enjoying the water. If children's wisdom and receptivity to images are present, this idealized picture has great appeal. Rather than a harsh rebuke for adult negligence, the lesson of Smokey relies on the power of rhetoric to modify behavior with specific, carefully crafted appeals. Yet the most frequently used slogan, "Only you can prevent forest fires," is an example of hyperbole. Certainly "you" are not the sole person responsible for starting or preventing fires. Other people and other factors are at work aside from yourself.

More explicit, however, is this earlier image:



FIGURE 9.5 Dating from about 1960, this image shows a member of the Boy Scouts and a member of the Camp Fire Girls with Smokey. (credit: "Smokey with Scouts" by United States Department of Agriculture/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

The rhetorical strategy again is pathos, appealing to a sense of guilt. If these children can help prevent fires, then surely adults can do the same, as they are likely more knowledgeable and care for the safety and health of their children.

Rhetorical Analysis: Key Terms

Rhetorical Appeals

When doing a rhetorical analysis, notice these appeals writers use to persuade their audiences.

- **Ethos:** believable, authoritative voice that elicits credibility and audience trust.
- **Kairos:** sense of appropriate timing when attempting to persuade.
- **Logos:** credible information—facts, reasons, or examples—presented as evidence that moves toward a sensible and acceptable conclusion.
- **Pathos:** the use of appeals to feelings and emotions shared by an audience. Some of the general categories are fear, guilt, anger, love, loyalty, patriotism, and duty.

Rhetorical Devices and Language Use

When doing a rhetorical analysis, notice these devices writers use to organize and emphasize their writing.

- **Figurative language:** similes and metaphors. Comparing one aspect of things that in other ways are completely different is an essential part of rhetorical language. Simile example: "The treasure chest of nature's wonders shone like a pirate's gold tooth." Metaphor example: "The pizza was a disk of saucy sunlight."
- **Numerical data:** statistics and figures. When accurate, numerical data can strengthen an argument.
- **Parallel structure:** repetition of the same pattern of words to show that ideas are equally significant. Parallel structure, or parallelism, calls attention to these ideas, achieves balance, and makes the statements more memorable. Example: "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country."
- **Personification:** giving an inanimate or nonhuman object human characteristics to make it seem alive and relatable. Examples: "The virus packed its bags and spread across the ocean"; "Twitter erupted in outrage."
- **Repetition:** repeating a single word or group of words to build emphasis. Example: "The first cause is poverty; the second cause is poor health; the third cause is discrimination. These causes have been studied, but to what effect?"
- **Rhetorical question:** a question that is not expected to be answered, one for which there is no answer, or one that creates a dramatic effect. Examples: "Has it occurred to you to ask why the economy is so unstable? A first point to consider is . . ."; "Do you think poverty will go away by itself?"
- **Understatement:** presenting something as less important than it is as a way of distancing from the truth. Understatement is often used sarcastically or ironically. Example: "It may not have occurred to politicians that poverty leads to a host of health-related issues."

Rhetorical Fallacies

When doing a rhetorical analysis, notice these fallacies writers may use to unethically persuade their audiences.

- **Ad hominem:** logical fallacy that attempts to discredit a person, not an argument. *Ad hominem*, meaning "against the man," is often termed *name-calling*. Examples: "She's just a leftover from another era who can't accept change"; "He's a stupid bully and an outright thief."
- **Bait and switch:** logical fallacy that introduces a point about one thing that is likely to be accepted and then changes the terms once initial agreement occurs. Example: "Buy these phones at this price before they're all gone!" When you go to buy one, moments later, the phones are gone—and they're far more expensive.
- **Bandwagon:** logical fallacy often used in advertising and propaganda. It tries to make people do something or think a certain way because everyone is doing it, and if they don't go along, they will be excluded. Example: "Everyone is buying these sneakers; get yours now before you're left out." Negative example: "This style is so dated; no one wears things like this now."
- **Causal fallacy:** the faulty logic of claiming or believing that an event that follows another event is the result of it. For example, losing your keys after going to a concert does not mean the events are connected causally; going to the concert did not cause you to lose your keys.
- **Hyperbole:** exaggeration. Hyperbole is one of the staples of advertising language. Examples: "Season's Best Peppermint Glazed Delights"; "I have a ton of homework."

9.4 Annotated Student Sample: "Rhetorical Analysis: Evicted by Matthew Desmond" by Eliana Evans

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the ways a student writer has analyzed the rhetorical strategies in a persuasive text.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving when reading a rhetorical analysis.

Introduction

Matthew Desmond (b. 1979 or 1980) is a sociology professor at Princeton University. He has published four books, each addressing issues of poverty or racial inequality in American life. He has been recognized by the Politico 50 list as an important contributing voice to national political debate. In the analysis that follows, student Eliana Evans examines Desmond's work from a rhetorical perspective.



FIGURE 9.6 Matthew Desmond discusses *Evicted* at the Library of Congress. (credit: "Matthew Desmond at 2017 National Book Festival" by United States Library of Congress/Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

LIVING BY THEIR OWN WORDS

Story as Persuasion

> Imagine it's Friday—payday. One American worker picks up her check for $637. Now, imagine that $550 will go toward rent, leaving only a small amount for everything else. The remaining $87 must be divided among food, utilities, childcare, and medical treatment. Unfortunately, many of the nation's poor don't have to imagine this troubling scenario because this is their reality. In his book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, ethnographer and author Matthew Desmond follows eight poor families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as they struggle to establish and maintain one of humanity's most basic needs: housing. As an ethnographer, Desmond gathers research to promote the study and documentation of human culture: how people live under all kinds of conditions.

Ethos. *By mentioning Desmond's qualifications as an ethnographer, Eliana Evans appeals to ethos: Desmond is an authority whose opinions can be taken seriously.*

Introductory Anecdote. *By beginning with a real-life example and addressing the reader directly, the writer immediately emphasizes Desmond's hard-hitting point. This strategy engages readers from the start.*

> Living and working in the typical mid-size American city of Milwaukee in the early 2000s, Desmond highlights the source of the cyclical poverty he observes around him. He concludes that unstable housing is "deeply . . . implicated in the creation of poverty" (5).

Thesis Statement. *The writer notes that Desmond offers his thesis statement, or the main point of his argument, without delay, building off the specific example in the introduction.*

> Throughout his book, Desmond explains that inflated rents and evictions— the forced loss of housing—create power imbalances between landlords and tenants. Legal and economic systems rigged against the poor are to blame for creating an unbreakable cycle of poverty for renters. To advance his deductive argument, Desmond largely employs emotional anecdotal evidence, introducing readers to the real-life circumstances of eight families, thus using pathos to reach his readers. To reinforce this anecdotal evidence, he also employs logical statistical evidence as well as emotional allusions to the nation's founding principle of equality.

> To bring his book to life, Desmond uses many quotations from the people he portrays in the cycle of poverty. Early in the book, he describes the life of Sherrena Tarver, an entrepreneur landlord who owns and manages numerous properties and has to evict nonpaying tenants in the most difficult circumstance. At one point, she faces a tough decision about Lamar, a legless man who occupies an apartment where he helps neighborhood boys stay in school and control their lives. He simply cannot meet his financial responsibilities, and Sherrena is torn between helping him and protecting her own bottom line. "I guess I got to stop feeling sorry for these people because nobody is feeling sorry for me," she states (11). She will have to pay her own mortgage on the property. No connection exists if others do not feel sorry for Sherrena, who has to face her own inner conflict about Lamar.

Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. *Desmond speaks with authority as someone who cares deeply about the injustices of the housing situation. Evans notes that Desmond also relies on emotional and logical thought and examples, and she shows this in his quotations.*

> Although his book identifies unstable housing as a cause of poverty, Desmond writes for the purpose of creating empathy in voters and establishing facts that policy makers cannot ignore to remedy the housing trap. The moving description of eviction and its effects allows readers to fully appreciate his proposed solutions. As a main point, Desmond advocates for legislation that would establish a universal housing voucher program combined with government regulation to stabilize rents. He explains that voucher "programs lift roughly 2.8 million people out of poverty" each year (302). If these programs were expanded and supported by laws that would prevent landlords from establishing exploitative rents, many more people could be helped. Desmond hopes to convince voters who have been moved by his ethnographic discussion to elect candidates who are serious about ending poverty and creating a more equal America.

Language Use. *Evans uses the phrase "as a main point" to emphasize to readers that Desmond strongly believes in the voucher system.*

> In support of his argument, Desmond presents multiple anecdotal examples to illustrate the root of the cyclical poverty his subjects face. For example, in Chapter 16, Kamala, a middle-aged mother of three, leaves her children for one evening in the care of Devon, their father. Later, a fire caused by a lamp kills their eight-month-old daughter. The apartment is uninhabitable, but the landlord, Sherrena, keeps the month's rent. The police report that the three children, abandoned by Devon, were alone in the apartment. The high cost of monthly rent leaves Kamala with few options for proper childcare, and without childcare, she has few options for employment. The exploitation by landlords such as Sherrena only intensifies the tenant's poverty. Kamala, who still has two children to support, is left with no home, no money, and little means of survival. Her story, and the stories of the many others Desmond chronicles, supports the argument that unstable housing is a cause of poverty, not a condition.

Examples and Pathos. *Desmond's discussion gains emotional strength from the story of a child's needless death.*

Pathos and Logos. *The logic of the situation is that a family must endure hardship with little support. The overwhelming need and the trap of poverty in poor housing make for strong logical and emotional persuasion.*

> Desmond relays the stories of Kamala and others to generate empathy with readers. These stories create emotional appeal in that they allow readers to experience the spiraling effects of poverty along with people they come to care about. Indeed, Desmond relies on the intensity of Kamala's story to give poverty a face. Kamala is no longer a nameless, faceless statistic. She is a real woman who experiences the loss of a child as a result of circumstances beyond her control. Kamala's story helps break the preconception that poor people are lazy and make individual choices to perpetuate their own poverty. Her situation illustrates a cycle of unbreakable tragedy and poverty that begins with her inability to secure affordable and stable housing. The details of her story make it hard for the public to ignore.

> Desmond does not rely on anecdotal evidence alone. He also includes statistical evidence to support his argument.

Logical Evidence. *The writer notes Desmond's use of quantitative evidence—an appeal to logic. Readers are eager to learn facts that will strengthen the impact of Desmond's argument.*

> In the prologue, Desmond explains that Arleen pays "88 percent of [her] $628-a-month welfare check" in rent (3). This disproportionate sum creates a situation in which "1 in 8 poor renting families nationwide [are] unable to pay all of their rent" (5). In Milwaukee, "landlords evict roughly 16,000 adults and children each year" (4). Such numbers go beyond empathy and instead appeal to logic. Policy makers are likely to reject the idea of drafting laws to relieve poverty based on feelings or empathy. Statistics, however, provide hard numbers that are not subject to debate and that reinforce the need for logical and realistic solutions. Desmond also notes that eviction and its effects have been vastly ignored by sociologists. These statistics fight preconceptions such as *Why don't poor people just get jobs?* In addition, by using personification, Desmond explains that poverty is a formidable enemy that a minimum-wage job cannot defeat.

Logos. *As a skilled writer, Desmond knows that if political action is called for, he will have to present a heavy dose of facts and numbers. Evans notes that readers are more likely to be persuaded by a combination of different rhetorical strategies, such as pathos and logos.*

Personification. *Evans notes that Desmond uses figurative language to personify the idea of poverty, calling it "a formidable enemy."*

> Finally, Desmond appeals to his readers' sense of right and wrong when he asks a key rhetorical question: Is housing a fundamental American right? If readers answer "yes," then it is un-American to systematically lock poor people away from the founding ideals of the country through housing, banking, and legal systems that work to guarantee their poverty. The American dream is one of equal opportunity. Yet, despite the constitutional guarantee of civil rights, the poor people who struggle to maintain housing in Desmond's Milwaukee are further separated from the American dream by race.

> For example, in Chapter 3, Desmond describes the segregation that has long plagued Milwaukee: despite the "open housing measure" guaranteed by "the 1968 Civil Rights Act," Milwaukee "remain[s] one of the most racially divided cities in the nation" (34). The housing divide in Milwaukee not only keeps poor people from achieving the American dream of stable and affordable housing, but it also supports a system of segregation that goes against the founding ideal of equality.

Logos and Pathos. *Desmond addresses the issue of right vs. wrong. He attempts to persuade readers by offering examples that make them think about the legal aspects of housing (logos) and the effects that deprivation have on individuals (pathos).*

> Desmond's argument is enticing in many ways. However, critics point out that he proposes a solution that fixes only the short-term problem of sustaining stable housing with a universal voucher program that provides no incentive for work. The long-term problem, which Desmond never addresses, would have to include a solution that would raise a massive number of people out of poverty by enabling them to sustain reliable housing, along with other living expenses, without relying heavily on government assistance. Vouchers may begin to eat away at the root of poverty, but they are a short-term, rather than a long-term, fix.

Addressing Counterclaims. *Evans is careful to include some possibly negative views of Desmond's main points to indicate that she has considered all sides before reaching a final verdict on the validity of his argument.*

> In the end, though, Desmond's argument is effective because he provides ample evidence with varying appeals to support his claims. The use of anecdotes allows readers to feel the pain of poverty. Desmond's statistical research shows logical reasons to end poverty through universal housing. The mentions of founding principles such as equality show that readers have a moral obligation as Americans to participate in a solution to the housing crisis.

> Although much of Desmond's book relies on its anecdotal evidence and emotional appeal, it is his logic that ultimately proves convincing. He identifies a tangible cause of poverty, then offers an equally tangible solution to the problem he describes. If having stable and affordable housing will help end poverty and thus improve society, then the government should provide this through vouchers and rent regulation.

Conclusion and Thesis Statement Reaffirmed. *Evans praises Desmond for his rhetorical ability to appeal to readers in different ways. She claims that his logical approach, presenting facts and figures along with emotional appeals, should be enough to convince the government to act.*

Work Cited

Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City.* Broadway Books, 2016.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Eliana Evans begins her rhetorical analysis with an example about the problems of paying rent and living on a reduced income?
2. How does Evans portray Desmond as someone worth listening to?
3. How does Evans evaluate Desmond's use of logic in arguing his points?
4. According to Evans, how does Desmond use pathos in persuading readers?
5. What is Evans's final opinion of Desmond's ability to persuade? Explain.

9.5 Writing Process: Thinking Critically about Rhetoric

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Develop a rhetorical analysis through multiple drafts.
- Identify and analyze rhetorical strategies in a rhetorical analysis.
- Demonstrate flexible strategies for generating ideas, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, and editing.
- Give and act on productive feedback for works in progress.

The ability to think critically about rhetoric is a skill you will use in many of your classes, in your work, and in your life to gain insight from the way a text is written and organized. You will often be asked to explain or to express an opinion about what someone else has communicated and how that person has done so, especially if you take an active interest in politics and government. Like Eliana Evans in the previous section, you will develop similar analyses of written works to help others understand *how* a writer or speaker may be trying to reach them.

