

Racial Profiling

Developed by Kim Flachmann

MODULE: STUDENT VERSION

Reading Selection for this Module:

Herbert, Bob. "Jim Crow Policing." *New York Times* 2 Feb. 2010, late ed.: A27. Print.

Reading Rhetorically

Prereading

Activity 1

Getting Ready to Read

The following article, "Jim Crow Policing" by Bob Herbert, was first published in the *New York Times* on February 2, 2010. It tries to persuade its readers that law-enforcement agents should not take any action on the basis of race alone. It uses a combination of logic and emotion to achieve its purpose. Have you ever been stopped by the police because of your appearance? If you have, what was your reaction? If you haven't, what do you think your reaction would be? Why do you think you would react this way?

Quickwrite: What do you know about racial profiling? What do you think about it? Write for five minutes. Then discuss your response with a partner.

Activity 2

Exploring Key Concepts

Understanding key concepts in a reading selection is essential to good comprehension, so that is where we are going to start the reading process. Complete the following activities before moving on.

Jim Crow Policing

Look up "Jim Crow" on the Internet.

- What does the term have to do with race?
- Is the reference positive or negative?
- What is its origin?

- What do you think this reference might have to do with police activities?

Now go to the PBS page called “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow,” and read four of the Jim Crow stories. Be prepared to retell one of them to the class.

Other Key Concepts

Below are some important concepts from Herbert’s essay. Write down your personal associations with these terms. Then complete the activity that follows.

- race
- prejudice
- ethnic
- discrimination
- profiling
- stereotyping

Complete a “cubing” activity for four of the words listed above. For this exercise, fill in all the squares below for each of the words you choose.

<p>Describe it: What are its colors, shapes, sizes, smells, tastes, sounds?</p>	<p>Compare it: What is it similar to?</p>
<p>Associate it: What does it make you think of?</p>	<p>Analyze it: How is it made?</p>
<p>Apply it: What can you do with it? How can it be used?</p>	<p>Argue for it or against it:</p>

Activity 3

Surveying the Text

Surveying your reading material (no matter what its length) will give you an overview of what it is about and how it is put together. To learn how to survey an essay, answer the following questions.

1. Who is the author of this essay?
2. When and where was this essay published?
3. What proper nouns do you notice in this essay?
4. What do you think the essay will discuss?

Activity 4

Making Predictions and Asking Questions

Making predictions about your reading will help you read actively rather than passively. Active reading promotes learning. Your answers to the following questions will guide you through the process.

1. What do you think this essay is going to be about?
2. What do you think is the purpose of this essay?
3. Who do you think is the intended audience for this piece? What brings you to this conclusion?
4. What do you think the writer wants the reader to do or believe?
5. On the basis of the title and other features of the selection, what information or ideas might this essay present?
6. Do you think the writer will be negative or positive in relation to the topic? How did you come to this conclusion?
7. What argument about the topic might the article present? What makes you think so?
8. Turn the title into a question (or questions) for you to answer after you have read the essay.

Activity 5

Understanding Key Vocabulary

The following vocabulary words are important to your understanding of this essay, so the definitions are provided for you:

- abomination (par. 1): an object that is intensely disliked
- contraband (par. 3): illegal imports
- despicable (par. 5): horrible
- degrading (par. 8): humiliating
- unconstitutional (par. 13): illegal
- specious (par. 15): false

Explain how each of these words is related to one of the key concepts introduced earlier in “Exploring Key Concepts.”

Activity 6

Reading for Understanding

We all process reading material differently. No one way is better than another. To demonstrate the variety of approaches to this essay, read it aloud, and talk about your responses to the following questions:

1. Which of your predictions turned out to be true?
2. What surprised you?
3. Are you persuaded by the text?
4. If a prediction was inaccurate, what in the text misled you?
5. Can you answer the question you created from the title?
6. What in the essay is confusing to you?

Activity 7

Considering the Structure of the Text

Learning more about the structure of the text will give you a better understanding of the writer's approach to its content. Your work on this activity will help you understand the text's structure as you apply it to your own writing.

