



Rhetorical Analysis Worksheet

SOAPS

What is this author writing about?

Subject _____

Occasion _____

What prompted this author to write in the first place?

Who was this written this for?

Audience _____

What is the author's goal?

Purpose _____

How is the author trying to convince the audience?

Strategies _____

Having trouble filling in the blanks? Maybe these will give you some ideas:

- S** What are the key elements of the text? What ideas are repeated? How do paragraphs begin?
- O** This could be an event, like September 11th, or a long-term condition, like a lifelong struggle with racism.
- A** To figure this out, find out when and where the text came from. If it came from a journal, ask yourself who might subscribe to it. If it came from an anthology, take a look at the texts around it and look for similarities. Remember that the author might be addressing a historical audience instead of a contemporary one.
- P** What claim is the writer making? What is she trying to influence or change?
- S** Figure out how the major claim is being supported. Is the writer appealing to your reason or your emotions? Ask yourself what kinds of words are being used (long, academic words? slang?) and how the text is organized. Look for places where the writer shows why the audience should pay attention to her opinions.

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Now put together all the information you generated in the SOAPS exercise to help you judge the **effectiveness** of the text. This involves making **connections** between the elements of SOAPS. It is not necessary to cover answers to all of these questions in the body of your paper. Just focus on the ones you can say the most about.

Is this particular audience likely to be convinced by these strategies? Why or why not?

Are the author's style and tone appropriate to the audience?

Do you think the author includes all the necessary information about the subject, or are important things left out?

How does the author involve the audience's emotions? Does he use specific strategies to convince (or perhaps to manipulate) the audience?

Does the text accomplish the author's purpose?

Does the author seem knowledgeable enough for the audience to trust her opinions?
Does she refer to other texts or to personal experience to back up her claims?

Before reading this text, how much did the audience probably care about the subject?

Writing a Rhetorical Analysis Thesis Statement

A rhetorical analysis thesis statement should say **whom** an author is addressing, **how** she is addressing them, **why** she is saying what she is saying, and **whether or not** it is effective. If you want, you can plug your ideas into the following sentence to make sure you get everything you need into your thesis statement, but it will probably sound awkward, so be sure to rephrase it later.

This text _____ effective in using _____ to convince
(is/is not) (name the strategies)

_____ of _____.
(name the audience) (name the purpose)

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Rev. January 08