Summary of Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis

The assignment is to write a rhetorical analysis of a piece of persuasive writing. It can be an editorial, a movie or book review, an essay, a chapter in a book, or a letter to the editor. For your rhetorical analysis, you will need to consider the rhetorical situation—subject, author, purpose, context, audience, and culture—and the strategies the author uses in creating the argument. Back up all your claims with evidence from the text. In preparing your analysis, consider these questions:

- What is the subject? Be sure to distinguish what the piece is about.
- Who is the writer, and what do you know about them? Be sure you know whether the writer is considered objective or has a particular agenda.
- Who are the readers? What do you know or what can you find out about them as the particular audience to be addressed at this moment?
- What is the purpose or aim of this work? What does the author hope to achieve?
- What are the time/space/place considerations and influences of the writer? What can you know about the writer and the full context in which they are writing?
- What specific techniques has the writer used to make their points? Are these techniques successful, unsuccessful, or questionable?

For this assignment, read the following opinion piece by Octavio Peterson, printed in his local newspaper. You may choose it as the text you will analyze, continuing the analysis on your own, or you may refer to it as a sample as you work on another text of your choosing. Your instructor may suggest presidential or other political speeches, which make good subjects for rhetorical analysis.

When you have read the piece by Peterson advocating for the need to continue teaching foreign languages in schools, reflect carefully on the impact the letter has had on you. You are not expected to agree or disagree with it. Instead, focus on the rhetoric—the way Peterson uses language to make his point and convince you of the validity of his argument.

Another Lens. Consider presenting your rhetorical analysis in a multimodal format. Use a blogging site or platform such as WordPress or Tumblr to explore the blogging genre, which includes video clips, images, hyperlinks, and other media to further your discussion. Because this genre is less formal than written text, your tone can be conversational. However, you still will be required to provide the same kind of analysis that you would in a traditional essay. The same materials will be at your disposal for making appeals to persuade your readers. Rhetorical analysis in a blog may be a new forum for the exchange of ideas that retains the basics of more formal communication. When you have completed your work, share it with a small group or the rest of

the class. See Multimodal and Online Writing: Creative Interaction between Text and Image for more about creating a multimodal composition.

GREENDALE DAILY COURIER

READERS' VIEWS

I am writing as both a concerned parent and a citizen in response to the recently announced Board of Managers forum to be held at City Hall on the allocation of resources for education. Among the items for discussion is the likelihood that budget cuts for next year will result in the curtailment of foreign-language instruction—a move that needs serious reconsideration.

I've spent most of my life in Greendale and graduated from elementary and high school before going to Westover State for my engineering degree. For 18 years, I've worked in Greendale city management, and my children are in school here. I have always supported the heroic efforts of teachers and administrators in making our schools as fine as they have come to be, and I have tried to keep myself informed about school policies. Now, however, as an active and loyal member of this community, I am alarmed by the announcement that an integral part of the curriculum is under financial strain and might vanish like a puff of smoke. Once gone, soon forgotten—to the detriment of all of us.

What am I referring to, you ask? Look at the middle of page 4 in the recent publication of plans for a revised city budget: Some know-nothing, who dares not be identified, has stated that all foreign-language instruction may be stopped in the next school year. This very "unimportant" item, which another coward has sought to bury conveniently, actually counts for a lot with me, counts with many others, and should count a lot for you as well. Indeed, this looming catastrophe could actually be a great opportunity to *reinforce*—not *reduce*—a commitment that needs *renewing*, not canceling! Rather than end it, we must continue it. Rather than curtail it, we must make it as strong as neighboring school districts are doing. If we don't, we will be the only district without it. Do we want our children left with an educational disadvantage? Do we want property values and tax revenue to plummet as parents flee from an inferior school district?

Folks may think I'm just talking off the top of my head, but I've done some reading to find out what other states have going on. And what I see isn't good. Not good at all, in fact. Only 20% of K–12 students nationwide study a foreign language. We, however, have enjoyed the benefits of learning for so long because we are ranked among the "nation's finest" as far as educational opportunity. And that's a reason a lot of us live here.

Yet if the rest of the country trails us—and that is shameful, but there is nothing we can do about it—the rest of the world does not! Indeed, some countries in Europe have 100% of their elementary and secondary school students learning a second language, and many study a third! English is most often what they choose to learn. And in the good ol' U.S., over 10% of K–12 students are actually learning English as a second language while speaking another at home, all the way from California with almost 20% to West Virginia with less than 1%! This statistic proves that kids learn easily, and in fact it gives them a competitive edge over the other 80% of American kids who won't know a word of anything but English.

All over Europe, all over Asia, all over Africa and South America, millions of people know and use English. It has become an international language of commerce, travel, entertainment, and politics. They can communicate with us as well as they communicate in their first languages. That may be very convenient because we think we don't have to learn another language. But think about it: We are at a DIS-advantage here both in everyday communication and in business negotiations. We need to understand how business is done overseas, how people of other nationalities think and act, and be able to do that without relying on interpreters. Indeed, knowing another person's language is a great advantage, for you can understand what the interpreter doesn't translate.

Knowing only one language isolates us culturally and gives the impression we don't give a hang, that we are OK with being know-nothings and are somehow better than other people. Don't we care about that?

And forget business for a minute. In a global society, people will need to communicate in languages other than English. My sister is a doctor who uses Spanish every day in her work as she deals with patients in life-threatening situations. Fortunately, she has the skill of speaking another language. Whether we're doctors or anything else, at some point we will face a situation in which knowing another language will be helpful or even crucial.

Is ignorance and arrogance the impression we want to give others? We can do much better! I know budgets are limited by state cutbacks, and tough decisions must be made about how to allocate tax dollars. But for so long we have offered students something. Sure, some students are sitting at home secretly rejoicing in a watered-down curriculum that will free up some extra time for texting and hanging out. Sure, some dislike having to learn Spanish or Chinese and have never seen the need for it. But just like lots of things in life, we know it's "good for us" in the long run, don't we? I do know that some colleges have done away with foreign-language requirements for their own reasons, and many residents here and elsewhere think that is the road to travel now for financial reasons.

But I think just the opposite: we are shortchanging our future leaders, our city, our state, our country, and our place in the world if we shrink our horizons, pull in our horns, and build in narrow perspectives.

Please, won't you stand with me on this, as so many others already have, to use our resources in the best ways? Let's not allow our children to lag behind our neighbors here and abroad, for without knowledge and the ability to communicate, we are doomed.

Your neighbor,

Octavio D. Peterson

Octavio D. Peterson

octaviosemail@anyonesmail.com

Quick Launch: Start with a Thesis Statement

After you have read this opinion piece, or another of your choice, several times and have a clear understanding of it as a piece of rhetoric, consider whether the writer has succeeded in being persuasive. You might find that in some ways they have and in others they have not. Then, with a clear understanding of your purpose—to analyze how the writer seeks to persuade—you can start framing a **thesis statement**: a declarative sentence

that states the topic, the angle you are taking, and the aspects of the topic the rest of the paper will support.

Complete the following sentence frames as you prepare to start:

1. The subject of my rhetorical analysis is _____.
2. My goal is to _____, not necessarily to _____.
3. The writer's main point is _____.
4. I believe the writer has succeeded (or not) because _____.
5. I believe the writer has succeeded in _____ (name the part or parts) but not in _____ (name the part or parts).
6. The writer's strongest (or weakest) point is _____, which they present by _____.

Drafting: Text Evidence and Analysis of Effect

As you begin to draft your rhetorical analysis, remember that you are giving your opinion on the author's use of language. For example, Peterson has made a decision about the teaching of foreign languages, something readers of the newspaper might have different views on. In other words, there is room for debate and persuasion.

