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AP[®] English Language

Reading and Writing Analytically

Special Focus

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Introduction: Analysis as “Undoing”

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Think of an automobile engine. When it's perfectly tuned up, it purrs like a kitten. Nobody calls the mechanic then. Think of an outstanding stage play. When the members of the cast are equally well prepared, when they act together as a flawless ensemble, the performance is consummately compelling. Nobody even notices that there ever was a director, let alone thinks actually to praise his or her work. Think of the classic double play in baseball. At the crack of the bat, the shortstop moves toward the ground ball and the second baseman glides over to cover the bag. The shortstop, in one motion, fields the grounder and underhands the ball to the second baseman, who slides his foot over the bag, leaps and pirouettes to avoid the incoming runner, and pegs the ball on a rope to the first baseman, who plants one foot on the base, leans out, stretches his arm, extends his glove, and makes the catch, just before the runner, jetting down the baseline from home, reaches the bag. Bingo, bango, bongo, six to four to three, Tinkers to Evers to Chance. Perfection. Nobody even notices that the team has a coaching staff.

Oh, but when the engine gets out of tune, when the acting is uneven and the play drags, when the shortstop's toss is too wide or the runner takes the legs out from under the second baseman or the first baseman can't dig the throw out of the dirt, then we notice. What went wrong? Who supposedly tuned up that engine? What must the director have been thinking? Hasn't the manager taught the fundamentals of turning a double play to these guys?

To cure all these ills, we analyze. What parts of the engine need our attention so we can get it back in tune? What parts of what scenes need more direction, more rehearsal? What actions need to be executed in what different ways by which players to pull off the double play?

Perhaps by experience, or perhaps through intuition, most high school and college students will recognize the need for analysis in these three scenarios, and some students may even have expertise in conducting such analyses. Yet when course assignments call for analysis, or when an academic challenge such as the AP[®] English Language and Composition Examination requires students to analyze texts and images, students run into trouble. Why? There are myriad reasons, many of which are unpacked in the chapters of this volume.

Perhaps one reason may lie in an essential disjuncture between the act of analysis, as we assign it to students or expect responsible citizens to be able to do it, and the etymology of the word. We require students to analyze published essays, stories, poems, and plays or to analyze slick advertisements, polished photographs, and precise charts. We expect citizens to analyze politicians' platforms; their business's or industry's strategic initiatives; and their church's plans to add members, diversify services, and raise money. These pieces of literature and public documents may appear to be seamless, unified entities. The etymology of *analysis*, however, tacitly asks us to "unseam" them, to "disunify" them. "Analysis" comes from Medieval Latin, derived from the Greek *analusis*, a "dissolving," which in turn comes from *analūein*, "to undo" or "to loosen."

That sense of analysis—of reading and writing analytically—as "undoing" is the common theme that runs through all six chapters of this volume. All six chapters focus on reading and writing analytically as essentially an act of taking something apart, seeing how the parts work, and showing how the parts produce the whole.

The original vision for the collection was for it to have three chapters that are essentially theoretical and conceptual and three that are completely "hands-on" and "teacherly." But all of the contributors, I've found, are both teachers and theorists, so none of us could avoid being pragmatic. All of the chapters not only frame conceptual issues related to reading and writing analytically but also offer guidelines on teaching advanced high school and beginning college-level students how to do so. In the first chapter, I attempt to unpack a definition of analytic reading, explain how the AP English Language and Composition Examination tests a student's analytic reading and writing abilities, and describe what I perceive to be a relatively precipitous drop-off in these abilities in recent years. In Chapter 2, Mary Kay Mulvaney describes in substantial detail the kinds of analytic reading and writing tasks college students generally encounter during the undergraduate years, and she offers her perspective on how both college instructors and AP teachers can teach analysis. In Chapter 3, Hephzibah Roskelly turns her attention to the teaching of analysis as the teaching

of reading, and she concentrates primarily on how and why we must continue to teach our students how to read “old” texts—those written prior to 1900. In Chapter 4, Bernard Phelan describes how he teaches analytic reading of nonfiction prose by using the metaphor of the “language landscape.” In Chapter 5, Kevin McDonald explains how he gets his students attuned to analyzing audience and purpose by encouraging them to “play” with texts. In Chapter 6, Jodi Rice demonstrates how teaching dramatic literature is an excellent way to teach analysis of texts in general.

It is our sincere hope that these chapters will frame for the AP English community new principles and practices for teaching students to read and write analytically in all their classes, on the AP English Language and Composition Examination, and in their lives as productive citizens.

On Reading and Writing Analytically: Theory, Method, Crisis, Action Plan

David A. Jolliffe

So let rhetoric be defined as the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion. (Aristotle, On Rhetoric, 1355b)

But the art of rhetoric has its value. It is valuable, first, because truth and justice are by nature more powerful than their opposites.... [So a proper knowledge of rhetoric would prevent the triumph of fraud and injustice.] Secondly, [rhetoric is valuable as a means of instruction.] ... Thirdly, in rhetoric, as in dialectic, we should be able to argue on either side of a question; not with a view to putting both sides into practice—we must not advocate evil—but in order that no aspect of the case may escape us.... Lastly, if it is a disgrace to a person when he cannot defend himself in a bodily way, it would be odd not to think him disgraced when he cannot defend himself with reason [in a speech]. (Aristotle, On Rhetoric, 1355a)

[T]welve-year-olds debating the merits of a Michael Jackson concert or a Mariah Carey video are making the same kinds of claims, counterclaims, and value judgments as those made by published book reviewers and media critics; there's even a continuity between the struggling adolescent who says 'It sucks' or 'That's cool,' and the scholar or journalist who uses more sophisticated language. (Graff 155)

In my years of teaching young readers and writers about how to read and write analytically—and I've been at it for more than three decades now—I have repeatedly made five points, and this chapter will proceed more efficiently if I state them squarely, up front, right from the outset:

- First, reading and writing analytically are not rocket science. To read and write analytically means to examine any text, “literary” or “ordinary,” in order to determine both what its meanings, purposes, and effects are and to show how its parts work together to achieve those meanings, purposes, and effects.
- Second, all textual analysis is ultimately rhetorical analysis. What people call “literary” analysis, “stylistic” analysis, or “discourse” analysis when it is done well is a subset of rhetorical analysis.
- Third, the practices of reading and writing analytically can be grounded in a body of theory from classical rhetoric that has stood the test of time—it’s been around for about 2,500 years. As the initial quotation from Aristotle above makes clear, rhetoric is the faculty of *discovering*—not necessarily of using, but certainly of finding—all the things a speaker or writer might do in a given situation to make his or her text meaningful, purposeful, and effective. In other words, the theory of rhetoric underlies analysis and criticism, as well as persuasive speaking and writing.
- Fourth, as the other quotation from Aristotle above reveals, reading analytically is what I like to call “the good citizenship stuff” as well as “the good student stuff.” Good citizens and good students need to know how texts work on them—how a text’s rhetoric can prevent fraud and injustice and, I suppose, perpetrate them as well. They need to know that all good teaching relies on good rhetoric, and most bad teaching probably reflects ineffective rhetorical choices. They need to know how to do justice to both sides of an argument—and, woe is us, how seldom the media in the United States give us the opportunity to do this. And students need to know how to use rhetoric to support their own positions.
- Fifth, reading analytically is something most thoughtful people do every day. Gerald Graff, in the final quotation above, suggests that preteens responding to a concert or a video engage in rhetorical analysis: Presuming that Michael Jackson and Mariah Carey are trying to achieve some meaning, purpose, or effect, the 12-year-olds, ideally, not only utter “It was cool” or “It sucked,” but also provide some justification for their evaluations. They refer to specific features of the concert or video—Michael Jackson’s snappy dance moves, for example, or Mariah Carey’s sappy lyrics—as support for their “cool” or “sucked” claims. And if 12-year-olds are routinely involved with rhetorical criticism of concerts and videos, how much more so

are bright high school students encountering an engaging novel or reading the myriad college-solicitation letters they receive, and how much more so are adults examining the tons of credit-card pitches and political ads that weasel into their lives daily?

In short, good students and good citizens not only can but must be rhetorical analysts and rhetorical critics, as well as effective *rhetors*—convincing and persuasive writers and speakers themselves.

This special-focus edition on reading and writing analytically grows out of a single, overarching question that emerges from the aforementioned five points: If reading and writing analytically, grounded in rhetorical theory, have been around since antiquity, and if these two activities are so central to success in school and success in life beyond school, why do students in high school and college courses encounter so much difficulty with these practices? As with most worthwhile questions, there are many answers to this one. Because rhetoric was downplayed in most undergraduate curriculums during the bulk of the twentieth century, many teachers (and therefore many students) are unfamiliar with the principles of rhetorical theory that guide reading and writing analytically. Because reading and writing analytically go by many names in high school and college courses, teachers and students may fail to recognize what an analytic reading or writing assignment calls for them to do. Because the course called “*reading*” tends to drop out of school curriculums in middle or junior high school, many high school and college teachers don’t realize that they must continue to teach reading, which means they must consciously and explicitly teach analysis—they must teach *reading*, not *readings*. And, finally, because teachers note that there’s a paucity of effective strategies that they can use, many of them don’t actually know how to teach analytic reading and writing.

Ideally, the chapters in this volume will speak to all four of these probable causes for students’ difficulties with reading and writing analytically. The other chapters take up vital conceptual questions related to reading and writing analytically as well as set out valuable strategies for teaching analytic reading and writing to high school and beginning college students. This introductory chapter is designed to accomplish three goals: to unpack a basic definition of rhetorical analysis, to demonstrate how this notion of rhetorical analysis underlies not only the analytic free-response (i.e., essay) questions but also the multiple-choice reading questions on the AP English Language and Composition Examination, and to describe how students’ abilities to read and write analytically, as evidenced by their performance on the AP English Language

and Composition Examination, have changed over the past five years—a change that led to the commissioning of this volume.

What Is Rhetorical Analysis?

In a very clear chapter that warrants the attention of all AP English Language and Composition teachers as well as college writing instructors, Jack Selzer notes, “There is no generally accepted definition of rhetorical analysis (or rhetorical criticism, as it is also called), probably because there is no generally accepted definition of rhetoric” (279). After discussing the range of definitions of rhetoric, some honorific and some pejorative, that have circulated since antiquity, Selzer settles on this characterization of the “interpretive enterprise” of the art of rhetoric: “[R]hetorical analysis or rhetorical criticism can be understood as an effort to understand how people within specific social situations attempt to influence others through language” (280-1). Referring to “rhetorical analysis as a kind of critical reading,” Selzer explains further:

When people read rhetorically...when they engage in rhetorical analysis, they not only react to the message, but they appreciate how the producer of that message is conveying the message to a particular audience too, whether that intended audience includes the analyst or not (281).

While I agree with Selzer that the myriad definitions of rhetoric can lead to some confusion about what rhetorical analysis is, I solve the problem for myself by adopting what I consider the most fundamental definition, Aristotle’s, then building an analytic system on it and teaching that system to my students. First of all, I paraphrase and unpack Aristotle’s definition in this five-bullet teaching tool:

Rhetoric Is

- *the faculty (Aristotle calls it a dynamis—an improvable art)*
- *of finding (not necessarily using, but certainly finding—Aristotle uses the term heuresis)*
- *all the available means (everything a writer or speaker might do with language)*
- *of persuasion (writers and speakers aim to shape people’s thoughts and actions)*
- *in a particular case (rhetoric capitalizes on specific situations).*

I move through the first bullet point relatively quickly in my teaching. For those students who claim that they will never be any good at writing, speaking, or analyzing because they simply weren't born with these "innate" talents, I say, "poppycock." Aristotle has been saying for the past 2,500 years that these are teachable arts, and people can get better at them. After that, I land with some force on the second bullet point and explain that, to Aristotle, rhetoric was dominated by invention, for which he used the Greek noun *heuresis*, or "a finding." I spend a moment with the English cognate noun, *heuristic*, a systematic process of finding and solving problems. I note that both rhetors and rhetorical analysts must be consistently and systematically searching. Searching for what? As the third and fourth bullet points make clear, they must systematically search to discover *all* the things a writer or speaker has done (in a text being analyzed) or might do (in a text being produced) to shape people's thoughts and actions—that is, to achieve meaning, purpose, and effect. As the final bullet point suggests, since rhetors operate in specific situations, cases that embody *exigence* (something sticking in the craw of the writer or speaker that needs speaking or writing about), *audience* (people, either immediate or mediated over time and place, capable of responding to this exigence), and *intention* or *purpose* (what the writer or speaker hopes the audience will *do* with the material presented: make meaning, realize its purpose, recognize its effect), rhetorical analysts ought to be able to determine, by drawing inferences, the exigence, the primary and secondary audiences, and the intention or purpose of any text they analyze.

I refocus on the third and fourth bullet points, leading my persistently inquisitive students to ask, "And what might *all* those things be?" Only then can the instruction move from defining rhetoric to defining and unpacking rhetorical analysis. "All those things" are the appeals and parts of a text that work together to achieve meaning, purpose, and effect.

Although I've tipped my analytic hand by leading students to draw some inferences about exigence, audience, and intention, I begin rhetorical analysis in earnest by teaching the students about the traditional "artistic proofs"—*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. I do not treat them, as some teachers do, as equal and interchangeable parts. I start with *logos*, which is not simply "the logical appeal" or "the appeal to reason," but instead is the "embodied thought" of the text. Every text, no matter how thoroughly it emphasizes the character of the writer or tugs on the emotions of the reader, incorporates *logos*, the central and subsidiary ideas that the text develops for the reader to "take home." A writer or speaker builds *logos*, according to Aristotle, using enthymemes or examples, and that's all (1393a), so the rhetorical analyst

must, initially or ultimately, be able to show, in any text, how the writer or speaker capitalizes on unspoken assumptions he or she thinks the audience already believes about the issue at hand; incorporates facts, data, reasoning, and perspectives about the issue; and then substantiates a claim, a generalization, or a point about the issue. After establishing *logos* as the central and indispensable proof, I then teach about *ethos*, showing how a text can emphasize the good sense, the good will, and the good character of the writer and thereby become more credible. And then I teach about *pathos*, showing how almost all texts do something to appeal to the emotions or states of life of readers.

I find it necessary to pause at this point in the instruction and focus on tone, the writer or speaker's apparent attitude toward the subject matter and issue at hand. Tone gets established, I maintain, in the intersections between *logos* and *ethos* and *logos* and *pathos*, and so tone ends up occupying a space in my analytic system at the same level as the appeals. A rhetorical analyst can only detect *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and tone by drawing inferences based on the arrangement and style—the diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language—of a text. Analytic claims about the appeals and tone are, in essence, arguments, and the details of the text provide evidence to support those claims.

My students, honest as they are, pick up on this last point and usually call my hand. “Wait a second,” they say. “How can you make all these claims about logical, ethical, and emotional appeals and tone? All we see is words on the page.”

“Exactly!” I reply. That’s all any text is, just words on a page, or images on a screen, so what an analyst must do is focus on and scrutinize those words to see *how* they forge *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and tone. So we turn our attention next to the arrangement, organization, and structure of the text itself, looking at how it can be divided into parts and what the function of each of these parts is—to introduce a central idea, to narrow the text’s focus, to divide the text into smaller parts, to compare or contrast material that has come before with what will come after, to address possible objections to what has been said so far, to promote the author’s credentials, to add a piece of emotionally evocative material, and so on. In all cases, we ask the big “so what?” questions about organization, structure, and arrangement: So what difference does the structure of the text make? How does the organization influence the appeals to *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* and the establishment of tone?

Then we turn our attention to the most visible details in the text—its diction, its syntax, its imagery, and its figurative language (or, in rhetorical terms, its use of schemes and tropes). We take a careful, systematic look at each of these four elements:

Is the diction formal or informal? Latinate or Anglo-Saxon? Does the writer use *I* or *you* or *we*? Are there any contractions? Does the text use any specialized jargon? Are the sentences long, short, varied, periodic, loose, standard subject-verb-object or subject-verb-complement? Are they primarily in active voice? If there are any passive voice sentences, how do they function? Are there any visual, auditory, or tactile images? Are there any schemes? What do the schemes do—add, omit, provide parallel balance, provide antithetical balance? Are there any tropes? What are the principal metaphors being used? How are comparisons and contrasts brought about by tropes other than metaphor? Can we detect any irony or sarcasm? About each of these questions, once again we ask, “So what? So what do the diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language, mediated through the organization of the whole text, do to the establishment of *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and/or tone?

Once we have finally made our way through all of these analytic categories—and this takes about two months of instruction with lots of practice using sample texts as different concepts are introduced—I am ready to say to students, “Okay, after you have determined what this text *means*, what its primary and secondary *intentions* or *purposes* are, what *effect* you think its author intended it to have on its audience, *why* you think the author was compelled to write it, and who you think its immediate and mediated *audiences* are, now explain how it means, how it realizes its purpose, how it achieves its effects, how it makes clear its exigency, how it addresses or evokes its audience(s), and how it announces its intention(s). If you start with some top-level concern like *logos*, one of the other appeals, or tone, you need to drill down through arrangement and style and point out features that you believe manifest the appeal in question or the tone. If you start with some highly visible feature like diction, syntax, imagery, or figurative language, you need to show how these elements, mediated through the organization of the text, constitute *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and/or tone, and indeed how these elements provide clues about the exigency, audience, and *intention* of the text. While your ultimate rhetorical analysis will probably focus on the text's most salient aspects—for example, *ethos* and *diction*, or *intention* and *details of imagery*—you must establish a dialectic between what you conclude is the meaning/purpose/effect of the text and how you perceive its parts, working together to achieve these ends.” Now that, for my money, is reading analytically. That is rhetorical analysis.¹

1. For a schematic diagram of the analytic system developed in this chapter, see Bernard Phelan's chapter in this volume.

How Does the AP English Language and Composition Exam Test Analysis?

Teachers familiar with the AP English Language and Composition Examination may hold two ideas about how the test examines students' abilities to read and write analytically that warrant rethinking. Experienced teachers, in particular, may recall that until the early 1990s, there were two kinds of analytic prompts in the free-response (i.e., "essay") portion of the examination: one that called for students to engage in "rhetorical" analysis and one that asked for "stylistic" analysis. In addition, many teachers and students may presume that the examination tests students' abilities to read and write analytically only in the single "analysis" question that has come to reside alongside the argument and the synthesis question in the essay portion of the test.

Several points need to be made in response to these slight, but noteworthy, misconceptions. First, the AP English Language Test Development Committee determined in the 1990s that the only type of analytic questions that would appear on the essay portion of the exam would be rhetorical analysis questions. Rhetoric is the overarching concept; the five ancient canons of rhetoric are invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Therefore, any stylistic analysis has to consider larger questions of the overall rhetorical effectiveness of the text being analyzed, and any rhetorical analysis must consider how stylistic choices affect the text's achievement of meaning, purpose, and effect. Second, a student's ability to read analytically is tested not only by the essay questions but also by the multiple-choice questions, which differ substantially from multiple-choice questions that students might encounter on other standardized tests. Third, with the introduction of the new synthesis essay question on the 2007 test, the AP English Language and Composition Examination now has an additional opportunity to examine students' abilities to read analytically.