Making Discoveries

Working in pairs, create a picture outline showing how this essay is structured. Talk with your partner until you have negotiated a graphic outline that represents how the essay is laid out.

Find another pair, and compare your graphics:

- How are they different?
- How are they the same?
- What major discovery did you make from this exercise?

Descriptive Outlining

Now follow these directions on the essay itself:

- Draw a line across the page where the introduction ends.
- Draw a line across the page where the conclusion begins.
- Draw lines throughout the body of the text that break the text into meaningful segments.
- Then, for each of your segments, label in the left margin its content (what it says).

- Then, in the right margin label the rhetorical purpose of each segment (why the writer included it in the essay).

Analyzing Your Findings

Before moving on, discuss the following questions as a class:

- What is the rhetorical purpose of each section you marked?
- How do you suspect each section will affect the readers?
- What is the writer trying to accomplish in each section?
- Which section is most developed?
- Which section is least developed?
- Why do you think the author made these choices?
- On the basis of your descriptive outline of the text, what do you think is the writer’s main claim or argument?

Activity 8

Noticing Language

Herbert uses two patterns that are especially effective in his essays: (1) the passive voice and (2) word repetition.

The passive voice is applied to a verb in a sentence when the “doer” or actual “agent” of the action is after the verb in a “by” phrase or completely missing rather than before the verb. Also, a passive verb always includes a form of “be” and a past participle.

Examples: “is practiced,” “was frisked,” “has been stopped”

Agents can be added to a passive verb in a “by” phrase.

Passive: Racial profiling is practiced in New York (by the police).

Active: Police practice racial profiling in New York.

Writers often use the passive when they don’t know or don’t want to reveal the agent or “doer” of their action. Herbert relies heavily on the passive in his essay because in most cases he often doesn’t know who was responsible for the action he is calling into question.

Herbert starts his essay with a sentence in the passive voice:

“The New York City Police Department needs to be restrained” [by whom?].

What other passive verbs do you see in this essay? What effect does this linguistic pattern have on you as a reader?

Notice that all the sentences after paragraph 12 are in the active voice. What effect does this shift from passive to active voice have on the message that Herbert is delivering?

In this essay, Herbert also **repeats** specific words that capture the readers' attention and keep the focus on these particular concepts. Two examples are *stop* and *frisk*, which are repeated throughout the essay. Find three other words or parts of words that Herbert repeats in this essay. What is the effect of these repetitions?

Activity 9

Rereading the Text

As you read the essay again, do the following tasks:

- Record the essay's thesis.
- State the thesis as a question.
- Highlight the details throughout the essay that directly answer the question you have written.
- On your copy of the essay, label the following points in the left-hand margin:
 - The introduction
 - The issue or problem the author is writing about
 - Examples given by the author
 - The author's main arguments
 - The conclusion
- In the right-hand margin, write your reactions to what the author is saying.

Activity 10

Analyzing Stylistic Choices

Answer the following questions about the words and sentences in this essay to help you understand how the linguistic choices the author has made create certain effects for readers.

Words

1. What does the term "racial profiling" bring to mind for you? Which other words refer to this term—either directly or indirectly?
2. Why do you think Herbert makes these different references to racial profiling?
3. This essay has several strong words that draw on readers' emotions. Circle the words that are the most highly charged and be prepared to explain your choices. Why does Herbert use these highly charged words? What effect do they have?

Sentences

1. Is the author's sentence structure mostly varied or not? What effect does the variety or lack of variety have on the essay?
2. Are the sentences readable? Explain your answer.
3. What effect are Herbert's sentences likely to have on his readers?

Postreading

Activity 11

Summarizing and Responding

Complete both of the activities below to make sure you understand how to summarize effectively.

Summarizing

The act of summarizing asks you to put someone else's ideas into your own words, which will improve your understanding of those ideas. Using your previous notes and annotations, work in groups of three or four to summarize the essay's main points in no more than five sentences. Then generate five questions that might serve as the basis of a class discussion. Use at least five vocabulary words from this module in your summary.