The context of the situation in which Peterson finds himself may well be more complex than he discusses. In the same way, the context of the piece you choose to analyze may also be more complex. For example, perhaps Greendale is facing an economic crisis and *must* pare its budget for educational spending and public works. It's also possible that elected officials have made budget cuts for education a part of their platform or that school buildings have been found obsolete for safety measures. On the other hand, maybe a foreign company will come to town only if more Spanish speakers can be found locally. These factors would play a part in a real situation, and rhetoric would reflect that. If applicable, consider such possibilities regarding the subject of your analysis. Here, however, these factors are unknown and thus do not enter into the analysis.

Introduction

One effective way to begin a rhetorical analysis is by using an anecdote, as Eliana Evans has done. For a rhetorical analysis of the opinion piece, a writer might consider an anecdote about a person who was in a situation in which knowing another language was important or not important. If they begin with an anecdote, the next part of the introduction should contain the following information:

- Author's name and position, or other qualification to establish ethos
- Title of work and genre
- Author's thesis statement or stance taken ("Peterson argues that . . .")
- Brief introductory explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis or stance
- If relevant, a brief summary of context and culture

Once the context and situation for the analysis are clear, move directly to your thesis statement. In this case, your thesis statement will be your opinion of how successful the author has been in achieving the established goal through the use of rhetorical strategies. Read the sentences in Table 9.1, and decide which would make the best thesis statement. Explain your reasoning in the right-hand column of this or a similar chart.

Sentence	Why or Why Not?
Only 50 percent of the students have said they want to study Spanish or any other language, so statistics show a lack of interest in spite of Octavio Peterson's rhetorical claims.	
A public vote should be taken to see how many residents support Octavio Peterson's rhetoric and ideas on language and whether his divisive opinion can be considered as it stands.	
Because Octavio Peterson's ideas on foreign language teaching are definitely worthy of support, I will summarize his letter and show why he is correct.	
This analysis of Peterson's language shows how he uses rhetorical strategies to persuade readers to consider the future of language learning in the city's schools.	

TABLE 9.1 Thesis statement choices

The introductory paragraph or paragraphs should serve to move the reader into the body of the analysis and signal what will follow.

Body

Your next step is to start supporting your thesis statement—that is, how Octavio Peterson, or the writer of your choice, does or does not succeed in persuading readers. To accomplish this purpose, you need to look closely at the rhetorical strategies the writer uses.

First, list the rhetorical strategies you notice while reading the text, and note where they appear. Keep in mind that you do not need to include every strategy the text contains, only those essential ones that emphasize or support the central argument and those that may seem fallacious. You may add other strategies as well. The first example in Table 9.2 has been filled in.

Rhetorical Device/ Strategy	Paragraph(s) Location	Effect on Argument
Ethos, credibility	First, second, fourth	By referring to himself, his education, his job, and his community involvement as a parent and concerned resident and by saying he has researched the subject, the writer establishes credibility.
Pathos, emotion		
Logos, reason		

TABLE 9.2 Rhetorical strategies

Rhetorical Device/ Strategy	Paragraph(s) Location	Effect on Argument
Kairos, timeliness		
Repetition		
Figurative language		
Speaking familiarly or "folksily"		
Rhetorical question		
Parallel structure		
Addressing counterclaims		
Bandwagon		
Ad hominem (name-calling)		
Hyperbole (exaggeration)		
Causal fallacy		

TABLE 9.2 Rhetorical strategies

When you have completed your list, consider how to structure your analysis. You will have to decide which of the writer's statements are most effective. The strongest point would be a good place to begin; conversely, you could begin with the writer's weakest point if that suits your purposes better. The most obvious organizational structure is one of the following:

- Go through the composition paragraph by paragraph and analyze its rhetorical content, focusing on the strategies that support the writer's thesis statement.
- Address key rhetorical strategies individually, and show how the author has used them.

As you read the next few paragraphs, consult Table 9.3 for a visual plan of your rhetorical analysis. Your first body paragraph is the first of the analytical paragraphs. Here, too, you have options for organizing. You might begin by stating the writer's strongest point. For example, you could emphasize that Peterson appeals to ethos by speaking personally to readers as fellow citizens and providing his credentials to establish credibility as someone trustworthy with their interests at heart.

Following this point, your next one can focus, for instance, on Peterson's view that cutting foreign language

instruction is a danger to the education of Greendale's children. The points that follow support this argument, and you can track his rhetoric as he does so.

You may then use the second or third body paragraph, connected by a transition, to discuss Peterson's appeal to logos. One possible transition might read, "To back up his assertion that omitting foreign languages is detrimental to education, Peterson provides examples and statistics." Locate examples and quotes from the text as needed. You can discuss how, in citing these statistics, Peterson uses logos as a key rhetorical strategy.

In another paragraph, focus on other rhetorical elements, such as parallelism, repetition, and rhetorical questions. Moreover, be sure to indicate whether the writer acknowledges counterclaims and whether they are accepted or ultimately rejected.

The question of other factors at work in Greendale regarding finances, or similar factors in another setting, may be useful to mention here if they exist. As you continue, however, keep returning to your list of rhetorical strategies and explaining them. Even if some appear less important, they should be noted to show that you recognize how the writer is using language. You will likely have a minimum of four body paragraphs, but you may well have six or seven or even more, depending on the work you are analyzing.

In your final body paragraph, you might discuss the argument that Peterson, for example, has made by appealing to readers' emotions. His calls for solidarity at the end of the letter provide a possible solution to his concern that the foreign language curriculum "might vanish like a puff of smoke."

Use Table 9.3 to organize your rhetorical analysis. Be sure that each paragraph has a topic sentence and that you use transitions to flow smoothly from one idea to the next.

Body paragraph 1	Write a topic sentence explaining your first point of analysis. If you begin with what you think is the writer's strongest point, state what it is and explain the rhetorical strategies used to support it. Provide appropriate quotations from the text. Suggestion: Address ethos, pathos, and logos first. You may need more than one paragraph to cover them.
Body paragraph 2	If needed, continue your discussion of ethos, pathos, and/or logos, explaining how they function in the text and providing examples. Once you have completed your discussion, move on to your next point, which will address one or more specific strategies used.
Body paragraph 3	Following a transition, write a topic sentence to address another point or points in the text. Discuss the strategies used, provide examples and quotations as appropriate, and show how they support (or don't support) the writer's thesis statement. Consider rhetorical strategies such as parallelism, repetition, rhetorical questions, and figurative language.
Body paragraphs 4–6 (or more if needed)	Continue as needed. In this paragraph, you might point out rhetorical fallacies, such as bandwagon, ad hominem, or any others you notice, if you have not yet done so. Indicate how they strengthen or weaken the writer's position. If you have already addressed all the elements of your analysis, discuss the writer's approach to counterclaims. You may need more than four body paragraphs for your rhetorical analysis.

TABLE 9.3 Drafting organizer

Conclusion

As you conclude your essay, your own logic in discussing the writer's argument will make it clear whether you have found their claims convincing. Your opinion, as framed in your conclusion, may restate your thesis

statement in different words, or you may choose to reveal your thesis at this point. The real function of the conclusion is to confirm your evaluation and show that you understand the use of the language and the effectiveness of the argument.

In your analysis, note that objections could be raised because Peterson, for example, speaks only for himself. You may speculate about whether the next edition of the newspaper will feature an opposing opinion piece from someone who disagrees. However, it is not necessary to provide answers to questions you raise here. Your conclusion should summarize briefly how the writer has made, or failed to make, a forceful argument that may require further debate.