Since students preparing to take the AP English Language and Composition Examination are surrounded by opportunities (one might say "demands") to take multiple-choice tests, teachers are wise to point out the differences between multiple-choice questions on other exams and those on the AP Exam. Many multiple-choice examinations, particularly those included in states' standardized tests, are dominated by four types of questions: those that ask students to identify (a) the central idea, the gist, of the passage under consideration; (b) the meaning that can be attributed to a particular passage based on inferences; (c) the "correct" answer about the content of a particular section of the passage; and (d) the grammatical error in an underlined portion of a sentence, or how a sentence could be improved by revising it in some

suggested way. The multiple-choice questions on the AP English Language and Composition Exam are quite different from these. The AP Exam questions may occasionally ask the student to identify the gist or main idea or to forge meaning by drawing inferences, but more often the questions call upon the student to assess the author's intentions and purposes, the development of the central ideas (i.e., *the logos* of the passage), the text's appeal to credibility or emotion (i.e., *ethos* and *pathos*), the organization and development of central and subsidiary ideas, and the meaning and effect of choices involving diction, syntax (for example, parallel structure or antithesis), imagery, or figurative language (for example, metaphor, irony, rhetorical questions, overstatement, understatement, and so on). To consider an example, look carefully at questions 22 through 33, based on the passage about Chinese–Western Europe relations in the eighteenth century, on pages 19 through 21 of the *AP English Course Description*, available at www.apcentral.collegeboard.com. According to my reading, those multiple-choice questions call on students to make judgments about the following: the gist of the entire passage, its use of data to develop *logos*, its effective use of parallel syntax, its meaning drawn from inferences, its authorial point of view, the rhetorical function of transitional sentences in the passage, and its tone.

A good way to teach students about the analytic nature of the multiple-choice questions is to adopt this practice: When you teach a work similar to one that might appear as a multiple-choice section passage on the exam, show students how to identify its purpose and central ideas (and justify their answer). Then think about points in the passage where you as a teacher might pause and query the students: “Look at this particular section of the text. What choices has the author made right here that affect the development of its ideas, its appeal to credibility or emotion, or its tone?” These generative moments—I call them “pause points”—in the passage are what give rise to good multiple-choice questions.

The most evident and visible method the AP English Language and Composition Examination uses to test a student's ability to read and write analytically is the essay question that specifically calls for analysis. The analysis questions used on the main AP English Language and Composition Exam over the past five years offer a representative view of the range of these questions:

- The 2003 examination presented students with an 1861 speech delivered by Alfred Green. Students were directed to “analyze the methods that Green uses to persuade his fellow African Americans to join the Union forces.”
- The 2004 examination offered students a letter written in 1746 by Lord Chesterfield to his son, “who was traveling far from home.” Students were

told to “analyze how the rhetorical strategies that Lord Chesterfield uses reveal his own values.”

- The 2005 examination featured a 1999 “mock press release” for “MagnaSoles shoe inserts” from *The Onion*, “a publication devoted to humor and satire.” Students were asked to “analyze the strategies used in the article to satirize how products are marketed to consumers.”
- The 2006 examination contained an excerpt from William Hazlitt’s 1827 essay, “On the Want of Money.” Students were directed to “analyze the rhetorical strategies Hazlitt uses to develop his position about money.”
- The 2007 examination offered students an excerpt of Scott Russell Sanders’ 1993 essay, “Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World.” Students were told to “analyze the strategies Sanders uses to develop his perspective about moving.”

Notice the common elements in each of these questions: In each case, the prompt gives students some guidance to help them determine the meanings, purposes, and effects of the primary text without specifically saying “this is what the text means,” “this is its major purpose,” or “this is the effect the author intended this text to have.” In each case, the prompt directs students to look for “methods” or “strategies” the author of the primary text uses to convey its meanings, purposes, and effects. Thus, each prompt represents an open invitation to rhetorical analysis. Simply put, students are asked to explain both what they see as the central ideas developed in the text *and* how they perceive those central ideas being fleshed out.

While the multiple-choice questions and the essay questions calling for analysis are the principal methods used to test students’ abilities to read and write analytically, analysis also must come into play in the students’ work on the synthesis question, which appeared for the first time on the AP English Language and Composition Examination in 2007. As I explain in an article on the AP English Language and Composition Course Home Page of the AP Central® Web site (“Preparing for the 2007 Synthesis Question: Six Moves Toward Success”), after students have read the synthesis prompt and are working their way through the sources during the new 15-minute reading period, they can prepare to write their essay, in part, by conducting a quick analysis of the *logos* of each source, identifying its central claim, what evidence or reasoning it offers in support of that claim, and what tacit assumptions allow a reader to understand how the evidence or reasoning actually does support the claim.

How Has Student Performance on Analysis Questions Changed?

Judging solely from the profile of students' scores on the analysis essay questions, one can detect a conspicuous drop in AP students' abilities to read and write analytically over the past five years.

- For the 2003 question based on Alfred Green's speech, the mean score was 5.15 (standard deviation 1.64) on the nine-point scale used to evaluate student work on the essay portion of the exam.
- For the 2004 question based on Lord Chesterfield's letter to his son, the mean score was 4.74 (standard deviation 1.75).
- For the 2005 question about the MagnaSoles advertisement satire, the mean score was 4.92 (standard deviation 1.79).
- For the 2006 question about Hazlitt's "On the Want of Money," the mean score was 3.96 (standard deviation 1.68).
- For the 2007 question based on Sanders' "On Staying Put," the mean score was 4.09 (standard deviation 1.89).

On a typical AP English Language and Composition question calling for an argumentative essay, the mean score is generally in the low- to mid-five range, as was the mean score for the initial synthesis question in 2007.

One might argue that the drop in performance on the analysis questions resulted solely from their incorporation in the prompt of what I term "archaic" prose—that is, prose written prior to 1900.² That might account for the subpar scores on the 2004 Lord Chesterfield question and the 2005 Hazlitt prompt, but even the performance on the 2005 MagnaSoles question, based on a piece written in 1999, and the 2007 Sanders question, based on an essay written in 1993, were, respectively, a bit below and substantially below the normally expected mean.

Even a cursory glance at the sample low-scoring student essays for each of these questions, available on AP Central, demonstrates some of the sources of students' problems with reading and writing analytically.

- The low-scoring essay on the 2003 examination largely summarizes the issues Alfred Green raises, rather than analyzing both his argument and the methods he uses to develop it.

2. For a justification for and advice about teaching such passages, see Hephzibah Roskelly's chapter in this volume.

- The low-scoring essay on the 2004 examination misreads Lord Chesterfield's letter, assuming it is actually concerned about his son's travel rather than about the derelict behavior and neglect of opportunity and education for which Lord Chesterfield was chastising his son. The student writer's claims, therefore, about the tone of the letter are completely misguided, and the writer, moreover, spends time analyzing such features as repetition without noting what the effect of repetition might be on the establishment of appeals or tone.
- The low-scoring essay on the 2005 examination suggests that the student writer is not completely sure that the MagnaSoles story is a satire, a send-up of similar press releases. The student writer offers praise for the putative author's "persuasive writing skills," rather than analyzing the argument, which would have revealed its satirical nature.
- The low-scoring essay on the 2006 examination shows that the writer largely misunderstands Hazlitt's argument. The student writer takes the word "want" in Hazlitt's title ("On the Want of Money") to mean "desire," rather than "lack." The student writer's attempts to analyze, for example, personification and a purported "Straw Man" logical fallacy are incorrect.
- The low-scoring essay on the 2007 examination is, in the words of Mary Trachsel of the University of Iowa, who led the Reading of the question, "disjointed." It identifies discrete features without ever clearly explaining how the features connect to, and support, Sanders' purpose and evolving ideas. The essay begins with a gloss on the content and relies heavily on glossing throughout. . . . The student seems to know what analysis is but inadequately performs the task, falling back on the strategies of paraphrasing content and pointing out stylistic features, yet not connecting the two."

Three common threads run through these descriptions of the unsuccessful essays. First, the student writers simply had a difficult time understanding the prose used in the passages, even the prose written during the 1990s. Second, the less-than-successful student writers often apparently assumed that the question called on them simply to summarize and comment on the content of the passage, rather than to analyze it. Third, while the student writers were capable, to a degree, of pointing out features of a text that might be analyzed, the less-than-successful ones were largely incapable of connecting those features to the establishment of meaning, purpose, and effect in the text at hand.

Addressing the Analysis Deficit: What Should We Do, and Why?

The paths of action lying before AP English Language and Composition teachers, as well as instructors in college writing courses, seem clear. As the chapters in this volume indicate, to succeed in college students must understand reading and writing analytically as processes of understanding what a text says and taking apart, assessing, and evaluating how it says it. I would maintain that these abilities represent practices of good citizens as well as good students. As teachers, we need to remind ourselves consistently that we must be teachers of reading as well as writing, and, as teachers of reading, we must provide our students with models of analysis that teach them the analytic handholds of the “language landscape,” as Bernie Phelan describes it in his chapter in this volume. We must teach them always to ask the big “so what” questions about the features of a text. Finally, we must lead them to see *everything* they read for AP English Language and Composition—fiction, poetry, drama, nonfiction prose, graphics, and visuals—as artifacts created by a writer or audience to achieve meaning, purpose, and effect for an audience of readers or viewers. It’s that simple. It’s not rocket science.

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Analytic Writing in College: Forms, Sites, and Strategies

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We are constantly “analyzing” our environment. In the course of the past few hours, I have analyzed student requests appearing among a lengthy list of e-mails, prioritized them, and initiated various strategies of response; I have analyzed program descriptions of a conference I am attending and judged the appropriateness of their content relative to my professional interests in order to select which sessions I will attend; I have analyzed my options for getting to the airport as I prepare to leave for the conference, making a decision relative to time, budget, distance, and so forth. Countless examples of relatively trivial things such as these enter our schedules each day, and while we attend to them, we rarely, if ever, consider the nature of the actual process of analysis we use to do so. Of course, because the above items are fairly mundane and straightforward, they can be analyzed fairly quickly and easily. Our students cope with trivial instances of analysis on a regular basis as well. For example, dress choices for a given school day are “usually” quickly analyzed in light of weather conditions, recently worn clothing, availability of clean laundry, anticipated peer encounters that day, and so forth. But of course, change the venue from “school day” to something like “senior prom,” and a whole new set of choices and contributing factors complicate the analytic demands.

Within an academic context, the process of analysis is generally much more complex, but at its core, analysis involves similar steps, no matter what the circumstances. As Chapter 1 of this volume explains, analysis always involves looking at how an entity’s *parts*—the student e-mails that need to be answered, the various session descriptions of the conference program, the possible routes to the airport, and the items of clothing one could put on, as well as, for example, the organization,

syntax, and diction of a text—constitute its *whole*, its meaning, purpose, or effect. In addition, analysis always involves *reacting* and *generating*: reacting to a text or an event by analyzing it, noting how its parts constitute its whole, and then generating a clear explanation of the analysis. Failing to recognize the basic nature of analysis and lacking tools to react analytically to a text and generate an original response to it, college students often find the demands of analytic writing quite daunting. In an effort to assist teachers in preparing young writers for the demands of college-level analytic writing, this chapter will examine three things: 1) specific forms that analysis typically takes in the college setting; 2) common places in which students might expect to encounter college-level analytic writing; and 3) useful considerations in preparing students for responding successfully to those encounters.

Forms of Analysis Demanded in College

College students face challenges of analysis in their personal lives that directly or indirectly affect their academic lives. Personally, for example, they face an array of decisions involving analysis: what courses to register for, what major to declare, what fraternity or sorority to pledge, what internship to secure, what extracurriculars to join, and so forth. All of these quandaries involve the classic part-to-whole nature of analysis. Tacitly, the students might ask themselves, “What parts of my personal experience will build the *whole* person I want to become?” Within their academic curriculum, students find that occasions involving analysis will take many forms as well—oral, visual, or electronic, as well as, of course, written analysis.

Students in college are sometimes given an analysis assignment involving primarily oral forms. They may be asked to analyze a famous speech, a radio press conference, a taped interview or significant conversation, a frequently heard radio advertisement, or a timely political debate. In each of the above instances, in addition to examining the content, audience, purpose, and context required to conduct any analysis (details of these will be discussed below), students need to consider aspects of delivery such as pace, tone, articulation, expression, and so forth. As an extension of such an assignment, students may be asked to, in turn, create their own oral text by articulating the results of their analysis in their own speech, oral report, or recorded critique. In other words, they may be asked to react to and then generate oral forms of communication.

Students may also be asked to analyze visual forms, such as a provocative billboard, an intriguing work of abstract art, or an important but ineffective brochure. (The AP English Language and Composition Examination moved to incorporate

the analysis of visual artifacts, beginning with the 2007 examination.) In these occasions, once again students would need to consider content, audience, purpose, and context, but they would also need to consider elements such as the use of colors, line, shape, textures, layout, size, and so forth. In turn, upon conducting their analysis by reacting to a given visual form, they may be called upon to generate another visual in response—such as a magazine advertisement offering a countermesssage to the one they analyzed, a series of photographs attempting to express a similar abstraction of an image or concept, or a revised brochure.

Increasingly, students are being challenged to analyze various electronic forms of communication such as Web sites, e-mails, PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos, blogs, and so forth. Here again with these different forms come different demands. In addition to the ever-present aspects of content, audience, purpose, and context are considerations of visual elements, such as color, layout, or shape, as well as elements of the oral forms such as tone or expression. There are also aspects of technical access, speed, connectivity, delivery—all often issues of much wider audience potential. Once again, when students have reacted to an electronic text they may be asked to generate and articulate their response in an appropriate electronic form such as their own PowerPoint presentation, a blog post with photos uploaded, an updated Web site, a new video, and so forth.

Sometimes, perhaps since oral, visual, and electronic texts are ubiquitous and demand immediate response, students find analysis of them an easier, or at least a more engaging form of analysis than analysis of written texts. Their reaction to such texts as a newspaper editorial, an academic journal essay, or a comprehensive letter, or their generation of a written report of their analysis, such as an essay exam, a lab experiment discussion section, or the commonly assigned analytic essay often leaves students bewildered and frustrated.

Indeed, the traditional academic form of analytic writing—the analysis essay—continues to be very challenging for most students on two levels. It demands that they understand how to analyze the text or texts written by others and, in turn, it requires that they know how to effectively articulate that analysis in their *own* original academic essay. In other words, when students are challenged to analyze a written text they struggle, and when challenged to generate their *own* written text in response, their struggle is compounded. Before we turn to some specific strategies to help students address these struggles, it seems useful to identify at least some of the many places that typical college students may expect to encounter demands for analytic writing.

Encounters with Analytic Writing in College

Of course, it comes as no surprise that students would be expected to compose an analytic essay in a college composition class, but students need to recognize that the analysis they perform may not look exactly the same as that required on the AP English Language and Composition Examination. Frequently assignments such as the following are included in first-year composition syllabi:

Analysis Essay

Assignment –

Write a four- to five-page, typed, double-spaced analysis of some aspect of Ehrenreich's text *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. You may elect to analyze some aspect of the social ramifications of the "working poor," some aspect of their lifestyle, some aspect of Ehrenreich's "experiment," or a blend of analyzing both the topic and her treatment of it.

Remember that an analysis includes:

- a *brief* introduction of the overall content of the text/topic being analyzed, including a clear identification of the author, the text, and the context
- a *thesis* sentence (preferably in the opening paragraph), which is a summary statement of *your* position on the essay and/or topic being analyzed
- summary, only as needed, of the main points of the text under scrutiny
- an analysis of the arguments/ assumptions/accuracy, etc., of the text (depending upon your focus)
- your opinions and ideas in response (agreement or disagreement or a blend) to the author's information and/or presentation, with strong support arguments
- a well-developed conclusion that redirects the reader to *your* thesis and considers implications beyond

Reminder: An analysis includes elements of summary, but it is something very different. An analysis presents an argument, defending a position. The summarized points are to be *interwoven* throughout your argument, not presented in separate sections!

Notice that while the assignment says that "analysis presents an argument, defending a position," students who have done well in AP English Language and Composition will recognize that their task is twofold: to analyze Ehrenreich's

argument itself, *and* to argue for the validity of their own assessment of the book. The former task is completely congruent with the analysis called for by many of the free-response prompts on the AP English Language and Composition Examination. (In this volume, see Bernard Phelan's explication of the prompt based on an excerpt of a Scott Russell Sanders essay on the 2007 examination.) The latter task rarely appears on the examination, but is a common extension of analysis found in college assignments.

A first-year college composition student responded to this assignment by composing a six-page, detailed analysis of aspects of the Ehrenreich text, which she entitled "Help Wanted: Total Authenticity Not Required." Megan began her essay with this opening, establishing the subject and the thesis of her analysis:

Life as Barbara Ehrenreich knew it ended over a plate of "salmon and fried greens" (1)! Author of the 2001 book entitled *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, Barbara Ehrenreich throws herself back into the world of investigative reporting, shedding her normal lifestyle for that of a low-wage worker. Throughout her novel, Ehrenreich delves into the lives of the working poor and attempts to survive on minimum wage in Florida, Minnesota, and Maine. Those who criticize Ehrenreich's book say that her minimum wage experiments in these three states are inauthentic. Although Ehrenreich's experiments are more or less authentic at times, this does not diminish the insights into the lives of the low-wage workers gained by the reader. (excerpt from Megan's essay)

Once she established the framework, Megan aptly proceeded to analyze various aspects of the authenticity of Ehrenreich's project, always evaluating its impact in light of the overall relationship to the insights provided to the reader—in other words, showing how the parts constitute the whole. A representative segment of her analysis reads as follows:

While evaluating Ehrenreich's experiment, it becomes important to remember that despite more or less authenticity, we as readers are able to gain a better understanding of life for the typical low-wage worker. While Ehrenreich does have certain advantages not available to the working poor, such as her advanced education, car, and savings, the reader is still able to see the social and economic struggles that the working poor are forced to endure. Her advantages don't change the fact that "these jobs were physically demanding, some of them even damaging if performed month after month" (195). Low-wage jobs are often emotionally taxing as well, with little or no

praise given for a job well-done. Along these same lines, low-wage workers have become “the untouchables of a supposedly caste-free and democratic society” (117). Ehrenreich characterizes their work as “invisible and even disgusting” (117). She finds it tough to watch her co-workers perform this “disgusting” work for \$6.65 an hour at The Maids and \$2.43 an hour plus inadequate tips at Hearthside (61, 16). Furthermore, despite the inauthentic parts of her experiment, we are still able to discern that when “[people] enter the low-wage workplace—and many of the medium-wage workplaces as well—[they] check [their] civil liberties at the door, leave America and all it supposedly stands for behind, and learn to zip [their] lips for the duration of the shift” (210). Because Ehrenreich doesn’t come from this low-wage world, her experiment will in no way be completely authentic. (excerpt from Megan’s analysis essay)

Megan clearly grasped the requirements of a close reading of the text relative to her thesis, and she provided a competent articulation of evidence to support the conclusion her analysis maintains. Commonplace for some time within composition classes, such assignments are increasingly common in college classes in different disciplines. Fostered by the now highly visible and widely endorsed Writing Across the Curriculum movement, analytic writing is commonly assigned in nearly every field. Academics throughout the university recognize two important attributes about effective writing—its power as a cognitive and affective heuristic *and* its necessity as a tool to construct meaning and promote activity within all discourse communities. Consequently, college professors increasingly assign analytic writing as a means to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as to teach content knowledge in a given area, and in turn require students to demonstrate competence in applying that knowledge to appropriate needs, concerns, and issues within a discipline.

Consider, for example, the following list of potential analytic writing assignments for any given college student over the course of his or her academic career:

- An analysis of a journal article reporting on an original study of assessment of child development for an educational psychology class. This assignment would call for the student to “unpack” and evaluate both the principles and methods of assessment used.
- An analysis of conflicting management styles in three highly successful Fortune 500 companies for Introduction to Management Theory. This

assignment would call for the student to separate the management styles into their component parts and to compare and contrast how each part worked in each of the three companies.