Responding

Turn your questions in to your teacher, who will choose some for class discussion.

Activity 12

Thinking Critically—Logos, Ethos, Pathos

The following questions and activities will help you gain a deeper understanding of the Herbert essay. Answer the following questions as thoroughly as you can, choosing evidence from the reading selection to support your answer.

Questions about Logic (Logos)

1. What are two major claims the author makes in this essay?
2. What support does the author provide for these assertions?
3. Can you think of counterarguments the author does not deal with?
4. Do you think the author has left something out on purpose? Why?

Questions about the Writer (Ethos)

1. Does this author have the right background to speak with authority on this subject?
2. Is this author knowledgeable? Smart? Successful?

3. What does the author's style and language tell you about him?
4. Do you trust this author? Why or why not?
5. Do you think this author is deceptive? Why or why not?
6. Do you think this author is serious? Explain your answer.

Questions about Emotions (Pathos)

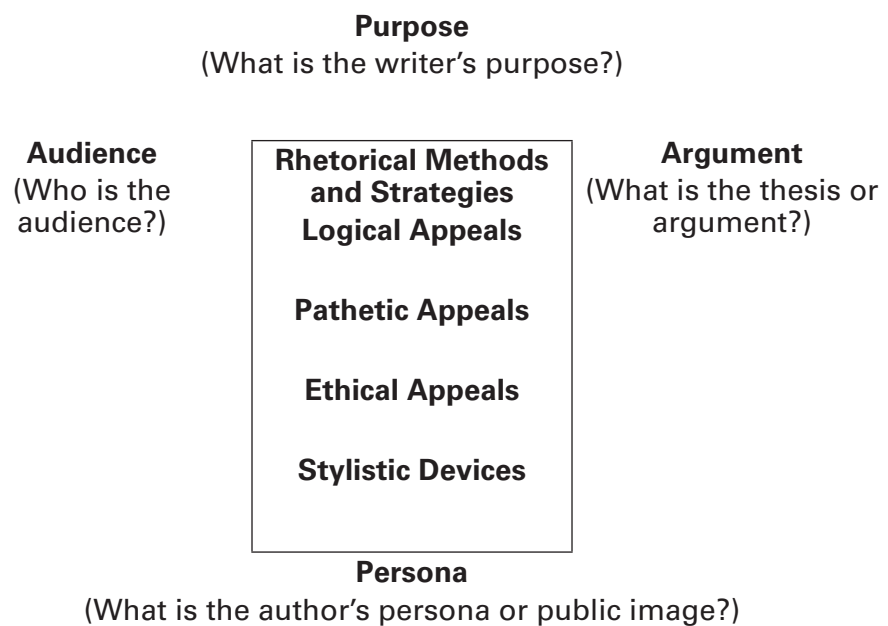
1. Does this piece affect you emotionally? Which parts?
2. Do you think the author is trying to manipulate readers' emotions? How?
3. Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments?
4. Does the author use humor? How does that affect your acceptance of the author's ideas?

Activity 13

PAPA Square

Now that you have answered the questions in Activity 12, you will analyze these issues further by completing a PAPA Square and a quickwrite.

The rhetorical appeals of logos, ethos, and pathos form the basis of rhetorical analysis in this module. A PAPA Square will help you analyze these appeals in your reading and can be used in turn in your own writing. To apply this exercise to your reading, answer the questions around the outside of the box in reference to the essay. In the center, identify the stylistic devices and logical, emotional, and ethical appeals the writer uses to persuade his or her audience. Now fill in the PAPA Square for the Herbert essay.



Quickwrite (five minutes)

Choose one of the following topics and write for five minutes:

1. What does this writer want us to believe?
2. What is your response to one of the author's main ideas?

Activity 14

Reflecting on Your Reading Process

Respond to the following questions in a quickwrite:

- What have you learned so far from joining the conversation on this topic?
- What do you still want to learn next?
- What reading strategies did you use or learn in this module? Which strategies will you use in reading other texts? How will these strategies apply to your work in other classes?
- In what ways has your ability to read and discuss texts like this one improved?