For more guidance on writing a rhetorical analysis, visit the Illinois Writers Workshop website (https://openstax.org/r/Illinois) or watch this tutorial (https://openstax.org/r/this-tutorial).

Peer Review: Guidelines toward Revision and the "Golden Rule"

Now that you have a working draft, your next step is to engage in peer review, an important part of the writing process. Often, others can identify things you have missed or can ask you to clarify statements that may be clear to you but not to others. For your peer review, follow these steps and make use of Table 9.4.

1. Quickly skim through your peer's rhetorical analysis draft once, and then ask yourself, *What is the main point or argument of my peer's work?*
2. Highlight, underline, or otherwise make note of statements or instances in the paper where you think your peer has made their main point.
3. Look at the draft again, this time reading it closely.

4. Ask yourself the following questions, and comment on the peer review sheet as shown.

Peer Review: Rhetorical Analysis

Name of Writer: _____ Name of Reviewer: _____

Title

- Is the title of this work straightforward and consistent with the content? If not, how can your peer revise their title?
- If the title is more creative, does it attract readers and make them want to read further? If not, how can your peer revise the title?

Thesis Statement

- Does the thesis statement succinctly communicate the purpose? If not, how can your peer better communicate this in a thesis statement?
- Does your peer offer an appropriate discussion of their chosen rhetorical topic, purpose, writer, reader(s), and context? If not, how can your peer better address these areas?
- Does your peer address the writer's success in persuading readers and explain how the writer succeeds or does not succeed? If not, how can your peer better provide reasoning and text evidence to support their evaluation?
- Depending on your peer's approach, does the thesis statement appear in an appropriate place? If not, how can your peer improve the placement or strength of the statement?

Body

- Does your peer mention the three major appeals and provide sufficient explanations and examples of their use? If not, what needs to be added or revised?
- Does your peer mention relevant rhetorical strategies and explain their functions? If not, how can your peer improve this part of the analysis?
- Does your peer note any logical fallacies, explain why the author uses them, and analyze their effects on the text? If not, what does your peer need to add or change?
- Does your peer note and explain the writer's counterclaims? If the writer doesn't address them, has your peer noted this omission? If not, what does your peer need to add?

Conclusion

- Does the conclusion support your peer's thesis statement? If not, what revisions does your peer need to make?

TABLE 9.4

The Golden Rule

An important part of the peer review process is to keep in mind the familiar wisdom of the "Golden Rule": treat others as you would have them treat you. This foundational approach to human relations extends to commenting on others' work. Like your peers, you are in the same situation of needing opinion and guidance. Whatever you have written will seem satisfactory or better to you because you have written it and know what you mean to say.

However, your peers have the advantage of distance from the work you have written and can see it through their own eyes. Likewise, if you approach your peer's work fairly and free of personal bias, you're likely to be more constructive in finding parts of their writing that need revision. Most important, though, is to make

suggestions tactfully and considerately, in the spirit of helping, not degrading someone's work. You and your peers may be reluctant to share your work, but if everyone approaches the review process with these ideas in mind, everyone will benefit from the opportunity to provide and act on sincerely offered suggestions.

Revising: Staying Open to Feedback and Working with It

Once the peer review process is complete, your next step is to revise the first draft by incorporating suggestions and making changes on your own. Consider some of these potential issues when incorporating peers' revisions and rethinking your own work.

- Too much summarizing rather than analyzing
- Too much informal language or an unintentional mix of casual and formal language
- Too few, too many, or inappropriate transitions
- Illogical or unclear sequence of information
- Insufficient evidence to support main ideas effectively
- Too many generalities rather than specific facts, maybe from trying to do too much in too little time

In any case, revising a draft is a necessary step to produce a final work. Rarely will even a professional writer arrive at the best point in a single draft. In other words, it's seldom a problem if your first draft needs refocusing. However, it may become a problem if you don't address it. The best way to shape a wandering piece of writing is to return to it, reread it, slow it down, take it apart, and build it back up again. Approach first-draft writing for what it is: a warm-up or rehearsal for a final performance.

Suggestions for Revising

When revising, be sure your thesis statement is clear and fulfills your purpose. Verify that you have abundant supporting evidence and that details are consistently on topic and relevant to your position. Just before arriving at the conclusion, be sure you have prepared a logical ending. The concluding statement should be strong and should not present any new points. Rather, it should grow out of what has already been said and return, in some degree, to the thesis statement. In the example of Octavio Peterson, his purpose was to persuade readers that teaching foreign languages in schools in Greendale should continue; therefore, the conclusion can confirm that Peterson achieved, did not achieve, or partially achieved his aim.

When revising, make sure the larger elements of the piece are as you want them to be before you revise individual sentences and make smaller changes. If you make small changes first, they might not fit well with the big picture later on.

One approach to big-picture revising is to check the organization as you move from paragraph to paragraph. You can list each paragraph and check that its content relates to the purpose and thesis statement. Each paragraph should have one main point and be self-contained in showing how the rhetorical devices used in the text strengthen (or fail to strengthen) the argument and the writer's ability to persuade. Be sure your paragraphs flow logically from one to the other without distracting gaps or inconsistencies.

9.6 Editing Focus: Mixed Sentence Constructions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Apply knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar and punctuation.
- Recognize and correct errors in mixed sentence construction.

A mixed-construction sentence contains parts that do not fit together because of grammatical structure or meaning. These sentence errors occur when writers begin a statement in one way, or one direction, and then unintentionally change grammatical paths. This kind of sentence construction can detract from an otherwise solidly analytical text.

- **Mixed Sentence 1:** Learning to ballroom dance it has shown increased agility, and you live longer.

First Problem: The reader expects a verb to follow "learning to ballroom dance" so that *learning* will mean something. But the word *it* interrupts before the verb appears. *It* collides with the first part of the sentence rather than completing it, and the sentence ends up making little sense.

Second Problem: The second part of the sentence, "and you live longer," is confusing because it introduces *you* instead of continuing the idea of learning to ballroom dance.

To eliminate confusion, you would have to rewrite either the first or the second part of the sentence.

Revised: Studies have shown that learning to ballroom dance increases agility and lengthens life span.

In fact, because it is the dancing itself and not the learning that has these effects, the sentence could be edited further.

Further Revision: Ballroom dancing has been shown to increase agility and lengthen life.

In the following examples, the writer needs to revise either the second part to fit with the first part or the first part to fit with the second.

- **Mixed Sentence 2:** By starting my general studies classes last semester gave me the opportunity to take classes in my major this fall.

  Second Part Revised: By starting my general studies classes last spring, I had the opportunity to take classes in my major this fall.

  First Part Revised: Starting my general studies classes last spring gave me the opportunity to take classes in my major this fall.

Read the following mixed-construction sentences, and note the ways they have been corrected.

- **Mixed Sentence 3:** For people who have hobbies, they are happier than others.

  Revision: People who have hobbies are happier than others.

- **Mixed Sentence 4:** The required qualification is someone who writes well.

  Problem: The qualification is the *ability to write well*, not the person.

  Revision: The required qualification is the ability to write well.

  Further Revision: The company requires someone who writes well.

- **Mixed Sentence 5:** Nurses, an excellent career choice, involves an extra semester.

  Problem: *Nurses* are not a profession, *nursing* is.

  Revision: Nursing, an excellent career choice, involves an extra semester.

Just Because… Doesn't Mean and *Is When* Constructions

Just because . . . doesn't mean constructions are common in speech but should be avoided in writing. They are another example of mixed sentence construction.