- A literary analysis of the theme of assimilation in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* as discussed in the written novel and as depicted in the recent film version of the novel for a postcolonial literature course. This assignment would ask the student to characterize what aspects of the novel—plotting, characterization, point-of-view, setting, and so on—collectively produce the theme under consideration.
- A comparative sociological analysis of family structures across three different cultural groups: Native American, African American, and Hispanic American. This assignment would call for the student to break down the different features of “family structure” and compare and contrast them across the cultures.
- An analysis of chemical data that challenges prevalent popular theories of global warming for a campus symposium on energy for Chemistry 110: Chemistry and the Environment. This assignment would call on the student to separate the data into categories and evaluate the degree to which each category leads to global warming.
- A campuswide analysis of college students' reticence to register and/or vote in democratic elections for the Dean of Student Affairs as an assignment in a first-year seminar course entitled Politics and the College Campus. This assignment would call on the student to generate an instrument to categorize the various reasons students don't vote and then to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of each reason.
- An analysis of the marketing strategies of automotive producers for diverse audiences: recent college graduates and established corporate baby boomers. This assignment would call for relatively traditional analyses of advertisements, both print and electronic.
- An analysis of U.S. intervention steps in Iraq as a take-home essay exam for a course entitled Contemporary Politics in the Middle East. This assignment would ask students to show what the parts of the intervention strategy were and how successful each was.

Obviously, the list could go on and on. Also, quite obviously, many of these assignments would seriously challenge students, requiring them to both understand how to successfully analyze something and how to demonstrate that understanding.

Sometimes entire papers are specifically labeled “analysis papers.” Such papers are very common assignments in literature classes, and prompts calling for such tasks are commonplace on the AP English Literature and Composition Examination. Literary analysis, focusing on a literary feature of a short story, novel, or poem (such as an aspect of plot, narration and point of view, character, structure, symbolism, setting, or theme) is often the primary activity of any literature course. Composing a literary analysis involves a careful reading of the literary work, followed by a detailed examination and interpretation of the work. A literary analysis paper will assert a claim and provide “evidence” from the literary text itself to support the claim. It will also provide additional evidence for the analysis by drawing upon the analytical discussion of previously published professional literary critics. For example, a claim might be asserted that a particular character is motivated by cultural expectations of his time. Then the writer would locate specific examples and evidence of those cultural norms throughout the text that support the claim asserted, and then cite scholarly articles of literary criticism that reinforce the claim. In doing so, the writer offers an analysis of an aspect of the novel involved. The writer’s ideas are not specifically stated in the original work, but rather are created in response to the original work. Thus, the analysis becomes an extension of the original text.

Let’s look at one student’s response (let’s call her “Holly”) to the first example mentioned in the list of possible college analysis assignments, in which a student successfully meets the demands of a given analytic writing assignment outside of the conventional English class. This assignment occurred within EDU 311: Educational Psychology. The syllabus stated the requirement of a “journal article analysis paper” and provided the following details:

Choose one research journal article based on an original research study (no meta-analyses) that is related to one of the following course topics: child development (ages 5–18), or Pre-K–12 instruction, learning, motivation, classroom/school environment, or assessment. Then write your analysis consisting of the following seven components:

1. summary of the theory/models/concepts and prior research on the topic,
2. participants and methods used to collect the data,
3. research question of the study,
4. type of research study (descriptive, correlational, experimental),
5. findings,
6. limitations of the study, and
7. significance of the study for classroom teachers or professionals in education.

The analysis should be no more than four pages in length, double-spaced, and word-processed. A copy of the research article should be attached to the paper. Do not quote any parts of the article. At the top of the paper, provide the complete APA-style citation of the research article (30 points).

Interestingly, the first five components of the assignment actually call for summarizing and reporting, *not* analysis. However, the sixth component most likely does require original analysis on the part of the student. She must determine the limitations of the study, if they are not specifically acknowledged by the journal article author. Here Holly reports:

The overwhelming weakness of this study is the negative attitude incurred by the teachers. It is very difficult to evaluate this study because of the bias brought on by the teachers. Through the interviews, it seems as though teachers felt disgruntled by lack of consultation prior to implementation and lack of support throughout the program. Another program would have created a stronger study, as it sounds like there were some underlying political issues within the school that was used. Also, because only one school was studied, the sample size is far too small to draw adequate conclusions and to make generalizations about all single-sex programs. Another factor discussed in the study was that in the creation of single-sex classrooms, the number of students per classroom increased, creating a more stressful and less safe environment for both students and teachers. (excerpt from Holly's paper)

The seventh requirement calls for the student to extend *beyond* analysis and to generate a response, determining the significance of this study for a specific audience. The final section of Holly's essay reads as follows:

Perhaps the best suggestion that this study offers to educators and professionals is how *not* to run a single-sex program. The study demonstrates the importance of collaboration and mutual respect among teachers and administrators. The study also, because of its poorly designed nature, offers hope to educators that perhaps single-sex classrooms can be successful in a well-managed, well-prepared environment. It certainly offers motivation to the so-inclined researcher to continue studying the topic and search for contrasting research. (excerpt from Holly's paper)

Clearly, the definitions and expectations of analytic writing assignments in college can and probably will vary considerably. There is no lack of possible places for analytic writing to appear within a college curriculum, presenting numerous challenges for college students today. The more strategies that students possess to face those challenges, the more successful they will be in managing college analytical writing tasks.

Teaching Analytic Writing

Recognizing analysis as a complete process of seeing the parts' relation to the whole, reacting to texts and events, and generating a clear text that reports the analysis and occasionally extends beyond it is crucial for success in college. Assisting students to succeed at analysis requires time, energy, and intentional instruction that includes: 1) an examination of the nature of "analysis," particularly as it differs from other cognitive and linguistic processes; 2) an exploration of the requisite components that *always* constitute an effective analysis besides basic understanding of content, namely context, audience, and purpose; and 3) a careful articulation and examination of several of the most commonly employed rhetorical devices used to accomplish a given purpose. This section will discuss these three aspects of teaching analytical writing, concluding with a close reading and discussion of a recent AP English Language and Composition Exam prompt that required an analysis essay in response.

Defining Analysis

First of all, it is extremely important that students recognize "analysis" as a complex cognitive and linguistic process that is quite different from a process of observation and reporting or of reading and summarizing. Observation and reporting implies that one looks carefully and records or recalls what he or she sees. And even though different viewers would see different things, many people will report the same basic things, offering no opinion or explanation regarding their observations. Similarly, to write a summary, a student need only ask a single basic question: "What?" In other words, the main purpose is for the student to determine the essence of what the author has stated or what has occurred at a particular site, and then restate that essence, in a shortened version, in his or her own words. Strictly speaking, a summary prohibits commentary, opinion, or interpretation of the "what" that the original author presents. Analysis, of course, is quite the opposite. Creating an analysis demands that the student move beyond determining "what" and ask several other questions, such as "Why?", "How?", "So what?", and "What if?" The written text or event or

reported observations must now be considered carefully, asking, “What might this really mean?”, “How does this relate to other facts or ideas already possessed?”, “What implications might it offer for certain actions or other perspectives?”, and so forth. Then students must assert certain opinions and interpretations about the information or ideas analyzed.

Most likely during college, the purpose of many assignments confronting students will be to analyze the reasons, motivations, effectiveness, and so forth of a given text or group of texts. To prepare high school students for college-level writing, AP instructors could introduce them to some basic differences between college writing and high school writing. College-level projects anticipate a far greater level of personal, scholarly involvement; that is, they demand an engagement on the student’s part that includes original, personal analysis. Simply put, college instructors (and, therefore, good AP teachers) want students to process and then create, *not* regurgitate. They want to see evidence of original, critical thinking on the student’s part that has enabled him or her to “create again something new.”

In the language of rhetoric and language scholars, one might say that the projects are epistemic or “knowledge-creating” rather than simply being reproductive or “knowledge-recording,” as many high school assignments are. It is up to students to begin to create new knowledge: to question existing ideas, to make connections with various theories, and to forge new ground, not to be content to simply identify and then mimic back what others have already said and thought. In order to generate “informed” opinions and new ideas, students must know the current thoughts on a topic, and they must recognize that true academic writing is never done in isolation. Rather, it is part of a conversation—a conversation with other scholars who are also continually questioning, exploring, and stretching the boundaries of existing theories and thought as they try to create new perspectives to understand various aspects of our human experience.

Thus, students need to understand that analysis is a sort of “meta” activity by its very nature, quite different from summarizing or reporting. When someone analyzes a text, it is also necessary to move well beyond simply restating the author’s language or ideas—in fact, a complete repackaging occurs. Analysis demands that students carefully explore the unstated or tacit aspects of a given text in order to begin to see how and why that text makes meaning with words, and then they must determine and articulate a reasoned reader response to those words.

In order to demonstrate to students the basic difference between summary and analysis, it may be useful to tape a segment of a political speech, presidential press

conference, or debate that is followed by a commentary segment. First, students could watch the speech or debate and simply record what was said, as literally as possible. Then they could listen to the commentaries offered soon after. Students should note how the interpreters (who are ideally from more than one perspective) will “analyze” the words delivered. Even though the literal words, the “what,” were the same for all hearers, the commentaries will vary tremendously. Students should recognize that these interpretations or analyses are asking the “Why?”, “So what?”, “What if?”, and “So now what?” types of questions. These questions and answers are never the same for and by all listeners. Surely, even within the classroom, students will analyze the same words with very different results. Similarly, you might ask students to watch a short film clip and then ask them to record exactly what happened. Students could compare recordings and then write a brief interpretation of the meaning of what they saw, once the facts of the “what” are agreed upon. Students can compare their responses, debate the inevitable differences, and then read and compare professional film critiques that offer analyses of the film. Finally, students could discuss and compare those critiques to each other and to the inevitable differing reactions of the students themselves. These suggested exercises can serve as a first step to moving toward an understanding of where and how those differences arose and provide insight into how analysis is conducted.

Components of Analysis

Exercises such as these can launch an explanation of the requisite features of analysis, which always operates beyond the basic level of comprehension of content and a surface understanding of vocabulary and sentence structure. Effective analysis must consist of a careful exploration of three things beyond basic content: *purpose*, *context*, and *audience*.

Any analysis must begin with a consideration of the purpose of a text. The most basic “move” of analysis is to determine how the parts of a text lead to its accomplishment of purpose. For any text to exist, first there needs to be an occasion, an impetus—in formal discussions of rhetoric, it usually referred to as *exigence*—that which motivates a need for a text. Exigence *precedes* a text, so exigence does not equal purpose. *Purpose* is what the text, created in response to the exigence, is intended to do. For example, a eulogy is written in response to an exigence, a community’s sorrow, grief, and need to formalize the death of a member of its community. The purpose of the eulogy is most likely to honor the deceased.

The purpose of any given type of text can vary tremendously. Consider, for example, the eulogy of Brutus provided by Marc Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Clearly, the purpose of this famous "Brutus is an honorable man" speech is not to honor but to shed considerable doubt on Brutus's reputation, and indeed to stir the subjects of the murdered Caesar to revolt. Moreover, the purposes of texts are certainly multiple. A single text, for example, can accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

- To record information
- To help someone retain information
- To explain processes
- To communicate facts or ideas to someone else
- To explore significant and/or mixed feelings
- To figure out what one really means or thinks about a subject
- To demonstrate knowledge to others
- To share information with others
- To persuade others that they should adopt a new course of action or change opinions
- To evaluate the perspectives of others

When considering the notion of context, you might first lead a brainstorming session of all the *possible* things that influence the context of any written text. Students will ideally produce a list that includes:

- The time period a text was written
- The significant events occurring during that time period, whether directly related or seemingly unrelated to the text
- The physical or virtual place the text was produced and the primary features of that place
- The primary methods of communication during that time—consider, for example, the potential differences between a telegraph message and an e-mail message
- The cultural groups (primary or marginalized) involved as subjects of the text and/or as the intended audience(s) of the text
- Important text(s) to which this text was written in response
- Responses that the text or similar texts generated at the point of its original publication and/or throughout time, and/or current responses

- The “speaker” (writer) of the text, including consideration of any information about his or her personal background, expertise (or not) about the subject, previous publications, and so forth. (Note: Of course, it is possible to consider the speaker/writer as separate from discussions of the context. In fact, students will often *not* initially identify the speaker as part of the context of the text. However, it can be a useful way for students to understand that for analysis to occur, an analyst must first admit that no text is created in a vacuum and that indeed the author of a text, with his or her unavoidable cultural perspectives, is a part of the context from which the text emerges.)

When initially guiding students to assess the importance of context, a specific example is usually the most effective. Let’s examine a simple, straightforward English sentence: “Smiling tentatively, she walked through the door of Jackson High to begin her first day.” Students can discuss the meaning of this simple sentence if the context is the following:

It is part of a letter to a close friend, written by a divorced mother of an only child who lives in a Chicago suburb in 2007, who is now delivering her daughter to an East Coast boarding school near her father as per the terms of a newly signed, shared custody agreement; OR It is a line from a 1960 small-town Alabama newspaper written by a white male journalist covering the first admission of a black teenage woman to a previously all-white high school; OR It is a line in a 1980s novel focusing on the experiences of a neophyte teacher or one from a rural background beginning her career in an inner-city high school.

Discussion of these varied meanings should underscore the point that context clearly matters a great deal when analyzing a text. In addition to paying close attention to the multiple complex variables of context to conduct an analysis, it is also crucial to pay close attention to the complexities of *audience*. Every text is always written for some kind of an audience—even if that audience is a private one, such as in a personal journal, for instance. Intensity of audience demands vary from the informal and casual, such as when writing a quick e-mail to a friend, to the extremely complex, such as when writing a document for a highly specialized professional audience. Most frequently, academic tasks require students to write for an audience of college peers and professors. In the case of *any* audience, an analyst needs to assess the

characteristics of the audience itself and the audience's expectations in order to successfully complete the writing task.

There are numerous "characteristics" of any audience that may significantly influence an effective analysis. In the case of writing an analysis essay as a response to a text, it is necessary, for instance, to analyze the audience of the original text that no doubt influenced the author and then to analyze the audience for the analysis essay as well. These factors will be different but equally important. Some of the audience variables include age, gender, experience/knowledge level, interest, and motivation. These factors will significantly impact just how much a writer needs to share with the audience by way of background or groundwork. Consider, for example, the difference between writing an analysis of the remake of a classic film for a professor who has published widely in the field of film studies versus writing the analysis for a campus newspaper's weekly column on box office hits. Thus, understanding the social characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity) of an audience as well as the level of knowledge and experience an audience possesses can significantly impact the success of the analysis.

Similarly, considerations of audience motivation can affect an analyst's work. Consider whether the audience really "wants" this information. If so, for what purpose? If the audience merely "wants" the information, a writer probably can concentrate on informative techniques and clarity issues. But if the writer thinks that an audience "needs" or "should want" this information, persuasive techniques will be much more important than simply providing accurate and comprehensive information. Thus, audience variables are demanding and complex for a writer of analytic texts—variables that college students may frequently ignore.

In addition to identifying the purposes, context, and audience of a text, students need to know the tools authors utilize to accomplish purposes, in a given context and for a given audience. One important set of tools comes to us from some of the earliest language theorists and philosophers, including the ancient rhetoricians, Aristotle and Cicero, who provided a framework for analyzing discourse that is still very useful. In simplistic terms, that framework consists of three lenses: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Some students may find these Greek terms daunting, but in fact students encounter their essence daily.

Ethos refers to the image that the text develops of the speaker, an image that an author or speaker can use to influence listeners or readers. Students need to learn to analyze the language or ideas of another by looking closely at the *ethos* of the speaker/writer. For example, students can examine how the writer or speaker

presents himself or herself, what aspects of his or her personality come through in the text, and so forth. One particular consideration for students is the level of a speaker or writer's qualifications or authority to discuss a given topic. For example, following advice in an article by Michael Jordan on ways to motivate high school basketball players would no doubt be useful, but adopting his opinions on the appropriateness of the standardized testing for college admissions criteria may be naive. Teachers should instruct students to assess their confidence in the speaker's or writer's ability based on reputation, previous works, recommendations of others, and level of personal involvement. Also, teachers should encourage students to assess how effectively a text is delivered by closely analyzing the attributes of the speaker projected in the text, including his or her apparent knowledge, tone, level of sincerity, vested interest in the topic, and so forth.

Pathos refers to the emotional appeals made to influence an audience. Frequently, information is presented to us in a highly emotionally charged package—attempting to make us fearful, sympathetic, excited, angry, or competitive, for example. These emotional trappings no doubt affect the way we process the information provided. Therefore, students should know that when conducting an analysis, it is crucial to look closely for the emotional appeals present in the argument. They should examine, for instance, the presence of emotionally charged language and ideas, or poignant, personal examples. These tools can be highly effective and often are highly appropriate. However, sometimes they might be unethically manipulative. A skillful analyst must always be attentive to emotional appeals and their function and appropriateness in a given text.

Logos refers to the formal arguments, reasons, facts, and logical appeals developed in a text. In conducting an analysis, students should first identify the claim(s) asserted and then trace the reasons and evidence provided. They should scrutinize all raw data and question the use of statistics, and they should consider what facts are offered and check the sources and credibility of those facts. Teachers should remind students that even with seemingly hard and fast mathematical statistics or scientific facts, the truth can be skewed, so students should study such data carefully, reflecting on the specific reasons provided to support a given position and assess their reasonableness. Sometimes there are illogical or fallacious reasons presented to defend a position, so students should weigh the logic of a given assertion. To do so, they must ask the hard questions: Is the claim based on a flimsy sample and then projected to apply to a large group? Is it making an assumption that what applies in one set of circumstances automatically applies in all? Is the evidence provided no

longer timely and therefore no longer valid, since newer research has negated the results? In other words, students must work to uncover faulty reasoning. For example, if students are analyzing a speech or a written document, they should ask if the author is basing his or her statements on broad generalizations or on illogical connections between ideas, assuming one thing causes something else when, in reality, the two things are unrelated.

Many aspects of analyzing the *logos* of a text are universal, but sometimes the criteria for successful logical argumentation are discipline specific. To begin an analysis of the *logos* of a text for any disciplinary setting, it is useful to instruct students about the basic differences between inductive and deductive reasoning. Students can begin to unpack this distinction by determining if lots of examples are provided and then general conclusions drawn (the inductive process), or if a general, guiding statement and then specific examples are provided as illustration or evidence of the credibility of that statement. Understanding this distinction enables students to comment on the strategy used by an author to project his or her argument and note the techniques involved.

Another common “logical” strategy to support a position in academic writing is to establish the credibility of value of the argument or position by drawing upon external support. Specifically, invite the students to identify this type of support, which is frequently provided in the form of quoting experts in the field, usually with “tags” provided indicating the relativity and worth (i.e., using the term “historian,” “literary critic,” or “sociologist” prior to the cited name of the commentator). In examples of academic writing, support is often further provided through the ample use of cross references, eyewitness testimony, previous studies, and so forth. All of these things are strategies for bolstering the value of the argument, which contributes to the credibility of the *logos* of a text. Teaching students to recognize these strategies is crucial to their success as analytic writers.

Calls for analysis in texts will appear in different formats depending upon disciplinary context. Sometimes, as in a laboratory or scientific report, an analysis will be specifically labeled the “analysis” or “discussion” section. Note this analysis excerpt from a student-written engineering lab report on the strength of steel in tension conditions. The writer offers the following interpretation of the data collected in the “discussion” section of her report:

In each specimen type the proportional limit was exceeded in the initial loading and thus there remained a permanent strain present in the specimens despite unloading. When loading was continued, the specimens

ultimately experienced necking and eventual fracture, with the cold rolled steel experiencing a longer necking process before failure, while the hot rolled steel experienced a shorter necking process before failure. This can be justified looking at the values for ultimate strength, cold rolled steel is higher than that of hot rolled steel, thus allowing cold rolled steel to withstand more necking before fracture.

In conclusion, this lab allowed one to explore the mechanical properties which will influence structural decision making between that of cold rolled and hot rolled steel. The modulus of elasticity, the yield stress, and the ultimate strength are all higher for that of cold rolled steel in comparison to hot rolled steel. Such knowledge is essential, for in design cold rolled steel would be chosen over hot rolled steel in an environment where tensile failure was of concern. This lab offered insight into the testing process and exposed one to the usefulness and importance of uniaxial specimen testing. Despite the small scale nature of this lab, the knowledge and skills obtained in this lab can further add to one's ability to begin to make serious engineering decisions regarding essential materials. (excerpt from Katelyn's lab report)

Note that the writer looks back to consider what her lab findings actually might mean, trying to determine if there are useful generalizations that can be drawn, and asking if there are implications for other contexts. In essence, the author is considering the underlying arguments suggested by her findings.