Connecting Reading to Writing

Discovering What You Think

Activity 15

Considering the Writing Task

Reading the assignment carefully to make sure you address all aspects of the prompt is important.

Writing Task

Write an essay that presents your opinion on a controversial issue of your choice. Consult various media sources if you need some ideas. Begin with a debatable thesis statement. Then follow the guidelines for writing an argument essay. As you write your essay, be sure you support your claims with well-chosen evidence. If something in the media (such as a newspaper article, ad, or speech) inspired this assignment, attach a copy to your paper before you turn it in.

Take the following steps for this exercise:

- Read the assignment carefully.
- Decide which issue you are going to discuss.
- Discuss the purpose of the assignment (what will you try to accomplish in writing your essay?).

Activity 16

Taking a Stance

Taking a stance on your topic at this point in the writing process is essential. This involves developing a tentative thesis statement and then “trying on” different perspectives within that framework. The two activities in this section will guide you to a position on your topic.

Developing a Tentative Thesis Statement

To begin this process, read as many different perspectives on your topic as you can find. As you read, settle on what you think your stance will be. Then answer the following questions:

1. What specific question will your essay answer? What is your response to this question? (This is your tentative thesis.)
2. What support have you found for your thesis?
3. What evidence have you found for this support (for example, facts, statistics, statements from authorities, personal stories, and examples)?
4. How much background information do your readers need to understand your topic and thesis?
5. If readers were to disagree with your thesis or the validity of your support, what would they say? How would you address their concerns (what would you say to them)?

Developing a tentative thesis now will help you take a stand on the issue you have chosen to write about. Your thesis should be a complete sentence that includes your topic and your opinion on that topic. It can be revised several times, but will ultimately keep your writing on track. Draft a possible thesis for your essay now.

Trying on Words, Perspectives, and Ideas

Before you actually write a draft, identify two perspectives that would disagree with your stand on the issue. Take on their perspectives, and draft a quickwrite from each of their stances.

Activity 17

Gathering Evidence to Support Your Claims

As you begin to choose evidence that will support your claims, you must be able to evaluate that information. From your previous work, list the information you are considering using to prove your point. For each item on your list, write down your responses to the following questions:

- How does the piece of evidence support your claim?
- Is it a fact or opinion? If it is an opinion, what facts can you find to support it?

- Will the evidence be persuasive to your audience?

Now put a check mark by the items that will serve as good evidence based on these criteria.

Activity 18

Getting Ready to Write

The following exercise will help you move from reading to writing. Once you have chosen a controversial issue and gathered some evidence, you need to fold in your own thoughts and ideas. Either by brainstorming (listing) or freewriting (writing your thoughts down in prose as fast as they occur), respond to the following questions:

- What is the exact issue?
- Why is it important?
- Do people care about it?
- What is most important about this issue?
- What are some other points of view on this topic?
- How do you think the issue should be resolved?

Writing Rhetorically

Entering the Conversation

Activity 19

Composing a Draft

When you write an argument essay, choose a subject that matters to you. If you have strong feelings, you will find it much easier to gather evidence and convince your readers of your point of view. Keep in mind, however, that your readers might feel just as strongly about the opposite side of the issue. Use the following guidelines to help you write your argument:

1. State your opinion on the topic in your thesis statement.

To write a thesis statement for an argument essay, you will need to take a stand for or against an action or an idea. In other words, your thesis statement must be debatable—a statement that can be argued or challenged and that will not be met with agreement by everyone who reads it. Your thesis statement introduces your subject and states your opinion about that subject.

Bob Herbert's thesis is his first sentence: "The New York City Police Department needs to be restrained." This is a debatable thesis. Some other statements on the topic of ethnic profiling would not be good thesis statements:

- Not debatable: Ethnic profiling by law-enforcement authorities in the United States often involves minorities.
- Not debatable: Some law-enforcement agencies have strict rules regarding racial profiling.

