

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Outline

Introduction

- Identify the text: title, author, type of document, and where it appears
- Describe the rhetorical situation and the event or problem prompting the message
- Define the intended audience and why they matter
- State the writer's practical purpose such as informing, calming, defending, or motivating
- Briefly preview the main strategies you will analyze
- End with a precise thesis explaining how specific choices achieve a result
- Use analytical language: *the writer suggests, frames, positions, establishes, signals*

Body Paragraph 1 - Establishing Credibility (Ethos or Authority)

- Topic sentence naming the credibility strategy and location in the text
- Explain why credibility matters for this audience and situation
- Provide evidence showing expertise, fairness, acknowledgment, or reliability
- Analyze how the wording builds trust or readiness to listen
- Clarify what readers accept after this move and connect to the writer's purpose
- Use rhetorical *verbs*: *establishes credibility, acknowledges concern, demonstrates awareness, appeals to trust*

Body Paragraph 2 - Logical Development (Logos or Reasoning)

- Topic sentence identifying a reasoning strategy, such as cause and effect or structured explanation
- Present specific evidence like numbers, an explanation of the process, or a sequence
- Explain step by step how each detail supports the next idea
- Show how the reasoning guides readers toward a conclusion
- Connect the reasoning to audience expectations and understanding
- Use analytical wording: *explains, supports, justifies, demonstrates, clarifies, leads the reader*

Body Paragraph 3 - Emotional Framing (Pathos or Personal Relevance)

- Topic sentence naming the emotional or relatable strategy
- Provide a passage using scenario, value language, or descriptive detail
- Explain the reaction created and why it matters for the purpose

- Show how this appeal works together with credibility and logic
- Use rhetorical phrasing: *evokes concern, creates urgency, emphasizes impact, connects with values*

Conclusion

- Restate the thesis in new wording
- Summarize how the strategies function together
- Evaluate effectiveness for the intended audience and situation
- Explain the broader result of the communication
- Use evaluative language: *the message succeeds, the argument persuades, the strategy proves effective*