Finally, an important aspect of conducting an analysis of a written text and/or generating one's own analytic essay is understanding commonly employed language strategies, each of which can appeal to a text's *ethos*, *pathos*, or *logos*. These include, but are not limited to, the use of:

- repetition
- distinctive sentence structures such as the long, periodic sentence or the very short one-word sentence exclamation
- contrasts
- irony
- parallelism
- figures of speech like powerful metaphors, personification, and isocolon
- classical and intercultural allusions
- proper nouns to create specificity

Teaching students to be attentive to language features and discussing their effects provide a very useful means for them to conduct an effective analysis.

A careful examination of a specific example of a recent AP English Language and Composition Exam prompt for the analysis essay might be the best means of demonstrating the teaching of the above-mentioned ways to conduct an effective analysis. The following prompt is shared on the AP English Language and Composition Exam page of the College Board Web site for review:

2007 AP English Language and Composition Free-Response Questions (Form B)

Question 3

(Suggested time — 40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

The selections below are taken from a speech delivered in 1861 by Wendell Phillips, a prominent white American abolitionist. The speech, written near the beginning of the Civil War, when Northerners were debating whether to allow African Americans to serve in the military, celebrates the achievements of the Haitian general Toussaint-Louverture (c. 1744–1803). Toussaint-Louverture was a former slave who led the struggle to liberate other enslaved Haitians. At one time, he was the most powerful leader in Haiti, which was threatened alternately by French, Spanish, and British armies.

Read the selections carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the strategies that the speaker uses to praise his subject and move his audience.

If I stood here tonight to tell the story of Napoleon, I should take it from the lips of Frenchmen, who find no language rich enough to paint the great captain of the nineteenth century. Were I here to tell you the story of Washington, I should take it from your hearts—you, who think no marble white enough on which to carve the name of the Father of his Country. [Applause.] I am about to tell you the story of a negro who has left hardly one written line. I am to glean it from the reluctant testimony of Britons, Frenchmen, Spaniards—men who despised him as a negro and a slave, and hated him because he had beaten them in many a battle. All the materials for his biography are from the lips of his enemies....

[Toussaint] forged a thunderbolt and hurled it at what? At the proudest blood in Europe, the Spaniard, and sent him home conquered; at the most warlike

blood in Europe, the French, and put them under his feet; at the pluckiest blood in Europe, the English, and they skulked home to Jamaica.

[Applause.] Now if Cromwell was a general, at least this man was a soldier. I know it was a small territory; it was not as large as the continent; but it was as large as that Attica, which, with Athens for a capital, has filled the earth with its fame for two thousand years. We measure genius by quality, not by quantity.

I would call him Cromwell, but Cromwell was the only soldier, and the state he founded went down with him into his grave. I would call him Washington, but the great Virginian held slaves. This man risked his empire rather than permit the slave trade in the humblest village of his dominions.

You think me a fanatic tonight, for you read history, not with your eyes, but with your prejudices. But fifty years hence, when Truth gets a hearing, the Muse of History will put Phocion of the Greek, and Brutus for the Roman, Hampden for England, Fayette for France, choose Washington as the bright, consummate flower of our earlier civilization, and John Brown the ripe fruit of our noonday, then, dipping her pen in the sunlight, will write in the clear blue, above them all, the name of the soldier, the statesman, the martyr, Toussaint Louverture. [Long-continued applause.]

Consider this prompt in light of the major aspects of analysis discussed above: considerations of context, audience, and purpose, and common rhetorical devices to fulfill purpose. In the case of the above prompt, students are provided with numerous helpful details of the context. Encourage students to read those carefully. For example, discuss the importance of the 1861 date and the comment that this is the very beginning of the Civil War; people may still need to be educated about its purposes, including the value and/or the moral imperative of abolition; people are not yet weary of the war; people may be wary of the war's value for them personally; and so forth. All of these factors can impact the audience. Of course, the detail of context that this author is a "white American abolitionist" (Wendell Phillips) is critical to an understanding of his perspective and agenda in delivering this speech. Discuss with the students ways in which Phillips establishes his *ethos* as a highly educated man able to make numerous historic and classical allusions. Finally, the background information about Toussaint-Louverture as a powerful leader, able to defeat the major

Western European military forces of his time, is crucial to understanding the value of Phillips's selection of this figure to make his point.

The specific task asked of the students is to “analyze the strategies” employed by this speech giver (Phillips). It is NOT, for example, to analyze the value of the content regarding the feasibility of freeing the slaves, nor to analyze Phillips's specific purpose in giving this particular speech. In fact, the purpose of the speech is clearly stated in the prompt: “to praise the subject and move his [Phillips's] audience.” Certainly, a very important basic strategy for assisting your students is to have them practice reading the prompt and determining *very carefully* what it is really asking them to do. Understanding the specific context, audience, and purpose is, however, extremely helpful for conducting an analysis of the “strategies” (the prompt request) employed by the speaker in his or her attempt to accomplish that purpose with that audience. Let's examine this prompt closely for those strategies.

To establish a credible *ethos*, Phillips begins by establishing his knowledge of history through his references to Napoleon. He also contributes to an *ethos* of dedicated patriotism and appeals to his audience's emotions of patriotic empathy, providing a personal appeal to this American audience by acknowledging that their hearts are inscribed with a nationalistic pride in founder George Washington. Phillips then uses the strategy of simultaneously juxtaposing comparison and contrast. He first compares a nearly illiterate African American with examples of universally acknowledged examples of greatness in Western culture (i.e., Napoleon and Washington), thus placing the African American in the company of saviors and fathers of nations. Then he simultaneously contrasts the Anglos' legacies of praise from countless fans with the slave's legacy of greatness coming from the “lips of his enemies” (those very white European nationals whom he defeated). The irony of mixing these figures and the sharp contrast of the sources of the praise are two of his first powerful linguistic strategies.

Immediately after drawing upon the two well-known figures of Western culture, Phillips elevates Toussaint-Louverture's status even further, by subtly comparing him to a God through the use of a classical allusion of hurling thunderbolts. Even if students do not recognize the allusion to Zeus, they should note the figurative language, the obvious exaggeration, indeed, impossibility of a mere mortal to “forge a thunderbolt and hurl it at” someone. Thus, Phillips implies but does not explicitly state that Toussaint-Louverture possesses superhuman status.

Phillips then asks the rhetorical question “At what?” does he hurl the thunderbolt, immediately answering it with three poignant examples using specific proper

nouns: Toussaint defeated the Spaniard, the French, and the English. Notably, Phillips employs two other powerful language strategies in this short passage. First, he repeats a parallel phrase three times in a row—"at the proudest blood...at the most warlike blood...at the pluckiest blood"—which provides an emphatic rhythm that contributes to the escalating emotional tone of the speech. This is an example of both "anaphora" (repetition of the beginning word in a string of phrases) and of "isocolon" (repetition of phrases or clauses of equal grammatical structure and length). Surely, the specific names of the figures of speech are less important than students recognizing that the writer is intentionally manipulating language to accomplish specific effects. That said, it would be useful if students can identify and properly label at least some commonly used figures of speech, recognizing their power as tools of language. Secondly, Phillips personalizes his attack by indicating that Toussaint sends the "people" home in disgrace; that is, he says the Spaniard, the French, and the English, as opposed to naming Spain, France, and England as the enemies. Phillips recognizes that people are more vulnerable and more culpable than nations.

In the next section, Phillips returns to his use of Greek mythology to emphasize the godlike stature of Toussaint, in his reference to Attica (be sure to remind your students to pay close attention to footnotes). He then employs the short, but effective, contrasting phrase, "by quality, not by quantity," again capitalizing on linguistic devices of repetition and parallelism.

Phillips returns to his opening technique of comparing and simultaneously contrasting Toussaint with figures of national and international prominence; he entertains comparing Toussaint with Cromwell or Washington but immediately dismisses the comparison as inadequate with the use of the powerful conjunction "but." That little three-letter word has the potential of negating everything stated before it with its stark simplicity. Instructing students to note details like this can significantly contribute to their skills as analytic writers.

Phillips then turns to address his audience even more directly, claiming to read their minds and assessing that they view him as a "fanatic." He blatantly attacks the audience—notably not until after having won them over numerous times as indicated by the applause comments inserted—by accusing them of reading history with bias. Once again he uses contrasting but repetitive and similarly constructed phrases as he states that "you read history, not with your eyes, but with your prejudices." Phillips's use of parallelism is indeed a powerful tool throughout this speech: He convinces his audience of one element and then quickly shifts gears, demanding compliance to the opposite.

Phillips continually adopts the lofty tone of a position of influence through his possession of incredible knowledge, employing numerous classical allusions. He reinforces the loftiness of his ending with his use of a lengthy, periodic sentence, including a series of embedded clauses. Discuss the effect of this with the students, noting especially that the impact of his concluding words is intentionally delayed through this technique. It is a way of holding the audience in suspense before he delivers his ultimate blow, so to speak. He is, in essence, bringing his audience to a heightened emotional state before imposing his final message. He quickly follows this with an effective use of the metaphor of the “flower” for Washington (the man responsible for the blossoming of our nation) and “ripe fruit” for John Brown (a popular abolitionist—note the applause—whose time is now). Within this long closing sentence, Phillips also effectively weaves his use of personification through the image of the “Muse of History...dipping her pen in the sunlight.” In other words, the very course of history will record the greatness of this man against the vastness of the physical universe. Notice how Phillips continues to increase the density of his use of figures and tropes to magnify his message, underscoring the grandeur of the occasion, and percolating the audience’s emotions, which he moves toward releasing like a potent gas under intense pressure.

Finally, Phillips employs a common rhetorical strategy for building emotional intensity: namely, using a string of terms without the use of “and” to link them together (“the soldier, the statesman, the martyr, Toussaint-Louverture”). He also uses gradually accelerated terms in that “statesman” trumps “soldier” in importance and in turn, “martyr” trumps both. Phillips moves his audience to applaud Toussaint by stirring his audience with national pride, moving them to acknowledge white weakness and to confront the shame of national prejudice. Thus, Phillips not only succeeds in praising his dead hero but also moves his audience to tacitly acknowledge that abolition is the only option if greatness is to be justly acknowledged.

Leading students through numerous specific examples of a detailed analysis of prompts such as this is crucial for honing their analytic skills. Students must remember to pay close attention to all details of the writing prompt and to all clues of context, including the authorial information, audience, and purpose. Finally, they must be taught to recognize commonly employed linguistic elements to establish a particular *ethos* of a speaker, the use of *pathos* to move an audience, and the varied means to construct an argument (the *logos*) of a text, particularly the wide range of language aspects of an argument. They must also point out the specific strategies that a skilled writer and/or orator will employ. Recognizing these strategies enables

the student to analyze the message and impact achieved and, in turn, to construct an effective analytic essay of his or her own. If prepared in this way, students should succeed, not only on the AP English Language and Composition Exam but also when they face the complex demands of analytical writing in its varied forms and places within college and, perhaps most importantly, as they prepare to be critically thoughtful citizens of our future world.

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New Worlds in Old Texts

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“One must be an inventor to read well,” Ralph Waldo Emerson urges in his famous essay “The American Scholar,” published in 1837. For teachers who teach “old” literature, like Emerson’s essay, the challenge of helping students read well enough to invent looms large. Students frequently resist older work, seem to understand it thinly, and often analyze it poorly. What’s old? If some students claim hyperbolically that anything is old if it happened before their own memory, it is undeniable that pre-twentieth-century writing presents difficulties for students, even adept readers, that frustrate their efforts to understand and enjoy the texts teachers ask students to read in their American, British, and world literature classes.

The problem is, as teachers attest, that students can’t—or won’t—enter the world that the text presents them with, since it seems so far removed from their own. Without finding the connection between world and word, as literacy teacher Paulo Freire would say, students are unable to grasp, much less analyze, texts. They fall back on stock answers, and listen to and repeat what the teacher or their more motivated classmates offer about the work. They end the reading of the book with a sigh of relief and a comment about how long he (the author, always a he in their description) took to get to his point. “It was sort of boring,” one of my students said of her reading of *House of the Seven Gables*. “He could have described that house in one or two sentences and he just went on. And on.”

Language difficulties—like the very long sentences to which my student objected in Hawthorne’s novel—prevent students from hearing the voice in the text, and voice is the essential link between speaker and hearer, reader and writer, a link that must be forged if students are to succeed with analyses of “old” texts, such as those that frequently appear on the AP English Language and Composition Examination. Composition theorist Peter Elbow stresses the importance of the voice for writers

in his classic text *Writing With Power* (1980). In that book he makes the distinction between writing with no voice and with voice: "Writing *without voice* is wooden or dead because it lacks sound, rhythm, energy, and individuality. . . . Writing *with voice* is writing into which someone has breathed" (299). If readers can't hear voice as they read, the text is wooden, dead, and as my student claimed "sort of boring."

Eudora Welty's autobiography *One Writer's Beginnings* (1983) makes a similar point about how essential voice is to interpretation in reading and writing. She says, "The cadence, whatever it is that asks you to believe, the feeling that resides in the printed word, reaches me through the reader-voice. I have supposed, but never found out, that this is the case with all readers—to read as listeners—and with all writers, to write as listeners" (11–12). Welty's comment suggests not only that readers need to hear a voice on the page that resounds in their own heads, but that reading and writing share an ability to listen for voice. Readers, then, must hear the speaker—narrator or character—and whatever prevents that sound prevents communication and therefore the possibility of interpretation and analysis. Readers who are unable to hear voice are unable to write with voice themselves, either in compositions in which they analyze others' arguments or those in which they create their own arguments.

Even in difficult or translated contemporary works, the language doesn't seem to present the same kinds of problems in listening for voice as in many pre-twentieth-century texts. In contemporary works, sentences are usually cumulative rather than periodic. They tend to be somewhat shorter as well, and less embedded. Vocabulary, even if it's specialized, appears more accessible. A challenging, translated work, like *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1983), opens this way:

He found the corpse covered with a blanket on the campaign cot where he had always slept, and beside it was a stool with the developing tray he had used to vaporize the poison. On the floor, tied to a leg of the cot, lay the body of a black Great Dane with a snow white chest, and next to him were the crutches. At one window the splendor of dawn was just beginning to illuminate the stifling, crowded room that served as both bedroom and laboratory, but there was enough light for him to recognize at once the authority of death. (3)

Although some sentences are long and the details the opening includes provide little help with the story itself or its narrator, students tend to read with interest and understanding rather than with the kind of bewildered impatience that is occasioned by reading *House of the Seven Gables*. They hear the voice in the text because the language seems to speak more clearly than in older literature.

Besides the significant language problem that prevents students from reading beyond literal comprehension, older texts present a cultural problem as well. Student readers have difficulty understanding the world the text portrays, not only because the voice of the speaker seems so hard to translate into understandable, hearable prose but also because the situations, scenes, mores, roles, and preoccupations of the characters often appear far removed from contemporary concerns. How can a reader enter a text that focuses on servitude and slavery, or the tribulations of capture by a group of people the writer believes are “savage beasts,” or abstractions about obedience to Puritan law of Sabbath keeping? Readers might be interested in these issues as historical moments, but in order to enter the world of the text and then to analyze texts well, they must also be able to apply those texts in some way to current contexts or personally meaningful ideas.

Reading theorist Louise Rosenblatt formulated a scheme 60 years ago that describes the transaction of reading and suggests methods for teaching reading so that readers can interpret texts more skillfully and insightfully. She calls her reading theory *transactional* because it focuses on the interaction between the reader and the text. Humans learn transactionally, Rosenblatt argues, using what they know about language and experience to make sense of what they encounter in the world. “Embodying funded assumptions, attitudes, and expectations about language and about the world, this inner capital is all that each of us has to draw on in speaking, listening, writing or reading. We ‘make sense’ of a new situation or transaction and make new meanings by applying, reorganizing, revising, or extending public and private elements selected from our personal linguistic-experiential reservoirs” (Rosenblatt, 5).

The process of reading mirrors this process of learning; every reading act is a transaction between a reader and a text and dependent on its context and situation. Because it’s a dynamic event between reader and text, “meaning” or analysis doesn’t reside “in” the text or the reader but in the transaction itself—the event that occurs as readers use the text and their own “linguistic-experiential reservoirs” to interpret and analyze what they read. This reservoir—I actually prefer the term *repertoire*—of information and experience readers bring with them helps them enter worlds far from their own experience, but only if they learn to trust themselves and learn to read the signs the text provides them. In great measure, learning to read older texts is an ability to use and develop the reader’s repertoire as much as it is learning to read the linguistic cues in the text. Teachers need to build strategies for helping students bridge the language and cultural divide presented by pre-twentieth-century literature,

and theorists like Rosenblatt suggest ways in which those strategies might be developed.

But before teachers can assess methods for engaging students in reading pre-twentieth-century work, it seems important to reflect on the reasons teachers view older work as important to teach. It's not enough to say to ourselves or to students that we teach early American literature because that's what the curriculum requires, or even because older literature gives readers a sense of history. Texts should be read by students not primarily as artifacts but as living documents. We want students to read Hawthorne or Bradstreet because their work can be, might be, relevant to our cultural moment as well as the authors' own. In other words, we teachers believe that the texts we teach *still speak*; the literature has a voice and a position that today's readers can respond to and find connections with. As Cornel West says in describing nineteenth-century American pragmatic philosophy, history seen pragmatically presents a "usable past," a recognition of the currency and relevance of old ideas that may influence present action (18).

As an illustration of the principle that older work can remain relevant, Emerson writes in 1837 that the past, as seen in books, should be usable. Emerson notes: "Books are the best of things well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end, which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire" (1613). The theory of books is noble, as Emerson says, but abuse comes when the reader reads only to receive the message of a text rather than to use it. Still, locating connections between then and now, or finding inspiration as well as understanding, is difficult to come by if a reader begins with an idea that the language is impenetrable and the ideas distant enough that nothing of use can be taken away. Because of those difficulties, many students see the past located in older texts as the bucket of ashes that the ancient Greeks debated. If teachers believe in the value of older texts, that the past is much more than a bucket of ashes, we need to find ways to breathe some fire back into the embers.

What follows is a discussion of three pieces in American literature, all pre-twentieth-century, that reflects on some of the difficulties and opportunities presented by teaching older literature. I choose these three because I recently taught an introductory course in American literature, where the potential pleasures and problems of reading old literature were visible. The texts are Phillis Wheatley's poem "On Being Brought From Africa to America," published in 1773; Emerson's "The American Scholar," published in 1837; and Kate Chopin's "A Pair of Silk Stockings," published in 1892. These texts provide a range of genres (poetry, essay, short fiction),

as well as a variety of voices and language issues that might serve as good examples for teachers using any pre-twentieth-century literature in their classes. I'll first describe some general principles about building cultural connections and confronting language difficulties, and then confront some specific issues and suggest some specific activities using the three texts.

Building the Repertoire

From the work of a host of reading theorists and teachers (including Iser 1978; Bleich 1988; McCormick 1994; Rosenblatt 2005), we know that thoughtful, perceptive reading, and thus the ability to analyze texts, is dependent upon being able and ready to enter the world the text presents. Readers must understand how the context—within the work and surrounding the work's production—affects the work's aim and its effects on them. To enter the world of the text begins the process of interpretation and forms the basis of all effective reading.

The world of the eighteenth or nineteenth century seems far removed from the twenty-first, and teachers have traditionally worked to connect the two worlds by providing relevant cultural, or context, cues for students. Biographical detail is often a good way for teachers to provoke the kind of engagement with the writer that helps students hear voice, work through language, and analyze themes and rhetorical moves.