Herbert sets up his essay with some facts about racial profiling and several references to the practice in New York of stopping and frisking blacks and Hispanics. This background information expands upon his thesis statement.

2. Find out as much as you can about your audience before you write.

Knowing your readers' backgrounds and feelings on your topic will help you choose the best supporting evidence and examples. Suppose that you want to convince people in two different age groups to quit smoking. You might tell the group of teenagers that cigarettes make their breath rancid, their teeth yellow, and their clothes smelly. But with a group of adults, you might discuss the horrifying statistics on lung and heart disease associated with long-term smoking.

Herbert's essay was first published in the New York Times, which addresses a fairly educated audience. The original readers probably thought much like he does on this issue. So he chose his support as if he were talking to people who agree with him.

3. Choose evidence that supports your thesis statement.

Evidence is definitely the most important factor in writing an argument essay. Without solid evidence, your essay is nothing more than opinion; with it, your essay can be powerful and persuasive. If you supply convincing evidence, your readers will not only understand your position but perhaps agree with it.

Evidence can consist of facts, statistics, statements from authorities, personal stories, or examples. Personal stories and examples can be based on your own observations, experiences, and reading, but your opinions are not evidence. Other strategies, such as comparison/contrast, definition, and cause/effect, can be particularly useful in building an argument. Use any combination of evidence and writing strategies that supports your thesis statement.

In his essay, Herbert uses several different types of evidence. Here are some examples:

Facts

- Not everyone who is stopped is frisked (par. 7).
- The Center for Constitutional Rights filed a class-action lawsuit against New York and the police department (par. 11).
- Paul Browne is the chief spokesman for Commissioner Kelly (par. 14).

Statistics

- In 2009, 450,000 people were stopped by cops (par. 2).
- 84 percent of the stops were black and Hispanic (par. 3).
- Contraband was found in 1.6 percent of the black cases, 1.5 percent of the Hispanic, and 1.5 percent of the white (par. 3).
- Weapons were found on 1.1 percent of the blacks, 1.4 percent of the Hispanics, 1.7 percent of the whites (par. 4).
- Police stopped more than a half million people in 2008 (par. 6)
- Of those stopped, 59.4 percent of the Hispanics were frisked, 56.6 percent of blacks, and 46 percent of whites (par. 7).

Statements from Authorities

- Center for Constitutional Rights (par. 11)
- Police Department (par. 13)
- Paul Browne (par. 14)
- Police Commissioner Kelly (par. 14)

Personal Stories and Examples

- The story about Lalit Carson (par. 11)
- The story about Deon Dennis (par. 11)

4. Anticipate opposing points of view.

In addition to stating and supporting your position, anticipating and responding to opposing views are important. Presenting only your side of the argument leaves half the story untold—the opposition’s half. If you acknowledge that there are opposing arguments and address them, your argument will be more convincing.

In paragraph 14, Herbert acknowledges as opposition a statement made by Paul Browne on behalf of Police Commissioner Kelly. Browne feels the stops are “life-saving.” By acknowledging this statement, Herbert raises his credibility. He then goes on to refute Browne’s claim in the next paragraph.

5. Find some common ground.

Pointing out common ground between you and your opponent is also an effective strategy. “Common ground” refers to points of agreement between two opposing positions. For example, one person might be in favor of gun control and another strongly opposed. But they might find common ground—agreement—in the need to keep guns out of teenagers’ hands. Locating some

Activity 20

common ground is possible in almost every situation. When you state in your essay that you agree with your opponent on certain points, your reader sees you as a fair person.

Herbert assumes that most of his readers know that ethnic profiling by law-enforcement agencies is going on around the country. His job, then, is to prove the extent and unfairness of it.

6. Maintain a reasonable tone.

Just as you probably wouldn't win an argument by shouting or making mean or nasty comments, don't expect your readers to respond well to such tactics. Keep the "voice" of your essay calm and sensible. Your readers will be much more open to what you have to say if they think you are a reasonable person.