- ***Just Because . . .*** *Construction:* Just because I want to work in Washington doesn't mean I'll get a good job there.

  Revision: Simply wanting to work in Washington doesn't guarantee a good job there. **Revision:** Although I want to work in Washington, I will need to find a good job there.

Another common mixed construction in spoken English involves the use of *is when*. This construction should also be avoided in writing.

- ***Is When*** *Construction:* A feeling of accomplishment is when I finish revising a paper.

Problem: "A feeling of accomplishment" is a noun phrase followed by a linking verb. This construction means that what follows the verb either describes the noun or renames it in different words. Therefore, to balance the sentence, you need an adjective or noun to complete the subject. *When*, however, is an adverb referring to time, and in this sentence, it begins an adverb clause. In other words, "a feeling" cannot be the same as or described in terms of time.

Revision: A feeling of accomplishment is finishing revising a paper.

Revision: I feel a sense of accomplishment when I finish revising a paper.

Your Turn

Now, correct the following mixed-construction sentences. After you have finished, go back and check your rhetorical analysis for mixed-construction sentences, and revise them as needed.

1. Putting your computer to sleep is when you can save the most electricity.
2. If you plant your seeds too close, anyone knows tomatoes cannot grow with corn.
3. Swimming in deep water is the danger of tides.
4. Just because you like math doesn't mean to eliminate classes in the humanities.
5. For people who want to be firefighters may have to work long and often intense shifts.

9.7 Evaluation: Rhetorical Analysis

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Evaluate the elements of a rhetorical analysis.
- Identify and correct errors involving mixed sentence structures.
- Evaluate an essay for clarity, coherence, and language.

At various points in your writing, especially after you complete the first draft, check the rubric provided here. Your instructor is likely to use a similar rubric to evaluate your rhetorical analysis. Aligning your writing to applicable points in the rubric—especially to those reflecting a score of 5— will keep you focused and guide you in your work.

Rubric

Score	Critical Language Awareness	Clarity and Coherence	Rhetorical Choices
5 **Skillful**	The text always adheres to the "Editing Focus" of this chapter—mixed sentence constructions, as discussed in Section 9.6—and maintains consistency in constructing the grammatical paths of sentences. The text also shows ample evidence of the writer's intent to consciously meet or challenge conventional expectations in rhetorically effective ways.	The essay presents all information clearly and logically. Well-chosen transitions connect paragraphs and sections, and the essay focuses consistently on its thesis statement. Claims are fully supported with quoted or paraphrased evidence.	The writer skillfully identifies rhetorical strategies and writes with precision and insight. The writer maintains a consistent voice and an awareness of the rhetorical situation.
4 **Accomplished**	The text usually adheres to the "Editing Focus" of this chapter—mixed sentence constructions, as discussed in Section 9.6—and maintains consistency in constructing the grammatical paths of sentences. The text also shows some evidence of the writer's intent to consciously meet or challenge conventional expectations in rhetorically effective ways.	The essay presents most information clearly and logically. Well-chosen transitions connect most paragraphs and sections, and the essay focuses on its thesis statement. Claims are well supported with quoted or paraphrased evidence.	The writer identifies rhetorical strategies and writes with precision and insight. The writer maintains a consistent voice and an awareness of the rhetorical situation, although there may be an occasional slip.
3 **Capable**	The text generally adheres to the "Editing Focus" of this chapter—mixed sentence constructions, as discussed in Section 9.6—and maintains consistency in constructing the grammatical paths of sentences. The text also shows limited evidence of the writer's intent to consciously meet or challenge conventional expectations in rhetorically effective ways.	The essay presents most information clearly and logically. Transitions connect most paragraphs and sections, but the essay may stray occasionally from its thesis statement. Claims are generally supported with quoted or paraphrased evidence.	The writer identifies most, if not all, rhetorical strategies and writes with some insight. The writer maintains a fairly consistent voice and an awareness of the rhetorical situation, although there may be slips.

TABLE 9.5

Score	Critical Language Awareness	Clarity and Coherence	Rhetorical Choices
2 **Developing**	The text occasionally adheres to the "Editing Focus" of this chapter—mixed sentence constructions, as discussed in Section 9.6—and maintains consistency in constructing the grammatical paths of sentences. The text also shows emerging evidence of the writer's intent to consciously meet or challenge conventional expectations in rhetorically effective ways.	The essay presents some information clearly, but the organization is confusing and/or illogical. Transitions connect some paragraphs and sections, but the transitions may be confusing or misleading. The essay may stray from its thesis statement and is either too short or too long. Claims often lack the support of additional quoted or paraphrased evidence.	The writer identifies some rhetorical strategies but neglects to elaborate on them sufficiently. The writer maintains an inconsistent voice and awareness of the rhetorical situation.
1 **Beginning**	The text does not adhere to the "Editing Focus" of this chapter—mixed sentence constructions, as discussed in Section 9.6—and does not maintain consistency in constructing the grammatical paths of sentences. The text also shows little to no evidence of the writer's intent to consciously meet or challenge conventional expectations in rhetorically effective ways.	The essay lacks clarity, and the organization is confusing and/or illogical. Transitions connect some paragraphs and sections, but the transitions may be too few, confusing, or misleading. The essay often strays from its thesis statement, if it has one, and is either too short or too long. Claims that do appear are not effectively supported.	The writer identifies few if any rhetorical strategies and neglects to elaborate on them. The writer maintains an inconsistent voice and shows little, if any, awareness of the rhetorical situation.

TABLE 9.5

9.8 Spotlight on … Business and Law

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify factors that influence the ways that work is designed, documented, and disseminated.
- Apply methods and technologies commonly used for communication in various fields.
- Write an effective résumé and accompanying cover letter.
- Interpret legal language and rewrite it in plain English.

In the business and legal worlds, written and spoken rhetoric is crucial to successful outcomes and the internal workings of an organization.

Rhetoric in Business

The ability to write persuasively by using rhetorical strategies is crucial to the success of a business, including its profitability, employee satisfaction, and efficient operations. More immediately, though, using rhetorical devices to get hired is no less crucial a skill. The purpose of business writing is often to sell, whether an idea, a candidate, a product, or a strategy. For most people, the first step in business writing is an effective application letter and résumé with the goal of obtaining an interview.



FIGURE 9.7 A strong cover letter and résumé will impress prospective employers, who will be well disposed toward interviewing you. Remember the purpose of these written pieces is to obtain an interview, not the job—at least not yet. (credit: "Women in Tech - 82" by WOCinTechChat.com/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

Application Letters and Résumés

When writing letters of application and résumés, keep in mind that you are writing to sell. In this case, you need to "sell" yourself to a company. Thus, you want to convey information rhetorically and persuasively. The most effective application letters have one element in common: they focus as much as possible *not* on you, the applicant, but on the *company* and the ways in which you could be an asset as an employee. Therefore, keep in mind that *your* need for work is not a real concern to a prospective employer. Rather, *their* needs and *your potential* are. If you are applying for a job, ask yourself these questions: What can you do to fill a present or future need? What exactly is the employer looking for (as opposed to what *you* are looking for)? If an employer has indicated criteria for applicants, what are those criteria, and how can you show you fulfill them?

Keep these ideas in mind when writing an application letter. Because you are focusing on your value to a company, do not start like this student did:

> My name is Brett Ellison. I am graduating this spring and would like to apply for the position you have advertised. It looks interesting and would suit me well.

It will take exciting and convincing writing to build interest after such a generic introduction. Your name, graduation date, and opinion of the job are of little interest to a future employer. Consider the difference with this opening:

> For the job opening you have advertised online in data management, you have asked for a recent graduate with skills in. . . . Four years of college with a major in computer science and an internship with Coverall Insurance have given me the skills you require.