Although dates and settings, as well as family connections and numbers of works, are significant builders of repertoire, the details sometimes bounce off students' heads instead of becoming embedded in their thinking as they begin to read older literature. For example, a teacher might give an introduction to Emerson that would go something like this: "Emerson was born a relatively poor child to a genteel family with aspirations for his education. He was educated at Harvard as a day student and took up the ministry when he was 26. He published his famous long essay *Nature* in 1834, and continued publishing essays and delivering talks well into his eighties. He is acknowledged as the primary influence in what has come to be called the American Renaissance and developed the philosophy of transcendentalism, a romantic concept derived in part from the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge. He lived his entire life in Concord, Mass." Now, what is the most interesting fact in that description? It's the last sentence, the one where students might perk up a bit to consider why one small place holds such power for a writer and thinker.

If teachers consider students' interest as well as important factual details about the author and the times, they will no doubt find some fascinating facts or bits of

gossip that will not only add interest but resonance to students' analysis of the texts they're reading. And this offhand information, delivered as a tidbit, becomes a way for students to begin to hear the voice on the page, something they need to guide them as they begin to analyze what they read.

In Emerson's biography, for example, there is the mysterious, and ghoulish, fact that he was so grief-stricken by the death of his young first wife Ellen that he dug her body up months later to assure himself of her passing. He did the same thing years later when his young son Waldo died. That impulse to learn from death, to understand it so as to grapple with its consequences, might have resulted in the comment Emerson makes in his essay "Experience": "I only grieve that grief can teach me nothing."

In other words, small, interesting bits of biography: Emerson's sloping shoulders, his small bedroom in the attic of the Old Manse, his daily walks on the Boston Common, the fact that he waited on the wealthier students and their parents as a poor day student at Harvard—any of these might help students penetrate the mysteries of "The American Scholar" or other essays. And it's the small stories that provoke interest and sympathy, which students lack when they begin to read older literature.

As teachers prepare to introduce an older piece, consequently, they should locate the small and insubstantial biographical fact as well as the more common, more important ones. Teachers can be guided in great measure by the work to be read: The grave opening is clearly connected to the essay "Experience"; Emerson's physical form might be related to the power of his oral speech. However they manage it, teachers need to engage students with the persona of the author in some way so that the voice that speaks—"In yourself slumbers the whole of reason"—can be heard.

Building the cultural repertoire operates in much the same way. It's important to note that Phillis Wheatley was a slave for much of her writing life, only being freed when her master died; important to understand the differences between freed blacks and slaves in New England; crucial to understand the connection between her writing and the Revolutionary War in the colonies. But the local cultural moment—the drawing on the cover of her first collection of poems that shows the young Phillis at her desk writing but clothed in the cap and gown of the servant—is significant in different ways and can help students enter into the way that culture and text interact. The small and seeming aside is often the very moment of entry for a student beginning to read an older text because it establishes the human connection, encouraging students to use their own experiences to guide the experiences they read about and so to be able to analyze texts more effectively.

Beyond the biographical and cultural repertoire building that often begins the reading of older texts, students need to become conscious of the use of language in ways they may not be comfortable or familiar with. Given the fact that language operates as such a barrier to the ability to analyze well, teachers can nurture students' understanding of various facets of the language of texts by overtly using language elements in their discussions. Teaching vocabulary is one way teachers have often used to foster students' analytical ability with old or difficult texts. In Chopin's short story, teachers might focus on words like "porte-monnaie" or "breastworks" to make sure students understand the connotations Chopin is provoking in her description of Mrs. Sommers and her day of shopping. Knowing the terms that are evocative of theme and mood—why *porte-monnaie* instead of wallet?—students can more easily analyze the texts they read. Not all unfamiliar vocabulary words are important to teach, and students can easily find these out on their own or learn them in context. But some words build the repertoire, because they clearly establish aim and voice, and they should be highlighted, discussed, and even practiced. (A teacher might say, "Let's see everybody's *porte-monnaie*, *tiens*?")

Less often do teachers ask students to examine syntax, and yet it's probably the single most daunting challenge for students reading older literature. My American literature student who saw *The House of the Seven Gables* as "boring" was in great measure reacting to the syntax she was reading and trying to understand. Even the simple fact of knowing that the periodic sentence was common in pre-twentieth-century literature helps students read for meaning rather than simple decoding. Here's an example of the periodic sentence in "The American Scholar": "Far, too, as her splendors shine, system on system shooting like rays, upward, downward, without centre, without circumference, — in the mass and in the particle, nature hastens to render account of herself to the mind" (1611). A student who encounters that sentence might stop right there. Why are there so many words? Why can't Emerson just say what he means?

To teach sentence construction, teachers might discuss how the primary work of the periodic sentence is accomplished near the end rather than at the beginning, and in the early part of the sentence the writer leads us to consider the conditions, exceptions, and details that lead to the big point. Writers who use the periodic sentence often want to make a big point, and this holding off of the main thought is one way to do it.

Students who understand that construction can then begin to see how and why Emerson varies the periodic sentence with sentences like this: "Every day, the sun;

and after sunset, night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows” (1611). They’ll begin to notice the rhythm of short and long sentences, cumulative and periodic construction, and fragments and complex clauses. Emerson’s prose *undulates*, and students will find that the principle of undulation is one of the hallmarks of Emerson’s thinking about the natural world. The syntax matches the aim, just as the syntax of Wheatley’s poem matches both the style of the time and her own rhetorical argument.

Students Building the Repertoire

If we believe the text still offers a usable past and still speaks, it follows that students already possess experience and knowledge that can help them bridge the differences in time and space presented by older literature.

Sometimes, however, students are taught overtly or implicitly that their own experience or opinion is not or should not be relevant to the analysis of a text. Yet, as Rosenblatt and others have shown, it must be. Our linguistic/experiential background is crucial to how any of us reads and analyzes, as we put what we know into play with what we don’t know yet. With older readings, students are even more likely to discount what they know and have experienced. The village in old Salem, the Catskills when the Mohawks still roamed them, the harbor in Boston where tall sailing ships cast long shadows on the men painted and dressed to look like warring Wampanoag or Narragansett—these things seem to have nothing to do with them except in the dry way of history taught for its sake alone.

To help students understand that their own experience can aid them in critical analysis of older texts, it’s sometimes a good idea to begin with a theme, plot, or argument in the work and ask students to apply or consider that theme even before they begin reading. With Wheatley’s poem, for example, which is about the changes forced on her as she was taken into slavery and brought from Africa to Massachusetts, students might be asked to consider an experience of their own where they were forced to dress, speak, behave, or take on actions or ideas that were not really their own in order to get along in school, in a community, or with family or friends. If an exercise like that precedes rather than follows the reading of the poem, students are more likely both to hear Wheatley’s more than slightly ironic voice, and more likely to analyze the poem’s effects.

In this way, discussion and writing can help students develop a reading repertoire that will contribute to skillful analysis. What they learn is that they already know things, and have had experiences that allow them to tap into the experience

Wheatley relates. That awareness will lead them to the nuances and inflections of the vocabulary that establish tone most clearly.

Asking students what they know of reading for enjoyment versus reading for understanding (“American Scholar”); if they’ve ever wanted something desperately that was denied them (“A Pair of Silk Stockings”); or other kinds of experiential suggestions provokes understanding of themes and, just as important, encourages students to make connections between themselves and the narrators, characters, or authors they are beginning to read.

Group work provides another highly effective method for students to use and build upon their own repertoire. In a small group, no matter how homogeneous, one member will know a fact or have had an experience that is unique in the group and that proves useful to the study of the text at hand. One student will have visited Boston, another will have listened to Toni Morrison describe the Middle Passage, still another will remember when her family couldn’t afford Christmas one year. All these stories and experiences, if shared, contribute to the ability to analyze texts such as Wheatley’s, Emerson’s, and Chopin’s. The sharing of information and stories through anecdotes, questions, and explanations mimics the way we all learn.

As groups examine the texts they’ve read together, they each demonstrate similar variations in skills, knowledge, and experience with readings that help other students in the group perceive meanings they might have missed. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist whose work on learning development and problem solving has been important to language and composition specialists for the past 40 years, uses the term *scaffolding* to refer to this interactive learning where less experienced learners are supported by more knowledgeable peers or adults (Vygotsky 1978, 122). Students whose experience is more limited or who are more hesitant about offering an opinion about the text learn more quickly and efficiently by listening and talking to students whose experience is wider or whose confidence is greater. Vygotsky calls the difference between what a student can learn unaided and what a student can learn with *scaffolding* the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978, 86). Groups at work together demonstrate how the *zone of proximal development* can lead to greater ability to analyze texts.

Teachers can guide this kind of repertoire building by establishing the work of the group as organic and important to the class as a whole. Groups work more effectively if students know one another well: The trust needed for real interchange of ideas happens only when groups meet often enough for members to know one another as writers, readers, and thinkers. Therefore, groups need to meet often—every other

day, perhaps—and need to remain constant, at least through a unit's worth of study if not longer.

Giving groups analytical questions about the text and then asking them to work out their best responses by writing them together is a good way to foster this kind of sharing and growth. “How does Wheatley feel about Christians? How do you know?” might be a good question to begin a conversation in groups. Or “Emerson was worried about specialization cutting humans off from their potential. What would he say about our society today?” Questions like these force students to examine the text closely, and they also ask students to rethink responses and develop them more fully because they operate in a group situation where not everybody will necessarily agree.

Finally, students can use and build their own repertoire to confront old texts by a conscious application of current issues and events to issues they discover in their reading. Women's issues have been very much in the news recently. The first woman to run for president in this country has focused attention on the way that gender affects our attitudes about competence, performance, roles, and rights. The media portrayals, other candidates' responses, and the candidate's own talk and action contribute to understandings about the complexities of gender issues in our culture. Reading “A Pair of Silk Stockings,” students see how the same issues get reflected in Mrs. Sommers's view of her circumstances and her options as woman and mother. It's a commonplace to say that older literature develops the themes and plays off the same concerns that we have in our world today; students who are encouraged to make that connection can analyze those themes and arguments more effectively.

Activities and Applications

I've suggested that analytical reading of older texts is enhanced when students

1. hear the voice on the page so that they can respond to it
2. understand the context of the situation presented in the work and that surrounds the work's production, and
3. grasp the language and sentence structure of the text

Using Wheatley, Chopin, and Emerson, I've developed some activities that help students negotiate those three areas to strengthen their skill in reading older texts analytically.

Wheatley's “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (1773) was written by a young woman who had become famous by virtue of her interesting, sometimes patriotic poems, and her status as both woman and slave. It was a strange occurrence

indeed that a black woman, brought as a slave from West Africa and indentured to a wealthy Massachusetts family, developed such skill with the pen that critics would claim that she couldn't have written the poems herself. Her ability to write in the rigid rhyme scheme and rhythm of the time marked her as a reader as well. An anomaly indeed. In fact, it is her ability to use the poetic techniques of eighteenth-century verse so well that prevents students from hearing her unique voice or the complicated tones that compose it. Yet, the strong voice is there, and as in any poem, it must be heard clearly if students are to be able to enjoy and analyze the poem.

Rather than begin with biographical or cultural detail for this poem, it's sometimes useful to create an activity that pushes students to hear the voice on the page by locating the argument. "If Wheatley is making an argument, what is it? Where is it?" Short prompts like this one force a pointed analysis of the text and indicate brevity and informality in the response, a good strategy for beginning to analyze older poems.

Here is the poem itself:

On Being Brought From Africa to America

'Twas mercy brought me from my pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand,
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic die."
Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,
May be refin'd and join th'angelic train.

Students write a paragraph in class and then discuss it together. The poem's length is an advantage; students can read it carefully more than once and can see it as a whole easily. Some ideas that often emerge include the function of the title: Is there an argument embedded in the phrase "being brought"? Is she making a comment about religion? Is she glad or unhappy that she didn't know or care about redemption when she was in Africa? Students work through these ideas, realizing that they begin to hear the voice of the African American slave woman commenting on the Christianity of Christians. It's a more complex poem than it seems, but once students hear the ironic, slyly reproving voice of the speaker, they can read the last two lines with confidence, emphasizing the "Christians" for the effect Wheatley was surely attempting.

In Kate Chopin's "A Pair of Silk Stockings," the voice of the narrator is clear, and students will recognize the third-person omniscient perspective the writer uses to describe the small scene. A poor woman with many cares and a husband who can't provide for the family has saved enough money to buy some much-needed items for house and children. Instead, she is tempted by a pair of silk stockings, and buys not only the stockings but spends a whole day indulging herself. The story ends on the cable car as she makes her way back to her family.

The story is simple; there is only one developed character; the language—unlike the formal syntax of Wheatley's poem—seems relatively modern. The challenge presented by this story lies in context, in understanding and re-creating the world the story presents. Chopin's story is set in New Orleans, although it's not directly mentioned. The French phrases, the delicacy of the descriptions of the menu at the restaurant, and the subtle class consciousness all mark this story as taking place in turn-of-the-century New Orleans. Mrs. Sommers's scrimping ways, as she contemplates patching her daughters' "waists" and relining her boys' caps, strike an odd note in the throwaway culture our students live in.

In order to help students grasp that context fully so that their analysis takes poverty, class, and desire into account, I assign an imitation exercise that asks students to remake the story line by line. Composition theorist Ann Berthoff calls this kind of exercise an "interpretive paraphrase," (72) and it works like this. Students read the story and then rewrite it, choosing alternate words, situations, metaphors, and characters. They end up with a story of their own that exposes the same themes as the original, but that uses new contexts. Writing their own context, students become deeply aware of the one in Chopin's story.

Here's a line of an interpretive paraphrase, using the first line of Chopin's story: "Little Mrs. Sommers one day found herself the unexpected possessor of fifteen dollars" (816). *That day, old Señor Rodrigues was surprised to find fifty dollars in his pocket.*

A relatively difficult exercise, interpretive paraphrase does more than help students focus on context. They learn about vocabulary, tone, syntax, and stylistic concerns as they remake texts by rewriting lines. They realize that intention guides their own production, and that realization sends them back to the text to consider the original author's intention.

In "A Pair of Silk Stockings," students hear more clearly the despairing tone that ends the story once they have re-created context in order to enter the one in Chopin's

tale: "... a poignant wish, a powerful longing that the cable car would never stop anywhere, but go on and on with her forever" (820).

Finally, an exercise with language, the element that presents the most challenges in teaching older literature. An exercise I like to give my students with older literature, and Emerson's "American Scholar" especially, is to ask them to read the text, write down and come prepared to discuss the most difficult, complex, or boring sentence they have encountered in their reading of the essay. Students are surprised by this assignment: Did I really indicate that there was a sentence that might be boring or impenetrable in this classic? They usually set about the task with some amount of glee. They share their sentences in small groups, voting on the best example and then read it aloud to the class. There'll be sentences like "On the other part, instead of being its own seer, let it receive from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest, and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice is done." As these sentences are read, it never fails that some group will hoot dismissively, "That's not hard. You should hear this one!" And so begins an often lively conversation about syntax and meaning, with students uncovering together what Emerson is arguing, how he's using metaphors and abstractions, and what they think about Emerson's stance. Working through ideas at the sentence level is particularly useful for a writer like Emerson, whose aphoristic sentences often distill meanings of the entire text. Students leave the class more prepared to read Emerson and other nineteenth-century works because they are hearing the cadence that allows them to understand it.

As these brief exercises and activities have suggested, writing is often the best way to help students read analytically. Writing should precede, accompany, and follow reading tasks, so that students are continually engaged in auditing their own developing perceptions about meanings and strategies. Writing tasks should be formal and informal, directly related to the reading and tangential to it, and should continually help reinforce the truth that reading and writing are acts of composing that strengthen one another.

"There is then creative reading as well as creative writing," Emerson says in "The American Scholar." "Our sense of the author is as broad as the world" (1613). With help from teachers and from one another, students can broaden their understanding of the world they know by finding the new world that lies in the past.

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Teaching Analysis of Nonfiction Prose as Language Landscape

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Students struggle with analysis. As Readers scored the analysis question at the 2007 AP English Language and Composition Examination Reading, many of them were dismayed at student performance and wondered aloud how well analysis was taught in high schools. Too frequently, responses to the question, based on an excerpt from a 1993 essay by Scott Russell Sanders, ranged from limited to nonexistent. Still, those of us at the Reading who teach AP English Language and Composition knew that we do teach analysis and rehearse the skills of analysis frequently. Why, despite the best efforts of many excellent teachers across the country, does analysis continue to be a struggle for so many students? How might we rethink the teaching of it?

The fact that analysis is a struggle has many causes. One, of course, might be that it is not taught as often or as well as it might be since teachers are not as conversant with the skills of nonfiction analysis as they might be. This explanation probably had greater weight 10 or 15 years ago, but the number of AP English Language and Composition Examinations given—and the implied training of teachers who have attended workshops and institutes—suggests that not knowing how to teach analysis is less of a factor than it once was. It is worth noting, though, that we still see student responses to the analysis prompt that simply note certain strategies and devices without connecting to the meaning, purpose, and/or effect.

Another cause, perhaps more pertinent, has to do with teacher preparation. English majors, for the most part, are focused on literature. Secondary teachers seldom come from a background where nonfiction is the focal point, or even a major emphasis. Young teachers, especially if there is no intervention, tend to replicate what and how they have been taught. Most often, they teach literary pieces that they have been

taught as undergraduates or as graduate students. While this training may help these teachers succeed with students in doing literacy analysis, such training does not necessarily help teachers be effective in teaching students how to analyze nonfiction prose.

The analysis of nonfiction prose contains one very important assumption: that teachers will know how to teach reading. Few, if any, English teachers are reading specialists. When I went through undergraduate and graduate school as an English major, I did so without the benefit of a single course in the teaching of reading. When talking to younger colleagues, I note that the consensus seems to be that one course in “reading” is required, but it doesn’t necessarily address the issues that present themselves in trying to improve students’ abilities to read and write analytically.

Remarkably, students are not averse to finding and explaining strategies or doing analysis in other areas. Students trained incessantly in literature-based English classes do literary analysis with some fluency and precision after repeated exposure to its vocabulary and methodology. In addition, it is commonplace that students, probably because of repeated exposure, are quite adept at the analysis of visual rhetoric, even before our attempts to work with them on this skill in a formal classroom setting. Why and how is the analysis of nonfiction prose so different?

Familiarity seems to be a best initial response. Work with literary analysis is frequent; work with visual analysis builds on skills students have acquired by inhabiting the modern world with its nonstop visual stimulation and orientation. Nonfiction prose, by contrast, is taught less frequently, yet demands more of students than those other discourse forms. Nonfiction prose, and its many techniques and strategies, has a language and purpose that require patience and the willingness to develop a vocabulary around the act of analysis. Reading nonfiction well involves a “circling of the objects,” coming back to the same object from a variety of perspectives, then looking from that perspective, through each differing filter. What students need to know and learn is just what constitutes this range of filters or perspectives from which the object, the text, is seen. Otherwise, the student will forever struggle with the difficult art of analysis.

Analyzing requires a language of analysis. Recognizing the features of what I term a “language landscape” necessitates knowing what someone might be looking for. If reading involves nonstop acts of prediction, then reading the language landscape involves prediction as well. First, though, let us take a look at just what we mean by language landscape.

Imagine that you find yourself in a strange place or even on a different planet. How would you describe that place to a person not with you? What would be the noteworthy features of that strange planet? Is it flat? Is it hilly? Is it lush and green? Dry and brown? Can a person breathe in its atmosphere? Are there trees? Rocks? Soil? And what are these like? Is the ground spongy or firm? Similarly, if you found yourself in a strange city, how would you talk to a friend about that place when you pulled out your cell phone? If you had the good fortune to be in San Francisco and tried to tell someone who had never been there what it was like, what would you tell that person? Certainly, you would mention the hills, dry and brown. The Golden Gate Bridge—other bridges as well—would not escape your notice. The bay, and its sheer size, would garner your attention. As you walked its streets, especially in the tourist areas, you would be struck by the continual juxtaposition of opulence and beggary. Women in furs walk by; prostitutes and homeless men beg for spare change. You would also notice, especially as you walked the hilly roads, streets with steel rails embedded in them. In time you would notice the cable cars that use the embedded rails.