Herbert maintains a reasonable tone throughout his essay. Every now and then, he is aggressive—"Racial profiling . . . is an abomination" (par. 1)—and even sarcastic—a "suspicious bulge" (par. 9). But even when he quotes some unbelievable statistics, as he does in paragraphs 2 through 4, he keeps his voice under control and, therefore, earns the respect of his readers.

Considering Structure

All essays should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. This is true of writing in all disciplines. An argument essay has these same divisions with a few more features that will communicate your stance and present your claims as clearly as possible. Since you want your audience to agree with you by the end of your essay, you need to organize it in such a way that your readers can easily follow it. The guidelines in this section will help you organize the material you have gathered into a coherent essay.

The first outline shows the order in which the features of an argument essay are most effective:

Introduction

1. Background information
2. Introduction of the subject
3. Statement of your opinion

Body Paragraphs

1. Common ground
2. Lots of evidence (logical and emotional)
3. Opposing points of view
4. Response to the opposing points of view

Conclusion

1. Restatement of your position
2. Call for action or agreement

Bob Herbert's essay follows the general outline just presented. Here is a skeleton outline of his essay:

Introduction

1. Background information about racial profiling in New York City
2. Subject introduced
3. Statement of opinion

Body Paragraphs

1. Evidence: Statistics (par. 2-7)
2. Common ground: Humiliation, fear (par. 8)
3. More background: Reasons for stops (par. 9-10)
4. More evidence: Personal narratives (par. 11-12)
5. Opposing points of view: Police department, Paul Browne (par. 13-14)
6. Response to the opposing points of view: logical and emotional response (par. 15)

Conclusion

1. Restatement of the solution (par. 16)
2. Call to action (par. 16)

The arrangement of your evidence in an argument essay depends to a great extent on your readers' opinions. Most arguments will be organized from general to particular, from particular to general, or from one extreme to another. When you know that your readers already agree with you, arranging your details from general to particular or from most to least important is usually the most effective approach. Using this order, you build on your readers' agreement and loyalty as you explain your thinking on the subject.

If you suspect that your audience does not agree with you, reverse the organization of your evidence and arrange it from particular to general or from least to most important. In this way, you can take your readers step by step through your reasoning in an attempt to get them to agree with you.

Organize your essay in a way that represents what you just learned in this section. Then draw horizontal lines through your essay to distinguish its beginning, middle, and end. Finally, label the key features of your argument by using the terms from the first outline in this section.

Activity 21

Using the Words of Others

One of the most important features of academic writing is the use of words and ideas from written sources to support your own points. Essentially, there are three ways to incorporate words and ideas from sources into your own writing:

1. **Direct quotation.** Bob Herbert says, “The nonstop humiliation of young black and Hispanic New Yorkers, including children, by police officers who feel no obligation to treat them fairly or with any respect at all is an abomination” (par. 1).
2. **Paraphrase.** In “Jim Crow Policing,” Bob Herbert notes that racial profiling in New York of black and Hispanic citizens is humiliating and unfair (par. 1).

This is a paraphrase of the quotation in #1; you can also paraphrase an entire article by putting it in your own words.

3. **Summary.** In “Jim Crow Policing,” Bob Herbert cites statistics and stories from New York City to prove that racial profiling is extensive and unjust. The New York Police Commissioner claims that these “stops” are “life-saving.” But according to the statistics the author provides, too often innocent citizens are harassed and the stops are unwarranted (par. 1).

In-Text Citation. MLA documentation style also requires in-text citations for every direct quotation, indirect quotation, paraphrase, or summary. If the author’s name is given in the text, the page number should be furnished in parentheses at the end of the sentence containing the material. If the author’s name is not provided in your essay, put the author’s name and page number in parentheses after the material.