The applicant mentions the required skills and follows with a statement indicating they possess the skills. When you begin this way, you emphasize the company's needs, not your own. The first paragraph should then end with a statement that you are attaching your current résumé and that you request the company's consideration.

In the next paragraph, highlight a specific achievement connected to that skill and your abilities. Include other aspects of your background as relevant. Try to keep each paragraph to no more than six lines. If possible, continue to focus on the company and its needs, showing that you know something about them. Keep it short; one page will be sufficient to highlight your skills. Avoid mentioning areas of weakness or skills you do not have. Conclude with an expression of gratitude for their consideration.

If you have a recommendation or lead for the job, you can naturally begin with that, as this student did in the following letter:

105 South Main Street
Lexington, KY 45678

February 10, 2021

Barbara Serrano, Director
Kentucky Council on the Arts
953 Versailles Road
Frankfort, Kentucky 45678

Dear Ms. Serrano:

Lorenzo Huff, one of my professors at the University of Kentucky, recommended that I write to you regarding openings in the Council's internship program this summer. He believes I am well qualified to join the program and work productively for you. I am grateful to Professor Huff and would like to apply for one of these positions. Attached you will find my current résumé for your consideration.

As you will note, my academic background combines a concentration in business administration with a minor in fine arts. My interest in the arts goes back to childhood when I first attended a performance by the Lexington Symphony of the *Eroica*, which awakened my interest in serious music. I have continued to pursue that interest, attending performances and taking part in community arts initiatives. My goal after graduation is to build a career in arts administration, focusing on fundraising and outreach for a major public institution such as the Kentucky Council.

I hope you'll agree that my experience, particularly my work with the local Community Concerts association, and my education, with classes such as Professor Huff's in European arts, is strong preparation for an internship with the Council.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualification with you in greater detail. May I call your office within the next few weeks to see about setting up an appointment to meet with you?

Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at the above address, by email at caleandr@greatmail.com, or by phone at (555) 555-3333.

With best wishes for continued success with the internship program,

Mikaela Rodgers

Mikaela Rodgers

A current résumé should always accompany your application letter. Try to tailor your résumé to highlight unique credentials you may have and ones that may set you apart from other applicants. Your résumé should complement the letter, meaning the two parts should fit together and not contradict each other. A good idea is to edit the résumé to fit the job you want by adding or highlighting parts that pertain specifically to the position; changing the order of details; or using italics, boldface type, or bullets for listing facts or dates. The résumé should not be a one-size-fits-all product or give the impression that it is a standard statement with no real pertinence to the specific job. Use your résumé as a selling tool to persuade a company or organization to grant you an interview. Actually getting the job comes later.

A key element in any résumé, following your identifying information, is a statement of your career goal. Although it is inevitable that others will have similar plans, try to stand out by sounding decisive or presenting a vision of what you can accomplish. Imagine being the reader of your résumé rather than the writer. That

person may devote only seconds to skimming it, and the first thing they will notice is the career goal, which you can change each time you send out a résumé. Your personal aim or goal gives you the chance to indicate something in one line that would make the reader want to continue. The following are effective statements:

- To use my programming skills to create innovative and useful content for a growing company
- To use what I have learned in management classes for the progress of a growing firm
- To contribute to a sales force based on best practices of marketing
- To work in the public sector for personal as well as social progress
- To combine a productive work ethic with openness to change and travel

Sample Résumé

Below is Mikaela Rodgers's résumé:

Mikaela Rodgers
405 Main Street
Lexington, KY 40508
caleandr@greatmail.com

Professional Goal:

To work productively in a position that combines business skills with awareness of the arts

Education:

BA, University of Kentucky (expected May 2022)

Major: Business

Minor: Art history

Grade point average: 3.87

Honors Thesis: "The View of the Arts in Business"

Graduate, Henry Clay High School (Lexington, KY), 2018

Martin Perry Scholarship for Outstanding Business Major

Honors, School of Business

Related Activities:

2021–22 Habitat for Humanity

Co-chaired campus fundraising drive that raised $55,000

2019–20 Community Concerts, Inc.

Part-time promotion assistant; assisted with scheduling, publicity, subscription procedures, and fundraising

2018–19 Art in the Schools Program Volunteer

through the Education Division, Lexington Center for the Arts

Trained to conduct art appreciation presentations in school classrooms, visiting one school a month

2016–18 Record City (part time and summers):

Sales clerk and assistant manager in a music store

Related Interests:

Journalism, watercolor painting, digital photography, cross-country skiing

Please request references.

Previewing a wide variety of sample résumés (https://openstax.org/r/sample) will give you plenty of ideas.

Language in Law



In the legal world, communication is equally or even more crucial. In addition to the ability to speak convincingly, the ability to use rhetorical strategies to write persuasively is of critical importance in legal professions and in everyday situations regarding disputes, contracts, and other matters involving legalities. In courtrooms and behind the scenes, the ability to persuade a judge to make a decision or ruling in favor of a particular client before or during a trial affects all aspects of a case, including the legal team's ability to persuade a jury of its position. Furthermore, disputes between family members, buyers and sellers, renters and landlords, and employees and managers are often settled with the help of appropriately used rhetorical strategies.



FIGURE 9.8 Because contracts and similar binding agreements feature in many legal disputes, it is important to understand and interpret the language in which they are written. Arguing for your interpretation involves the use of rhetorical strategies. (credit: "Legal Contract & Signature - Warm Tones" by Blogtrepreneur [howtostartablogonline.net/legal]/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.0)

Language use in the legal profession relies on *precedent*, meaning evidence or examples of past legal cases and their verdicts. Legal English aims to be consistent, complete, valid, and formal. It must correspond to what is expected by the court to which it will be communicated. Legal briefs, for example, are documents written to persuade the court to agree with the writer's position, whether for a plaintiff or a defendant. To gain judicial agreement, legal language must avoid open-ended interpretations because ambiguity (two valid points of view without a single resolution) is counterproductive. Instead, lawyers and those who write for them often adapt a writing template already familiar to and required by a court.

American legal English has its roots in history. It was adopted from England, where Roman rulers and later French invaders left an inheritance of terminology still used today. Many familiar legal terms are hundreds of years old. For example, the verb *shall* replaces *must* or *have to* ("The plaintiff shall . . ."). The word is an imperative, binding and unconditional, unlike its uncertain use in modern English ("Shall I do that?"). Also, the word *consideration* indicates a sum of money or settlement to be paid, not "the act of caring" ("The land shall be transferred for a consideration of . . ."). Antiquated expressions appear frequently—*heretofore*, *forthwith*, *until such time that*, *party of the first part*, *party of the second part*, *due process*—as do Latin expressions—*pro bono*, *pro se*, *ad hoc*, *bona fide*, *de facto*. Doubling of concepts is also common: *null and void*, *breaking and entering*, *pain and suffering*, *legal and binding*.

However, the linguistic situation has changed somewhat with the move toward "plain English," meaning avoidance of the jargon and excesses of legal writing. Rather than long sentences and paragraphs with minimal punctuation and spacing of text, "plain English" reforms and simplifies the terminology to make it readily understandable for people outside the legal profession.