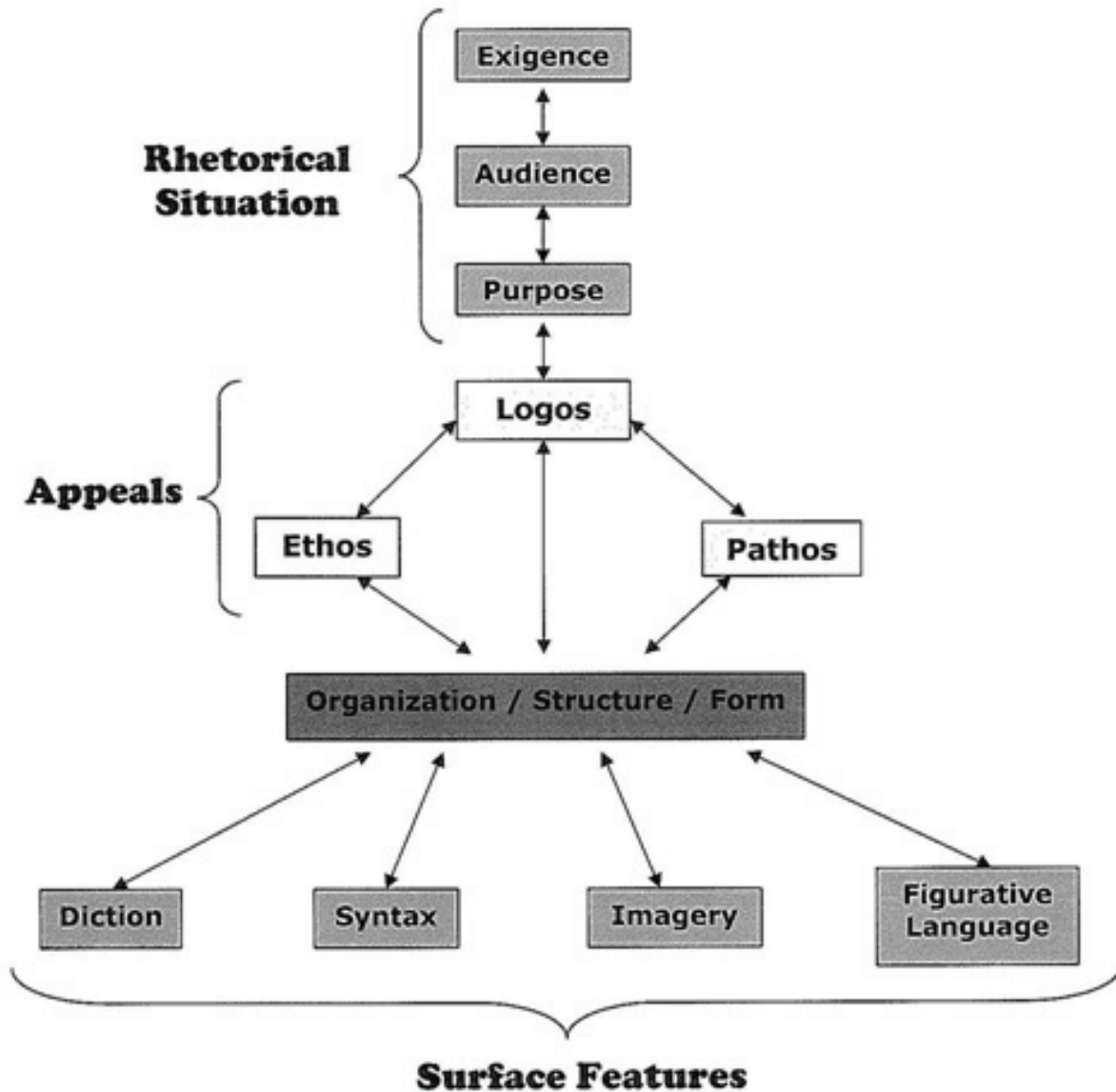
If you were in another city—say, Kansas City, Boston, or Birmingham—you would offer a very different report based on a series of decidedly different observations. This phenomenon of difference is what we see in nonfiction prose all the time. We could go to any standard college freshman reader, look at any eight or ten selections from it, and be struck by the variety of both idea and prose.

One of our jobs as teachers is to work with the analysis of any given piece of prose, and most of us are intuitively skilled enough at reading to draw student attention to certain features or sections of text. At the same time we can begin to sharpen students' ability simply by asking them to tell us what they notice. But that effort is bound to fall short unless we are able to move those observations to a connection with meaning, purpose, or effect. We will have difficulty getting students to make this mental leap unless they know what these features might be and how they are connected to authorial intention.

Students need to know that each author writes for a reason or reasons. These reasons are, to some degree, discernible to a reader or audience. Students also need to be aware that writers—especially skilled ones—have at their disposal a large toolbox and the means to use it to bring about meaning, purpose, or effect. That toolbox—and what is in it—contains knowledge of the various aspects of rhetoric and style. What are some of these aspects? Through what filters might we view a piece of prose? While using and by using these filters, what features might emerge from a given text? A quick

look at David Jolliffe's rhetorical framework diagram, developed initially for AP Summer Institutes that he and I have taught together for the past decade, will help here.

JOLLIFFE'S RHETORICAL FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM



At the center of this diagram sits the *logos*, or embodied thought, of the piece. No analysis can take place, however, and no reading of the language landscape can be effective, unless there is some sense of what all of the efforts of this essay are directed toward. Regardless of whatever other aspects of rhetoric are taken into account, or whatever language features might be noted, all should ultimately point toward, and result in, the *logos*, and especially a reader's or audience's acceptance of that *logos*, due to the rhetorical efforts of the writer.

The three terms above *logos*, in the diagram—exigence, audience, and purpose—constitute the rhetorical situation. The term exigence asks the question of why a writer wrote a particular piece. What got the writer's goat? What sticks in the writer's craw? No one writes for no reason. You may need to repeat that last statement to your students, given that so much of what they write for school arises from assignment by adults. The passion of real writing requires real exigence.

The second aspect of the rhetorical situation is the requirement of an audience. Unless one is writing to someone—and even in a diary one is writing to oneself—one is not writing in the sense that we are using the term here. Purpose, the third aspect of the rhetorical situation, works in concert with the audience. As we are using the term here, purpose refers to what the writer wants the audience to do with the exigence placed before them. The model here is clear: The writer has acted on the exigence already; the writer wants the audience to act on the exigence in some way as well. The writer, who is already at point B, wants to move the audience from point A to point B.

Another filter, in addition to the *logos*, and the rhetorical situations, has to do with the two other appeals, *ethos* and *pathos*. Any examination of text requires attention to credibility as well as appeals to emotion and self-interest. Both of these appeals presume to effect a sharing of exigence. If the reader or audience does not see the writer, the narrator, or the persona as a person of good sense, good character, and good will, they will hardly be inclined to share the writer's exigence concerning the matter under consideration. How will they be predisposed to even begin moving from point A to point B if they are lacking emotional engagement or direct self-interest?

The next section of the diagram—whole text structure/arrangement—offers us another filter for viewing the language landscape. The order of ideas and the sequence of thoughts, as they interact with a reader's mind or an audience's ears, are neither accidental nor unimportant. Our work with student writing often shows us the opposite of this situation or condition. The five-paragraph theme, in particular, often suggests that having three points to talk about automatically constitutes a "body" in a paper. Once a student is convinced that having three points is sufficient, the next logical step is to put those three points in whatever order occurs to the student since the three points are little more than a list. Arrangement, a key feature of the language landscape, is a far more complex matter.

First of all, this aspect of rhetoric and feature of the landscape is about function, not structure. Whenever we are creating a sequence in writing or discerning a sequence in reading, we are looking at how each idea in each paragraph is conducting

to the effect of the whole. Mere positioning explains little. The fact that a paragraph is designated as an introduction, a body paragraph, or a conclusion tells us little about what it does. A functional approach to arrangement focuses on issues such as an invitation to the audience, nature and placement of background information, indication of key elements of discussion, arguments with reasons and evidence, sequence of arguments, counterarguments, and gaining assent from an audience.

The terms at the bottom of the diagram are a significant part of the language landscape as well. Often these items—diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language—are what students think of first when they are asked to look at the language landscape. In part, this attention stems from the fact that these features can be pointed to directly in the text. One can point at a specific word as a diction choice or a sentence or two as an example of syntactic manipulation for a purpose. Discerning a primary or secondary audience, or determining the tone of a given piece, will more likely involve looking at multiple places in the text as well as “reading between the lines.” By contrast, diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language are often discrete; they can be named and located.

Other filters not directly mentioned in the rhetorical diagram, though implied by it, also help a student have a full repertoire of tools when examining the language landscape of any given text. These include modes of discourse, the notion of argument itself, and other features such as transitions, discourse markers, and paragraph elaboration. A word about each is in order.

Modes of discourse act as a key means to unlock prose analysis because these modes offer insight into how the mind works as it constructs or discerns meaning. The typical modes—division/classification, definition, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, and process analysis—are all renderings of the human mind at work. Recognition of them, when tied to reading, is tied directly to apprehension of authorial purpose. It is worth noting, in passing, that when teaching students to see these modes in the writings of others, we also need to teach them that these modes appear with other modes, rather than alone.

Transitions and discourse markers require student recognition also. These devices are the means by which authors put road signs in their compositions. No one giving someone directions would simply name a series of streets with no mention of distance or direction. Composition is a parallel experience.

Students also need to know and recognize paragraph elaboration and the moves between paragraphs as functioning parts of the language landscape. Being conversant with a common paragraph structure such as claim, reasoning, evidence,

or conclusion will help a student write thoughtfully and read discerningly, even when some of the many variants of this structure are used. The same is true in examining how a writer moves from paragraph to paragraph. If a student is aware that a writer might add, exemplify, counterargue, intensify, digress, or conclude in moving from one paragraph to the next, that student will be a much more savvy reader.

In short, students need to be able to hold many things in mind at once as they attempt analysis. They need to read a text while considering “small” features such as sentence architecture, phrases and clauses, embeddings, introductions, clause relationships, and the scheme and tropes that constitute the bottom portion of the Jolliffe diagram. At the same time they need to be considering central contention, claim, elaboration, evidence, genre, modes of discourse, discourse markers, intention, text, subtext, context, inference, and the top and middle sections of the diagram. Clearly this is no easy task. What we can and must do is build a reading repertoire. It is much easier—and more frequently the case—that we talk, and students build, a writing repertoire. We need to affect a parallel act with reading. What is a student’s reading repertoire? When a student faces a new and difficult text, what does he or she have in that toolbox to meet the challenge of comprehending the text and, in an exam situation, analyzing that text successfully within certain time constraints?

Let us now turn our attention to a text from Scott Russell Sanders’ book, *Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World*, (see page 64) and look at the language landscape of the text using the filters we have just discussed to discern the contours of this unique landscape.

We could, for example, begin our set of observations and applications by noting some of Sander’s more intriguing diction choices. The use of “seductive” in line 2 is one such choice, tipping off the readers as to his tone early on; “vagabonds” in line 6 again suggests the author’s tone early, long before he articulates his point of view fully and explicitly. Where a word such as “varied” or “diverse” would suffice in line 32, Sanders uses “mongrel.” If we wish to stay at the level of surface features, more might be said. Sanders uses contrasting clauses, a noticeable syntactic feature, in lines 65–70. He puts two contrasting ideas, his and Rushdie’s, side by side. One other noteworthy feature is his use of the metaphor of the cookie cutter and the dough, used to disparage those who would move around while imposing their mind-set on others. Attention to these “surface features” could eventually lead to a consideration of *logos*, or perhaps suggest an idea about Rushdie’s intended audience.

Another writer, analyzing this text, could enter the language landscape at *logos*. Sanders clearly focuses on two very different views of the world. He spends

2007 AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Question 2

(Suggested time—40 minutes. This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

In the passage below from *Staying Put: Making a Home in a Restless World*, Scott Russell Sanders responds to an essay by Salman Rushdie, a writer who left his native India for England. Rushdie describes the “effect of mass migrations” as being “the creation of radically new types of human being: people who root themselves in ideas rather than places.” Read the Sanders passage carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the strategies Sanders uses to develop his perspective about moving.

Line
5 Claims for the virtues of shifting ground are familiar and seductive to Americans, this nation of restless movers. From the beginning, our heroes have been sailors, explorers, cowboys, prospectors, speculators, backwoods ramblers, rainbow-chasers, vagabonds of every stripe. Our Promised Land has always been over the next ridge or at the end of the trail, never under our feet. One hundred years after the official closing of the frontier, we have still not
10 shaken off the romance of unlimited space. If we fish out a stream or wear out a field, or if the smoke from a neighbor's chimney begins to crowd the sky, why, off we go to a new stream, a fresh field, a clean sky. In our national mythology, the worst fate is to be
15 trapped on a farm, in a village, in the sticks, in some dead-end job or unglamorous marriage or played-out game. Stand still, we are warned, and you die. Americans have dug the most canals, laid the most rails, built the most roads and airports of any nation.
20 In the newspaper I read that, even though our sprawling system of interstate highways is crumbling, the president has decided that we should triple it in size, and all without raising our taxes a nickel. Only a populace drunk on driving, a populace infatuated with the myth of the open road, could hear such a proposal
25 without hooting.

30 So Americans are likely to share Rushdie's enthusiasm for migration, for the “hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs.” Everything about us is mongrel, from race to language, and we are stronger for it. Yet we might respond more skeptically when Rushdie says that “to be a migrant
35 is, perhaps, to be the only species of human being free of the shackles of nationalism (to say nothing of its ugly sister, patriotism).” Lord knows we could do with less nationalism (to say nothing of its ugly siblings, racism, religious sectarianism, or class snobbery). But who would pretend that a history of

migration has immunized the United States against bigotry? And even if, by uprooting ourselves, we shed our chauvinism, is that all we lose?

45 In this hemisphere, many of the worst abuses—of land, forests, animals, and communities—have been carried out by “people who root themselves in ideas rather than places.” Rushdie claims that “migrants must, of necessity, make a new imaginative relationship with the world, because of the loss of
50 familiar habitats.” But migrants often pack up their visions and values with the rest of their baggage and carry them along. The Spaniards devastated Central and South America by imposing on this New World the religion, economics, and politics of the Old. Colonists brought slavery with them to North
55 America, along with smallpox and Norway rats. The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was caused not by drought but by the transfer onto the Great Plains of farming methods that were suitable to wetter regions. The habit of our industry and commerce has been to force
60 identical schemes onto differing locales, as though the mind were a cookie-cutter and the land were dough.

I quarrel with Rushdie because he articulates as eloquently as anyone the orthodoxy that I wish to
65 counter: the belief that movement is inherently good, staying put is bad; that uprooting brings tolerance, while rootedness breeds intolerance; that imaginary homelands are preferable to geographical ones; that to be modern, enlightened, fully of our time is to be displaced. Wholesale dis-placement may be
70 inevitable; but we should not suppose that it occurs without disastrous consequences for the earth and for ourselves. People who root themselves in places are likelier to know and care for those places than are people who root themselves in ideas. When we cease
75 to be migrants and become inhabitants, we might begin to pay enough heed and respect to where we are. By settling in, we have a chance of making a durable home for ourselves, our fellow creatures, and
80 our descendants.

(1993)

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GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

much time in the first two paragraphs explaining and paraphrasing Rushdie. By the third paragraph he is openly critical of those who are rooted in ideas. Finally, in paragraph four, he contrasts the two philosophies while showing a clear preference for the good sense of rootedness. The arrangement of the essay clearly moves us from understanding Rushdie's position to an eventual rejection of that position.

The language of this piece also features appeals to *ethos* and *pathos*. We could move from *logos* to a consideration of *ethos* and *pathos* or perhaps begin with these features and move on to *logos*. Sanders, using *pathos*, appeals directly to our self-interest in saving the planet or preserving what is left of it (ll. 74–80). He appeals also to our sense of what is sacred while, at the same time, suggesting his strong *ethos* with his advocacy for the planet and rejection of the throwaway culture and its approach (ll. 11–14). His ending attempts to restore a sense of the sacred in his appeal to the emotions of the audience (ll. 75–77).

If another writer chose the rhetorical situation as the entry point for analysis of this piece, that writer would certainly find much to talk about in considering Sanders' exigence. While showing the attractiveness of Rushdie's view, Sanders makes quite clear that stewardship of the planet might be better achieved by those rooted in place rather than in idea. He has a sense of his audience's being multiple and including both those sophisticates rooted in ideas as well as those often neglected as audience—people rooted soundly and sensibly in place. Sanders, furthermore, wants his audience to act on the urgency of this exigence so that we might “have a chance of making a durable home for ourselves, our fellow creatures, and our descendants” (ll. 78–80).

Another young writer approaching this piece for analysis might benefit from considering the modes of discourse used here. In paragraph one, Sanders defines the American restlessness in a series of assertions. He first indicates that Americans have always had the virtue of “shifting ground.” He develops his definition by examples (ll. 4–6), allusions to the Bible and Frederick Turner (ll. 6–10), and a hypothetical example (ll. 19–26) featuring wordplay on “drunk” and “driving.”

Exemplification, both hypothetical and actual, pervades the piece in the form of arrangement that assists in the development of the piece. Paragraph 1 tends to emphasize hypothetical and generalized examples; paragraph 3 focuses on specific historical examples. Sanders also incorporates cause and effect in his analysis of the topic. His critique, developed most fully and specifically by cause and effect in paragraph 3, shows in three contexts the devastating effect of being rooted in ideas: Spanish colonization of Central and South America, North American colonization, and dust bowl migration. Sanders' most effective use of the modes of discourse occurs in

his use of comparison/contrast. He uses this method throughout the piece, but uses it to best effect in lines 65–70 with sets of antithetical clauses.

What should be clear is that a well-taught, well-informed student will suffer from a problem far different from that which afflicted many students on the 2007 exam. Rather than having little, or nothing, to say about this question, a student conversant with the filters and templates that identify and clarify the language landscape will have a difficult time in deciding how to limit the scope of the analytical inquiry. The just-completed suggested paths of analysis obviously take in more than any one writer would have time for during the writing of an exam response. Learning the modes of entry in all possible forms best occurs in extended classroom discussion and workshops. A teacher might, for example, explain one or two different ways into a text each day of the week, revisiting Sanders and looking at the text from a variety of vantage points. Other texts from recent exams that might lend themselves to a week's exploration, and extended and multiple analysis, would include the Jamaica Kincaid text, "On Seeing England for the First Time," from the 1999 exam, and Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address from the 2002 exam. In both cases we are looking at rich texts with considerable interpretative latitude. Also, in both cases the texts can be approached in a variety of ways.

The classroom needs to be the place and the occasion where we bring the full resources of rhetoric in examining texts. Reading the language landscape involves sifting through the riches of the filters we have named, delineated, chosen, and applied throughout the piece. We need to build student confidence so that they feel comfortable entering a text from wherever it makes sense to do so. Whether they begin with surface features, arrangement, the rhetorical situation, or the appeals, students should feel sure-footed as they link observation to interpretation, and interpretation to judgment. Rehearsing the modes of analysis and the choice making involved in creating an analytic document can only result in an outstanding response.

The exam itself requires a different approach than that taken in the classroom when working with a passage for three days or a week. Students in the exam situation need to put a premium on choosing. They need to find a filter, or combination of filters, that will serve to craft a swift and savvy response. While all of what was said about the Sanders essay is present in the work, what might someone who must respond quickly do in such a situation? One possible approach would be to focus on antithetical clauses, the diction choices, the examples, and causality. Another approach might focus on discourse markers, imagery, rhetorical questions, and hypothetical examples. Still another approach might emphasize the absence of

Rushdie's speaking for himself, combined with possible oversimplification, author's *ethos*, and audience considerations. All approaches could result in a full and intelligent upper third response—a score of 7, 8, or 9.