Practice with Sources. Choose two passages from the reading selection that you might be able to use in your essay. First, write down each passage as a correctly punctuated direct quotation. Second, paraphrase the material in your own words. Finally, respond to the idea expressed in the passage by agreeing or disagreeing with it and explaining why. Now you are ready to use this material in an essay.

Activity 22

Negotiating Voices

One strategy to help you mark the separate voices in an essay that you write is to use clear introductory language, such as the following templates or sentence frames:

General Purpose Frames

- The issue of _____ can be viewed from several different perspectives.
- Experts disagree on what to do about _____.

To Introduce the Words of Experts

- Noted researcher John Q. Professor argues that _____.
- In a groundbreaking article, Hermando H. Scientist states that _____.
- According to Patricia A. Politician _____.

To Introduce Contrary Views

- However, the data presented by Hermando H. Scientist show _____.
- On the other hand, Terry T. Teacher believes _____.

To Introduce Your Own Views

- Although some argue for _____, others argue for _____. In my view _____.
- Though researchers disagree, clearly _____.

Identifying Model Language

Return to the article you read by Bob Herbert, and underline all the quotations and paraphrases in the essay. Based on the model above, explain how two of these are introduced and distinguished from other perspectives and quotations in the essay.

Using Model Language

Now consider the evidence in the essay you are writing, and use these models to write one example for each of these categories (General Purpose, To Introduce the Words of Experts, To Introduce Contrary Views, and To Introduce Your Own Views). Use the samples above as models only, and create a frame that fits into the context for your essay.

Revising and Editing

Activity 23

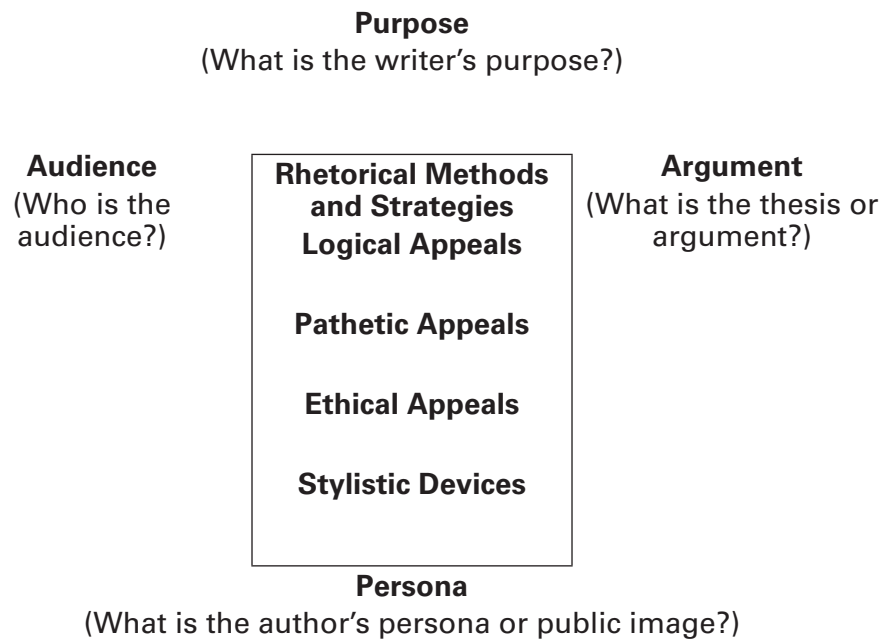
Revising Rhetorically—Rhetorical Analysis

A rhetorical analysis of an essay requires you to assess writing based on the purpose of the writing, the message of the argument, the needs of the audience, and the persona the writer adopts. The following questions will get you started on a rhetorical revision:

- What is the rhetorical situation? Who is my audience, and what is my purpose?
- What types of appeals (logical or emotional) will be most effective with this audience?
- How can I establish my own authority on this issue? What credibility do I have with this audience?

Just as it did in your reading, a PAPA Square can help you analyze the rhetorical strategies in your own writing. To apply this exercise to your writing, answer the questions around the outside of the box in reference to your own essay. In the center, identify the stylistic devices and logical, emotional, and ethical appeals you use to persuade your audience.