Plain English

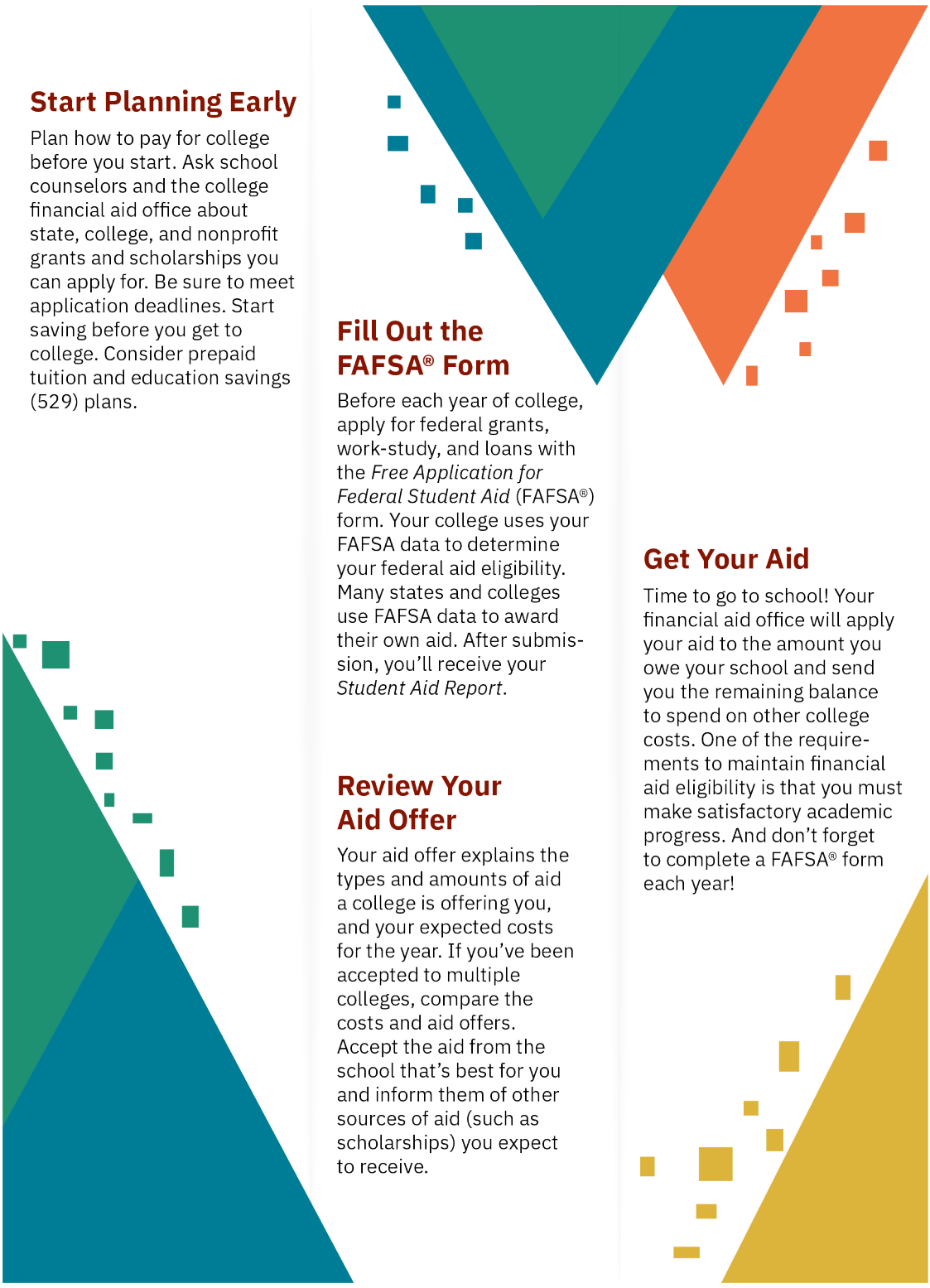
"Plain English" was formally introduced in the United States in 2010 by President Barack Obama in the official Plain Writing Act of 2010 adopted by Congress. It was part of a paperwork reduction program extending to all areas of government communication with the goal of reducing the amount of written communication issued by all agencies. Common opinion recognized that what needed to be said could be done more efficiently if people understood the content of laws and regulations.

As an example, the following regulations from the New Jersey state office for overseeing real estate

transactions are unclear and confusing. Despite the capital letters, the text consists of long, dense paragraphs that actually discourage reading and understanding. Because a situation in which someone breaks a lease is likely to be stressful, language such as this, with long sentences and legal terms, only worsens the possible confrontation. The assumption is that the tenant will have to either wade through the language independently or rely on a lawyer as a paid guide.

> **TERMINATION:** After expiration of the leasing period, this agreement is automatically renewed from month to month, but may be terminated by either party giving to the other a 30-day written notice of intention to terminate. Where laws require "just cause," such just cause shall be so stated on said notice. The premises shall be considered vacated only after all areas including storage areas are clear of all RESIDENT'S belongings, and keys and other property furnished for RESIDENT'S use are returned to OWNER. Should the RESIDENT hold over beyond the termination date or fail to vacate all possessions on or before the termination date, RESIDENT shall be liable for additional rent and damages which may include damages due to OWNER'S loss of prospective new renters.
>
> **POSSESSION:** If OWNER is unable to deliver possession of the residence to RESIDENTS on the agreed date, because of the loss or destruction of the residence or because of the failure of the prior residents to vacate or for any other reason, the RESIDENT and/or OWNER may immediately cancel and terminate this agreement upon written notice to the other party at their last known address, whereupon neither party shall have liability to the other, and any sums paid under this Agreement shall be refunded in full. If neither party cancels, this Agreement shall be prorated and begin on the date of actual possession.

On the other hand, the following document explains in plain English, with short sentences and paragraphs, the procedures for securing federal student aid. Not only are the instructions clear, but they also explain some of the reasoning for them.



The plain language of this document aims to make information easily comprehensible. It is broken into brief, concise paragraphs with short, clear sentences. Punctuation is basic and emphatic. Students already uncertain about financial security are made to feel welcome and have the sense that the procedure can be done without their becoming mired in dense language and regulations.

Your Turn

Business. If you have a résumé, update and revise it according to the suggestions presented in this section. If

you do not have a résumé, now is the time to create one. Select a format and complete it with your information, including a professional objective. (You can access the site (https://openstax.org/r/site) provided earlier in this section or consult Microsoft Word for résumé templates.) Once you have revised or completed your résumé, find an announcement about a summer job or internship and write an appropriate application letter.

Legal. With the Plain Writing Act of 2010 in mind, rewrite the section of the New Jersey rental agreement reproduced in this section. Change sentence and paragraph length when appropriate to simplify language and clarify meaning. Remember that your readers consist of average people looking to rent an apartment.

9.9 Portfolio: How Thinking Critically about Rhetoric Affects Intellectual Growth

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate, through writing, the discovery and reconsideration of ideas.
- Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence your work.

In this reflection, think about your participation in the chapter as you learned about and completed a rhetorical analysis assignment. Participation includes thoughtful completion of work, working with other students in peer review, interacting with your instructor, and raising questions or concerns.

Summing Up and Looking Ahead

An effective way to reflect productively is to compose a "Sum Up" entry for yourself that you can share with your instructor or peers. Your "Reflection on Analysis" may include what you knew of the genre before working on this chapter and what your initial reactions were to reading about Jamil Smith as this chapter's Trailblazer. *Will you look forward to reading more of his work?*

You also may note your writing of the rhetorical analysis and articulate any remaining questions about language use. *Might the experience lead you to express yourself in a similar public forum? Which issues interest you the most?*

While working through the sections of the chapter, *did you find any well suited to your pace and style of writing?* As you reflect, discuss in your own terms and in any format you choose what you learned from the material and what, specifically, you believe will be most useful for you in your education.

Further Reading

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