If anything, then, we need to give students too much information about what might constitute analysis in a given case. Until they have a sense of what might be said about a text potentially, they will have difficulty in finding the things to say. To work toward this goal—providing students with an overabundance of “handholds” for reading and writing analytically—the participants in a 2007 AP Summer Institute developed the following one-page handout of reading skills for AP English Language and Composition students. Use it or adapt it to fit your own pedagogical purposes.

READING SKILLS FOR AP MULTIPLE-CHOICE PASSAGES AND PROMPTS

Reading Skills for AP Multiple Choice Passages and Prompts

Small Skills (Surface Features)		Large Skills (Rhetorical Situation and Appeals)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sentence architecture• Phrases and Clauses• Embeddings• Introductions• Clause relationships• Loose and periodic sentences• Schemes and Tropes		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central contention• Claim• Elaboration• Evidence• Genre• Modes of Discourse• Discourse markers• Function vs. Structure in paragraphs	
Additional Reading Skills		Hints for Reading Archaic Prose	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language landscape• Intentionality• Text• Subtext• Context• Inference		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use discourse markers to divide text into what would be modern-day paragraphs• Read semicolons as periods• Note long sentences in text so they “pop out”• Understand extended analogy (it is the heart of archaic prose)	
Reading Skills Implicit in AP Passages			
<p>Diction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand connotations and use context clues for difficult vocabulary <p>Syntax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine meaning through syntax (this implies working knowledge of grammatical concepts) <p>Tone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the effect of tone and how it is created <p>Imagery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the effect of imagery <p>Figurative Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how metaphors are developed (beyond recognizing, know how/why they function in the text)• Recognize and understand analogies• Know figurative language/literary devices• Understanding rhetorical purpose of figurative language	<p>Organization/Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize modes of discourse• Recognizing patterns and organizational structure• Recognize an author’s “moves” or shifts• Understand the function of structure (in paragraphs and the whole piece)• Read footnotes for meaning• Navigate long sentences <p>Appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify main ideas and details• Identify and understand subtleties of text <p>Rhetorical Situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine author’s intent (need to use inference and hypothesis to do this)	<p>Strategies/Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inference is required to do many of the listed skills• Compare and contrast is an essential skill• Read before and after line # references• Read embeddings (parentheticals)• Recognize natural breaks in long text• “Points lie in the readings rather than the questions”• Double-read passage (10 min. read / 5 min. answer questions)• Emphasize reading well instead of testing well	

It is very difficult to look for something if you don't know what you are looking for. Our task in the analysis question, as we teach students to be better prepared to address this question, is to put in front of them and have them discover the many modes through which texts can be engaged and apprehended. They need to learn rhetoric in all of its manifestations: situation, appeals, arrangement, style, diction, syntax, tone, and argument. And having learned and applied rhetoric in a classroom setting, they then need to learn to choose a vantage point from which to best convey their sense of a particular language landscape and its workings. No two landscapes are alike. No two texts are alike. No two interpreters are alike. Variety, then, is potentially infinite, but when taking an AP Exam, time is brief. Finding the available means of persuasion and then commenting intelligently on that writer's choices while limiting the scope of one's own inquiry are not easy tasks. It is not surprising that students struggle. It is our job to help them get better at this complex task.

Asking Students to “Play” with a Text: Teaching Analysis of Audience and Purpose

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It surprises me how intimidated students are by “works” of literature. After all, by the time they get to an AP English Language and Composition course, they are either juniors or seniors in high school. They have analyzed literature for any number of years, and most of our students have had at least Pre-AP® courses, if not AP courses, in other subjects. However, none of this keeps them from fearing the texts we ask them to read and analyze. At this point I ask my students to reconsider how they think of the “works” we read together. As Thomas Foster (2003) writes in *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, “We only call them literary works. Really, though, it’s all a form of play” (281).

Why is it that our students are so intimidated? Perhaps it is because reading literature of any genre requires a certain amount of work. But so does analyzing the intricacies of narrative or piecing together the details in a movie or any episode of *CSI*. Why are our students willing to engage the genres of cinema and television, but not our fiction and nonfiction? So I ask them to play. After all, they play along with crime shows when they know that things have to work out in the end. Where is the fun in these shows? The fun lies in following the clues and beating the writers to the answer that they will make obvious before the story is over. The authors we ask them to read do the same. The difference is that instead of providing us with “whodunit,” our writers provide us with their “purpose,” the first task that AP English Language and Composition analysis prompts ask students to understand.

A First Step: Direct Versus Indirect Address

This “work versus play” conversation happens very early in the year, before students see a released AP Exam prompt. In fact, we spend some time discussing Miller’s *The Crucible* before we return to *CSI* and *Murder, She Wrote*. Of course, we keep our focus on “playing,” but we work on developing our rhetorical analysis skills before looking at the specifics of the AP English Language and Composition Exam. Once we are ready for this discussion (usually mid-September), I divide the passages that students will see accompanying analysis prompts into two types: direct and indirect addresses. This distinction involves broad generalizations, but it is a useful initial move toward teaching audience analysis. The distinction helps students quickly identify the speaker’s voice and actually anticipate the audience for the passage. Voice and audience, of course, are two of the main elements that students must identify if they are to provide a successful rhetorical analysis of a passage.

I define a direct address as a passage with a clearly stated audience, such as a speech, letter, sermon, or other clearly directed writing. In these passages, a set of circumstances exists that allows the writer to know his or her primary audience. There may be additional audiences (such as an international audience that is secondary to the domestic audience for an inaugural address), but the author has a primary focus that can be pinpointed. As for an indirect address, I define it as a passage that does not have a clearly stated audience. I stress to students that an author may have an intended audience (such as the demographic market of a magazine), but the author is aware that anyone could read the text and that the specific environment of a direct address does not exist. We then discuss how many texts that we have already covered in class fit these divisions: “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” is one example of a direct address, while my students often describe *Of Plymouth Plantation* as an indirect address.

My students struggle most with indirect addresses. These texts frequently convey moments in a text where an author shares his or her life philosophy or worldview with us, typically in a conversational voice. Students often feel as though the author is simply “telling us a story,” and consequently overlook the passage’s rhetorical purpose and appeal. The introduction to Richard Rodriguez’ *Days of Obligation*, used as the basis for a question on the 2004 AP English Language and Composition Exam, offers a clear example of an indirect address that confuses many students. As a Reader for this question, I was often frustrated to realize that many students simply did not understand that “everything’s an argument,” to borrow the

title of Andrea Lunsford and John Ruszkiewicz’ popular textbooks. Many students simply did not know where to start with the passage.

Because our class discussions revolve around close readings of texts, applying these labels to familiar passages seems to empower students when discussing the exam. It is easy for students to apply these “address” definitions to previously discussed works and feel confident in their ability to apply this sorting device during a testing situation with some success, so this helps us over our first hurdle in preparing for the AP English Language and Composition Exam, and quickly leads us to the next.

An “Adequate” Reading Versus an “Effective” Reading

Now that students have an initial “handhold,” they need to carefully *read and analyze the prompt itself*. It is important to point out that AP English Language and Composition analysis prompts always ask students to do two things. The first requirement is to “convey the author’s purpose,” although it is important to realize that this exact phrase is not always used. Occasionally a prompt will even give a subtle hint of what purpose the students should look for and analyze. The second task is to explain *how* the author conveys his or her purpose. Students will spend the bulk of their essay explaining the *how*, but without a clear understanding of the author’s purpose, the analysis will frequently amount to little more than a listing of rhetorical strategies and devices and will, therefore, not be successful.

An excellent example of the two-task nature of the analysis prompt comes from the 2002 AP English Language and Composition Examination, on which students were directed to analyze the entire text of Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural address. The purpose statement contains a hint, describing the address as a text “in which he [Lincoln] contemplated the effects of the Civil War and offered his vision for the future of the nation.” Later in the prompt, students were asked to discuss how Lincoln uses rhetorical strategies “to achieve his purpose,” but this is actually focusing on the second task students are asked to undertake, which is to explain *how* the author conveys his purpose.

After identifying the author’s purpose, students must create a refined statement of it to start their essay on the path to success. Readers scoring the examination will often first determine whether an essay is an upper-half or lower-half paper based on whether they perceive that the student clearly understands the author’s purpose. From there, Readers decide where in the upper half to place an essay. For students who answered the Lincoln question, essays using the general purpose statement

provided typically were scored as “adequate.” These adequate essays suggested an understanding of this direct address but did not demonstrate a clear command of Lincoln’s prose. Students who understood that Lincoln clearly stated his purpose in the final paragraph of the inaugural address often demonstrated their ability to play Lincoln’s game and recognize the clues from early in the passage, where he was at work attempting to heal and unify the nation. These essays were effective and often scored in the top categories of the scoring guide.

An “Effective” Reading of Indirect Nonfiction

Since students seem to get a better handle on direct addresses, we spend more time on indirect address in both nonfiction and fiction. One of the harder nonfiction passages for my students comes from Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, an excerpt of which formed the basis for a question on the 1997 AP English Language and Composition Exam. I identify this passage as an indirect address because Douglass has no control over who decides to read his text, even though he has a target audience in mind. Again, too many of my students will suggest that he is “just telling us about slavery” if we do not provide further direction. The indirect address label reminds them that everything is an argument, and that Douglass is trying to convey something more to us about his experience. The 1997 prompt enables us to enter the conversation and play the game. Here is the actual prompt:

The following passage comes from the 1845 autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave*. Read the passage carefully, noting such elements as syntax, figurative language, and selection of detail. Then write an essay in which you identify the stylistic elements in the third paragraph that distinguish it from the rest of the passage and show how this difference reinforces Douglass’ rhetorical purpose in the passage as a whole.

As you can see, the two elements of all analysis prompts are here. Students are asked about “Douglass’s rhetorical purpose in the passage as a whole,” and students are alerted to a shift that occurs in the passage that will follow. All of this provides students with opportunities for success if they know to look for these clues. Students are asked to note the shift and then identify the “stylistic elements”—the *how* that Douglass uses to convey his purpose. As suggested earlier, students are always asked

to explain how the author relates his or her intent for the passage to us; they simply need to look for the phrase that asks for the information.

Quite often I do not have my students write an essay based on this prompt, but instead we use the prompt as a teaching passage to encourage students to see the more “effective” purpose statement from this passage. After reading the prompt but before reading the passage, I ask students to anticipate Douglass’s purpose for the passage. Using their historical knowledge of Douglass and the title of the book from which this passage is excerpted, they respond that Douglass is going to tell them about his life as a slave. This very general statement is more or less accurate, but only barely “adequate” when it comes to identifying the author’s actual purpose. In fairness, they have not read the passage yet, so this is a good starting point, but I will ask them to see this obvious answer as only good for a pre-reading exercise and point out that it will not be acceptable after we finish reading the passage.

After this quick exercise in anticipation but still before reading the passage, I redirect the students to the prompt one more time. Since the prompt contains additional information, I ask students to anticipate the shift outlined in the prompt. The fact that the third paragraph should stand out should help students see Douglass’s purpose more clearly; I then ask students to skim the passage and determine how many paragraphs it contains. Even though the passage is very short, the fact that there are four paragraphs is very important. Too often, the student samples released for this prompt, and the essays my students used to produce in response to it, suggested that less-than-successful student writers compared the third paragraph to the first two but did not take into consideration the information in the sentence-long fourth paragraph. I extol my students to see all the information on the page as important and to consider this last bit of information that the prompt includes. If it is there, I say, it must be important.

Because of our close analysis of the prompt, our quick exercise in anticipation, and a dawning awareness of the importance of all the text on the page, my students often find the Douglass passage, one that I formerly used as a watermark early in the second semester, very accessible. After reading the passage aloud while the students annotate the text, I ask them what they notice that distinguishes the third paragraph from the remainder of the passage. They immediately notice the thoughtful, detached, almost cool description of the first, second, and fourth paragraphs of the passage. They then sense the sharp contrast of the emotional, hyperbolic “apostrophe to the moving multitude of ships” (l. 32) that begins the third paragraph. With little additional prompting, students can point to the details in the passage that suggest

that Douglass's detached tone coincides with his description of the physical aspects of slavery. However, when describing the emotional aspects of slavery, we see a man on an "emotional rollercoaster" (a bit of terminology that explains, perhaps, why teens eventually identify so well with Douglass!).

This discussion is still centered in the first three paragraphs as the students excitedly discuss the minutiae of the passage that allows them to see Douglass's purpose starting early in the passage. I encourage this discussion because students are revisiting the clues from the passage that will show their total understanding of Douglass's rhetorical strategies. However, I must eventually steer the discussion to the final paragraph and the section of the text where Douglass tells us "whodunit"—or at least blatantly reveals his purpose. The final paragraph of the excerpt reads, "Thus I used to think, and thus I used to speak to myself; goaded almost to madness at one moment, and at the next reconciling myself to my wretched lot."

Douglass's much more eloquent wording of his "emotional rollercoaster" becomes very clear to students after our discussion. It also allows them to see the more "effective" statement of purpose for Douglass's passage: He is not only telling us about slavery but specifically conveying the idea that the emotional toll of slavery was much more taxing than the physical toll of slavery. Were this discussion to lead to a writing exercise, students would still have the hardest part of their work ahead of them: They must take this "effective" purpose statement and then provide the support necessary to demonstrate a thorough reading of the passage. However, they at least have a thesis that sets them up for success, as opposed to an "adequate" thesis that sets them up for mediocrity.

An "Effective" Reading of an Indirect Address in Fiction

My course is based on a chronological study of American literature taught in conjunction with an AP U.S. History course. As the year progresses, another lesson that helps my students see this distinction between an "adequate" and "effective" purpose statement comes when we study Ernest Hemingway. Because of his often austere writing style, Hemingway poses challenges for many students in even accessing his work, much less working toward a nuanced understanding of purpose. A story that may initially be the most inaccessible and yet ultimately the most rewarding to solve is "Hills Like White Elephants."³

3. I will reference the story as it appears in *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, which labels all pieces with paragraph numbers. I include these numbers in parentheses in my text references.

To introduce the story, we attempt a dramatic reading. I read any descriptive passages, but students play the roles of the three characters in the story: “The American,” “the girl with him” (1), and “a woman” (6) who tends the bar. This approach can be confusing to students because Hemingway does not always label who the speaker of a given line is, and there is often some humorous confusion as we try to survive the reading. The effect is an initial disjointed reading that immediately forces students into the details of the text to try to make sense of what they have just experienced. At worst, this experience is something akin to what it must feel like when a passage makes no sense to a student during the AP Exam. A student’s best hope is to dive back in and see what he or she can salvage, and ideally this lesson teaches the student how to discover a great deal.

A primary source of the students’ confusion stems from a reference to a medical operation that first occurs in paragraph 42. However, the specific operation is simply referred to as “it”; those who miss the pronoun–antecedent relationship between “it” and “operation” are confused and misguided about what the couple is contemplating doing. Still, as we work our way through various details that let the audience know that the couple’s relationship is already intimate, some student will tentatively raise his or her hand and offer the suggestion that the operation under consideration is an abortion. This is what the plot of the story discusses, and we work through any number of text references that will help students see this as an accurate reading. On a particularly good year, some students will know the multiple symbolic associations that accompany the reference to “white elephants” in both the story and its title. Even if no students know these references, there are sufficient examples to lead us to the correct conclusion.

At this point students naturally move into a discussion about whether or not the couple will follow through with their discussion and have the abortion. There is no clear answer, and students must work to create an effective argument to support their own view of what will happen. In other words, they must do what all analysis prompts ask students to do: develop a position about the purpose of the passage and then support it with evidence from the text. I encourage class discussions of the pros and cons of the couple’s decision because of the wealth of close textual study they engender. However, students normally conclude that there is merit to both arguments and thus generate an excellent moment to discuss an “adequate” reading of this short story versus an “effective” reading of it.

Earlier I suggested that the abortion is “what the plot of the story discusses.” Particularly when it is difficult to resolve the conflict presented in the story’s plot,

students need to understand that the author probably has a relatively complex purpose in writing the story. Were this a literature class instead of a AP English Language and Composition class, we would discuss the story's theme at this point, but to help students prepare for our rhetoric exam, we focus on Hemingway's purpose. This is exactly what I ask students: If the purpose of the story is not to tell us whether the girl has an abortion, then what is his purpose?

To refocus on purpose, I read the story aloud before we attempt answering this question. (I read many things aloud in class to help students hear an inflected reading. This modeling is often necessary for weaker students who have not developed this skill on their own.) Because we have discussed many of the story's details and have examined the dialogue between the characters, my reading of the story now contains the inflection that our dramatic reading did not. In addition, students can see more clearly the evolution of description and dialogue in the story that now suggests another, more "effective" purpose to the story: that what we are witnessing is the struggle for power in this relationship, and not a decision about abortion.

When the story begins, even the titles given to the characters (the American, the girl) suggest a maturity difference between the couple, regardless of the nature of their relationship. We know they are intimate because we are told of their luggage with "labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights" (99). The other thing we can see is the man's dominant position in the couple by the way he drives their conversation. The girl just asks questions while the American provides answers. He also has to order for them because the girl cannot speak Spanish (they are in Barcelona), again placing the man in control. After an awkward exchange of small talk, the couple has a brief fight before attempting to move back into uncomfortable small talk. After a silence, the man introduces the idea of the simple operation (42). In response to his prodding, the girl either responds with silence or questions to his assurances that everything will "be fine afterward. Just like we were before" (48).

The man continues badgering the young woman (in what is obviously not the first time through this conversation) until the girl seems to start accepting the idea. It is at this point that the American says, "I think it's the best thing to do. But I don't want you to do it if you don't really want to" (57). This well-placed comment puts the decision, and responsibility, firmly on the girl's shoulders; he has bullied her into potentially having the abortion, but this phrase absolves him of responsibility should they be unhappy afterward. After all, he said she didn't have to...

Whether you read the story all the way through or stop and discuss during this second reading, students will see that the balance of power rests with the man at

this point. They see the chess match being played and will comment on the rhetoric employed by the American. This is certainly analysis of the kind that leads to success on the AP English Language and Composition Exam, and it begins to come rather naturally for some students by this point. But we still need to examine the power shift in the story.

As the American’s rhetoric continues, there is a sense that he will get his way as the girl provides simple declarative responses to his prompts about the surgery and their future relationship. It is at this point the girl says, “Then I’ll do it. Because I don’t care about me” (64). This is an unexpected response for the American, and by the time this short dialogue finishes, he states, “I don’t want you to do it if you feel that way” (69). By saying that she does not care about herself, the girl has placed the responsibility for this decision back on the man and has shifted the balance of power.

For the remainder of the story, regardless of the “language landscape” descriptions we are given,⁴ or any other details that students have used to justify whether or not the girl decides to have an abortion, we conclude that she is undoubtedly in control of the conversation and the relationship. She makes the declarative statements and the man asks the questions. He adopts the whiney, immature tone the girl had at the start of the story, and she tells him to shut up either directly or indirectly three different times. She also gets a rather important admission from the American. The girl says, “Doesn’t it mean anything to you? We could get along” (92). The “it” here has shifted from the abortion to having the baby, and the American responds, “Of course it does...” (93). He does continue to make his case for her having the surgery, but his appeal is rather weak; she tells him to be quiet, and he complies.