Fill in the PAPA Square below for your essay.



Quickwrite (5 minutes): What did you learn about your essay from this analysis? Write freely and openly about the role of the appeals in your essay, your persona, your audience, and your purpose. Do you think this essay will persuade your readers?

Activity 24

Revision Workshop

Now that you have assessed your essay from your perspective, it is time to share it with some classmates.

Peer Group Work

Working in groups of three or four, read your essay aloud to the other members of the group. Then use Part I of the Evaluation Form provided by your teacher as a revising checklist for each essay.

Paired Work

Work in pairs to decide how you will revise the problems that group members identified.

Individual Work

Revise the draft based on the feedback you have received and the decisions you have made with your partners. Consider the following questions as revision guidelines for your individual work:

- Have I responded to the assignment?
- What is my purpose for this essay?
- What should I keep? Which parts are the most effective?
- What should I add? Where do I need more details, examples, and other evidence to support my point?
- What could I delete? Do I use irrelevant details? Am I repetitive?
- What should I change? Are parts of my essay confusing or contradictory? Do I need to explain my ideas more fully?
- What should I rethink? Is my position clear? Have I provided enough analysis to convince my readers?
- How is my tone? Am I too overbearing or too firm? Do I need qualifiers?
- Have I identified common ground?
- Have I addressed differing points of view?
- Does my conclusion show the significance of my essay?
- Have I used key vocabulary words correctly to accurately represent my ideas on this topic?

Activity 25

Considering Stylistic Choices

Every choice you make as you write is stylistic. When you write a word, a phrase, or a sentence a certain way, that is your style. Since you are in complete control of this commodity, you can change your words and sentences to create certain effects that will be sure to reach your intended audience.

Answer the following questions about your writing style in this essay. Then decide if you want to make any changes to create a different effect.

- How will the language you have used affect your readers' response? Are any references too harsh? Too mild? Or too sensitive for your audience? In other words, is your language appropriate for your intended audience?

- Which words or synonyms have you repeated? Are these effective repetitions? Explain your answer.
- Did you use any figurative language? Why did you use it?
- What effects will your choices of sentence structure and length have on the readers?
- In what ways does your language convey your identity and character?

Quickwrite (5 minutes): What stylistic changes can I make in my essay to persuade my intended audience more effectively?

Activity 26

Editing the Draft

Edit your draft on the basis of the information you have received from your instructor or from a tutor. Use Part II of the Evaluation Form as an editing checklist. The following editing guidelines will also help you to edit your own work:

- If possible, set your essay aside for 24 hours before rereading it to find errors.
- Read your essay aloud so you can hear your errors and rough spots.
- Focus on individual words and sentences rather than on the overall meaning. Take a sheet of paper and cover everything except the line you are reading. Then touch your pencil to each word as you read.
- With the help of your teacher, figure out your own pattern of errors—the most serious and frequent errors you make.
- Look for only one type of error at a time. Then go back and look for a second type and, if necessary, a third.
- Use a dictionary to check spelling and confirm that you have chosen the right word for the context.

Activity 27

Responding to Feedback

Based on the activities and quickwrites you have done in the revising and editing sections, make a list of changes you want to make in your essay. Review the criteria and explanations offered in these two segments. Then revise and edit your essay in a way that reflects what you learned about your draft in this final section.

Reflecting on Your Writing Process

Reflecting on your writing is an essential part of improving on your next assignment. When you have completed your essay, answer these six questions and submit your thoughts with your final draft.

- What was most difficult about this assignment?
- What was easiest?
- By completing this assignment, what did you learn about arguing?
- What do you think are the strengths of your argument? Place a wavy line by the parts of your essay that you feel are very good.
- What are the weaknesses, if any, of your paper? Place an X by the parts of your essay you would like help with. Write any questions you have in the margin.
- What have you learned from this assignment about your own writing process—about preparing to write, about writing the first draft, about revising, and about editing?