What I want my students to see from this story is that we can use the plot of the story to create different conclusions about whether the girl will have the abortion. For me, this is only an “adequate” reading of the text—not because I have a prejudice about how the story should be read, but because there is little sense of finality to the argument when I remove my own ethical convictions. However, there is no doubt that a power shift happens in this story, and also no doubt that a very direct commentary is made about relationships and the verbal jousting that occurs within them. This conclusion, I maintain, leads to a more “effective” reading. Too many students will use the details of this story to support their own belief about the moral value of abortion instead of allowing Hemingway’s writing to guide them to a thoroughly defensible position: the more “effective” statement of the story’s purpose. After unraveling this

4. For a definition of “language landscape,” see Bernard Phelan’s chapter in this volume.

short story, students definitely feel as though they have solved a mystery and that Hemingway has, in his own way, played a game with them.

The Ubiquity of Analysis in AP English Language and Composition

I have shared just a few examples of what is a yearlong process. Every piece we discuss, regardless of whether it is fiction or nonfiction, poetry or prose, or novels or dramas, is addressed with the analytical process I have described here. I find that the more rhetorical analysis my students do of fiction like “Hills Like White Elephants” or *The Scarlet Letter* or Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, the more successful my students are on indirect addresses. What my students discover are the skills to access any text and get to its most significant purpose, theme, or moral, regardless of genre or time period. As I score their essays in class, I also feel that I am reading more compelling interpretations that display thoughtful persuasion, regardless of whether the prompt is analytical or argumentative in nature.

We also have to remember exactly how much of the exam is rooted in textual analysis. The entire multiple-choice section, four or five passages, calls for analysis. Students have to understand the purposes of all the passages on the synthesis question—another five or more passages. Released examinations have, to this point, contained at least one free-response question that is analytical in nature. If this model holds true, a minimum of 10 passages on the exam requires our students to see purpose and understand how the author conveys that purpose. As important as it is to teach our students to write effective argumentation, teaching from this perspective must be grounded in analysis so that students will be prepared for the bulk of the AP English Language and Composition Exam.

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The Appeals and the Audience: The Rhetoric of Dramatic Literature

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Fiction in the “Nonfiction” Course?

Many new AP English Language and Composition teachers, faced with the first impression that teaching the course means teaching only nonfiction, may feel nonplussed by the prospect of leaving behind everything they loved about teaching English. In particular, years of experience with beloved novels, plays, and poetry seem suddenly irrelevant as they browse readers filled with essays, speeches, and the terminology of rhetorical theory and analysis.

Yet, as I’ve said several times to new AP English Language and Composition teachers wondering how they might best make the shift from fiction to nonfiction, there is no reason why the English Language and Composition *course* should not include all genres of literature, even though the *examination* contains only nonfiction prose. If teachers remember that the main purpose of AP English Language and Composition is for students to understand and apply the uses of language—especially of rhetoric—in all its forms, they can include any rich fiction or drama work and adapt their approach to it easily to a rhetorical study.

Learning to see fictional literature through a rhetorical lens is perhaps the greatest shift in thinking that accompanies the decision to include fiction in an AP English Language and Composition course. Given that rhetoric can be defined as effective and stylish communication in all its carefully constructed forms, with a clearly defined purpose and a series of strategies for accomplishing that purpose, fiction and drama clearly fit the bill. Yet when we study any piece of writing as a rhetorical text, we are mainly studying its rhetorical elements—appeals to logic

and emotion, and establishment of authority and voice—and how the author uses these appeals for a specific purpose: to inform, to persuade, to define. In contrast, the rhetorical elements in imaginative literature are often less explicit than they are in essays and speeches; we probably have been taught to consider imaginative literature primarily as an art form, rather than as a form of rhetoric—that is, a means by which authors express arguments. However, as authors Andrea Lunsford and John Ruszkiewicz say in their text by the same name, “everything’s an argument”—and a rhetorical analysis can make explicit those arguments present in fiction, drama, and even poetry, as well as in nonfiction literature.

Drama: The Perfect Fit for Rhetorical Analysis

When I choose a play or novel for my AP English Language and Composition course, I ask myself, “Does it make a strong statement about something? Do the characters themselves employ rhetorical techniques we can study?” Many of the texts I have assigned for my class fulfill at least one of these criteria, if not both. For example, in *Antigone*, each character has an agenda (Creon hopes to justify his decision to leave Polyneices to the dogs; Antigone defies his authority and explains how honor drove her to it; Tiresias tries to show Creon the error of his ways). We can analyze these characters’ speeches and dialogues for techniques of language by drawing on the traditional rhetorical appeals: *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*. *Othello* provides opportunities to examine what Shakespeare has to say about the nature of truth and lies, the power of manipulation, and the importance of reputation, as well as to analyze the ways in which characters express these concepts explicitly through their words or implicitly through their actions. Shaw’s *Saint Joan* contains many scenes in which characters expound their own views (and thus, in many cases, Shaw’s own views) about the political and religious realities of the time, many of which are also relevant today.

Drama, therefore, seems a natural fit to me in an AP English Language and Composition class. In fact, the very nature of the drama lends itself well to rhetorical analysis: Each dialogue or monologue has a clear purpose in advancing the plot, character development, and ideas or theme of the playwright. Characters themselves also have reasons for speaking; these determine their diction, style, tone, and more. As actors and directors know, each character’s motivation determines not only *what* she says, but also *how* she says it.

When we apply the principles of rhetorical analysis to a drama, we are trying to understand not only the content of the characters’ lines and the ideas contained therein (*logos*) but also those characters’ demeanors, statuses, and motivations (*ethos*),

and the ways in which they elicit emotional responses from the other characters and from the audience (*pathos*). And because the dynamic between characters is so integral to dialogue, we can also examine and analyze the ebb and flow of power within a scene or an entire play. Thus, looking at individual scenes or parts of scenes, students can ask, “What does each character want, and what means—linguistic or paralinguistic—does he or she use to achieve that aim or desire in this scene?” In looking at a play as a whole, students can broaden their analyses by asking, “What theme—or argument—is the playwright trying to advance through this interaction between characters?”

Traditional Rhetoric in the Drama

The terms with which the Greek rhetoricians designated all the rhetorical concepts and structures they identified were much loved by medieval and Renaissance scholars, and they sound impressively erudite but, quite frankly, daunting to a modern ear. It is easy to get bogged down in the Greek and Latin terms, and forget that *explanation*, not simply identification, is the heart and soul of analysis, and so I always recommend to my students that they not worry about memorizing the terminology. If they really want to learn the terms, they can go to *Silva Rhetoricae*, the popular and comprehensive rhetoric Web site from Brigham Young University’s Gideon O. Burton (<http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm>). Although I teach my students some useful and interesting terms (some of which I use below in the following exercises) as they appear in context, I am much more interested in their being able to articulate, in their own words, what is going on in a scene.

If my students learn any Greek terms, however, they will learn *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, and it is to these three staples that I insist they return in each analysis. As with any rhetorical analysis, they must always ask themselves: What is the *content* of the dialogue in the scene (*logos*); how do the speakers present themselves when they speak (*ethos*); and what means do they use to ensure that others in the scene (and the audience) will respond, not just with their heads but with their hearts (*pathos*)? Since we are also studying more conventional occasions for rhetoric, such as famous speeches by political and historical figures like Martin Luther King Jr. (“I Have a Dream”), John Kennedy (“We choose to go to the moon”), and Emile Zola (“J’accuse”), they have already discussed the ways in which structure and language in a speech influence all three appeals. It is not much of a leap to apply the same analytical strategies to the speeches and dialogues in dramas. Monologues and other speeches

are a good place to start because of their obvious similarities to the historical speeches the students have studied.

For example, the famous eulogies in Act 3, Scene 2 of *Julius Caesar* provide an excellent opportunity for rhetorical analysis in the context of a dramatic text. There is no need for students to know the entire play; providing them a brief contextual summary of the story so far gives them enough of a starting point to understand the basics of the dynamic between Brutus and Antony:

Brutus, a senator of Rome, has been convinced by another senator, Cassius, to help kill the popular Julius Caesar because they believe Rome, which has been a Republic ruled by the Senate, was in danger of becoming an empire ruled by one man. The people of Rome demand an explanation from the conspirators, and Brutus volunteers to speak. He has also promised Caesar's close friend, Marc Antony, the opportunity to speak, provided Antony does not say anything against those who killed Caesar.

With Brutus's speech we can introduce important concepts about style in rhetoric—the tropes and the schemes. Rearranging the apparently ordinary prose of Brutus's speech on the page and emphasizing his key word choices reveals many of his carefully constructed rhetorical schemes. Students begin to grasp the technical skill and respectable ethos of a conventional senatorial rhetorician, master of anaphora, chiasmus, antithesis, and many more strategies of style and oral artistry:

BRUTUS:

Romans, countrymen, and lovers!

Hear me for my cause; and be silent, that you may **hear**:

believe me for mine honor, and have respect to mine honor, that you may

believe:

censure me in your wisdom; and awake your senses, that you may the better judge.

If there be **any** in this assembly,

any dear friend of Caesar's,

to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his.

If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer,—

Not that **I loved Caesar less**,

but that **I loved Rome more**

Had you rather Caesar were **living**, and die all **slaves**,
than that Caesar were **dead**, to live all **freemen**?

As Caesar loved me, I weep for him;	There is tears for his love ;
as he was fortunate , I rejoice at it;	joy for his fortune ;
as he was valiant , I honor him;	honor for his valour ;
but, as he was ambitious , I slew him.	and death for his ambition .

Who is here so base that would be a bondman ?	If any, speak; for him have I offended.
--	--

Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman ?	If any, speak; for him have I offended.
--	--

Who is here so vile that will not love his country ?	If any, speak; for him have I offended
---	---

I pause for a reply.

The bold text makes it easier for students to see the words that Brutus emphasizes through such techniques as anaphora, thesis/antithesis, and chiasmus. (Note that students do not need to know these terms if they can articulate in their own words what Brutus wants and how he achieves it.) He wants the crowd to know that he loved Caesar, and he repeats this concept in nearly every line, changing up the order but always pairing Caesar's positive traits with his own sympathetic reactions, Caesar's negative traits with his own righteous actions—his own honor, in effect. Overall, however, the lasting impression he wants his audience to carry away is that it is not enough to love only one man; one's paramount duty as a Roman is to love Rome. In this, Brutus employs a technique that Jay Heinrichs calls "code grooming" in his book *Thank You for Arguing* (192): using language that underscores the values of a particular group in order to establish a connection with them. The Romans value patriotism; all other emotions aside, killing Caesar was good for Rome. Brutus knows this, and he plays on it.

Yet perhaps he plays on it a bit too heavily. Through their own experience, students are not insensitive to the fact that the eloquence of a politician may be a mask for his insincerity; in fact, as those of us familiar with the story already know, the weakest element in Brutus's speech is his ineffective use of *pathos*—his inability to connect emotionally with the crowd. Brutus uses all the right words for a Roman senator, words that underline his love of Rome and of Caesar himself.

But the calculated artistry of the speech becomes even more apparent in contrast to the apparently spontaneous nature of Antony's speech, making Brutus's words seem forced and insincere in retrospect. It is hard to understand what's missing until we compare the two, deconstructing the precise structure of each speech and understanding that words themselves cannot always convey emotion; a speech's emotional effect is also contingent on being artful—but not too artful—in its construction and delivery.

Guiding students through a comparative study of Brutus's speech and Antony's, within the context of the scene that shows the reactions of their audience, will help students appreciate the difference between these two classic orations. Here are some questions I use with my students as we read through the scene:

After Brutus's eulogy of Caesar:

1. Brutus opens his speech with "Romans, countrymen, and lovers [i.e., friends]." What does the order of these words say about the importance he places on each?
2. Consider Brutus's rhetorical questions. What sorts of things is he hoping the audience will decide are most important to them?
3. Brutus uses antithesis compounded with climactic parallelism. Find at least one example of this. Why is the combination of these two devices effective?
4. In one sentence, express the *purpose* of Brutus's speech and his principal means of achieving it.

After the first part of Antony's speech:

5. Before Antony spoke, had Brutus achieved his purpose?
6. Contrast Antony's opening to Brutus's. What effect does the difference in the order of the words have?
7. What is the first example of paralipsis Antony uses in this speech? How does it set up the audience's expectations for the rest of the speech?
8. Antony repeatedly refers to Brutus and his co-conspirators as "honorable." What effect does the continued repetition of this word have on the *tone* of the words around it?
9. Like Brutus, Antony uses rhetorical questions; what does *he* hope the audience will think as a result of them?

10. Consider the last few lines of this part of Antony's speech. How is his "pause" different from Brutus's? What do these lines reveal about Antony's strategy?

Before the second part of Antony's speech:

11. Spot one logical fallacy in the thinking of the citizens.

After the fourth citizen says: "They were traitors: honorable men!"

12. Antony once again uses paralipsis. How? What is his purpose? Does he achieve his aim?
13. The repeated word "honorable" appears again; this time not only Antony uses it, but the Fourth Citizen as well. What does its use reveal about the effect of Antony's speech on his audience?
14. In one sentence, express the differences in *purpose* and *methods* between Brutus's and Antony's speeches.

This last question is a crucial one when performing a rhetorical analysis (in this case, a comparative one) of any text. In the end, students are trying to determine what the *purpose* of any text might be. The answer to that question serves as a working thesis upon which they can base a written rhetorical analysis; the answers to the other questions help to flesh out the content of that analysis. In this way, students examine the speakers' strategies: their reasoning, their emotional appeals, and the ways in which they establish themselves as figures of authority or objects of sympathy.

Approaching a Play Through Focus Scenes

Like many teachers dealing with the broad demands of this course, I find it a challenge to spend too long a time in class on any single text. Yet, many of my students will also go on to take the AP English Literature and Composition course in the following year, and I consider as part of my mandate their preparation of a wide repertoire of literary texts. In addition to the other nonfiction reading, I include about three dramas, one class novel conducive to argumentation activities (like *1984*), and at least one independently read novel of recognized literary merit. It makes for a lot of reading in the course, with very little time to spend on analysis of an entire work.

For this reason, I let my students know up front that they are expected to read the entire work on their own, according to a reading schedule I provide. We don't go over plot points unless they bring up things they don't understand. Our class time is devoted instead to close-reading analysis of selections with a focus on rhetorical

purposes. In the case of plays, the reading schedule includes a list of what I call “focus scenes,” including the dates on which we will discuss those scenes in class, and often some supplementary materials that will give students some background knowledge or some concepts to consider while reading the scene. For example, in studying *Othello*, we also read an essay called “The Ways We Lie.” These essays help students identify the purpose of many scenes in the play that involve manipulation through lying and half-truth, giving them a framework around which to analyze the rhetoric of those scenes.

In choosing a focus scene, I aim for moments in the play that are rich in conflict, tension, and power struggle. They may involve argument, persuasive techniques, clear motivations or goals for the characters, strong shifts in tone or relationships between characters, and other dramatic elements that make for interesting discussion. A good example of such a scene is the exchange between Creon and Haemon in *Antigone*, which clearly shows through its language the degeneration of the father–son relationship as Haemon struggles with the conflict between the loyalties to his father and to his fiancée.

Focus Scene Strategy: Promptbooks

This scene between Creon and Haemon is the kind of scene that you may want to read aloud in class, if only to encourage students to find and label cues they believe give them insight into the tone with which they read the lines. An excellent strategy for getting students to identify tone in a scene like this one is to have them create a promptbook for the scene. This is an activity that I adapted from the *Romeo and Juliet* portion of Folger’s superb *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth and A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1995). Taking on the role of a director, students annotate the text of the play as though it were a working script, paying particular attention to cues in the language itself as to the tone of voice used by characters. Students can also add notes with regard to actions, blocking, set design, and other theatrical elements.

The main purpose of the exercise, however, is for students to be able to justify their choices by using textual support gleaned through close reading of the scene, particularly with regard to the characters’ language choices, the messages they convey to one another (both successfully and unsuccessfully), and their reactions to one another as a result of those communications. By writing about or discussing their choices, students isolate and identify the components that give the scene its dramatic impact and the characters their dynamic. They can brainstorm a list of possible tone

words to nail down how lines should be spoken and discuss the differences in their shades of meaning. Ultimately, they should realize that labeling tone precisely in turn defines more precisely the purpose of the words and the structure.

An exercise like this one works particularly well with Shakespeare because stage directions are limited. All clues about characters' emotions, interactions, and motivations, even if hidden from other characters, are clear to the audience. Attention to the details of the dialogue itself will reveal these clues.

Focus Scene Strategy: Discourse Analysis

Once students get used to the idea that clues about a scene's tone and purpose can be found by closely examining the contents of the dialogue, you have laid the foundations for a strategy called discourse analysis. This framework is taken from a book called *English Language and Literature: An Integrated Approach* by Ron Norman (1998), designed for use in the British school system for students studying for their English A-Level exams, which are not unlike the AP Exams. Discourse analysis provides a framework of questions with which to analyze short passages of the play for language techniques used by the playwright in the establishment of characterization and dynamic, and rhetorical strategies used by the characters in their dialogue. The minutiae of language convey status, tone, nature of relationships, and ultimately the purpose of the exchange.

The basic framework, introduced by Norman in his text, is as follows:

1. Turns

- How often, and for how long, does each speaker speak?
- What kind of contribution does each speaker characteristically make? (question/answer/accusation/joke/agreement/etc.)
- Who gets interrupted easily? Who doesn't?
- Who influences the agenda and changes the topic?

2. Relationships

- How do the speakers address each other? (Sir? Mick? Mate? You silly sausage? Darling?)
- Do any of the speakers rephrase or comment on the appropriateness or quality of another's contribution?
- In what ways do any of the speakers avoid being too blunt, or direct, and use "politeness strategies" instead?

- How much of the talk is phatic?⁵

3. Lexical and grammatical choices

- What distinguishes the style or register of the vocabulary of each of the speakers?
- What kinds of phrase and sentence construction are typical of each speaker?

4. Productive and paralinguistic features

- How is each speaker distinguished in terms of the pitch, tempo, dynamics, and intonation of their utterances?
- How are stress and intonation patterns used throughout the dialogue?
- What role is played by pauses, hesitations, repetitions, and other nonfluency features?
- How do the speakers' gestures, movement, posture, and eye contact relate to the meanings conveyed by their language?

*(English Language and Literature: An Integrated Approach, p. 158)*⁶

For the purpose of analyzing a scene as it appears on a page, I usually boil it down to these questions:

- Who speaks, how often, and for how long?
- What kind of contribution does each speaker make (questions, statements, type of information, etc.)?
- Who interrupts and gets interrupted?
- Who influences the agenda and controls the topic?
- How do the speakers address each other?
- What distinguishes the vocabulary, phrase, and sentence constructions of each speaker?
- What added elements do nonverbal cues (camera angles, body language, etc.) contribute to how lines are delivered and perceived?

One of the best ways for students to appreciate this kind of analysis is to start by encouraging them to verbalize the inferences they make when watching something familiar, like a television show. I've used episodes of popular TV shows, like *House*. For example, a short scene from the second-season episode "Autopsy" pits

5. **Phatic** expressions are ones that often serve to grease the wheels of conversation, rather than to convey significant meaning. For example, "How are you?" is more often intended as a casual greeting than as an actual inquiry into the other person's health or state of mind.

6. I am indebted to my colleague Annette Chiu, who introduced me to Norman's text and the discourse analysis approach.

a precocious nine-year-old cancer patient against a young doctor who is trying to maintain his demeanor of professionalism and calm, despite the patient's ability to twist him around her little finger. She manipulates him quite adroitly, pretending not to understand his medical jargon and getting him to simplify his lexicon, but then responding with her own knowledge of medical procedure, which she has acquired through her long experience with tests and hospitals. A script excerpt gives even the casual reader an appreciation of the power dynamic in the scene:

Chase: You ever had this test before? (*Andie shakes her head.*)

Andie: What's it for?

Chase: This goes all the way up the vein by your hip into your lung. If I find something up there blocking anything I pull it out. Simple.

Andie: It's gonna be easy. The doctor at Sloan told me I have a great aorta.

Chase: Oh, you have had this test before.

Andie: Sorry. I just like hearing you talk.

(*Chase laughs and goes back to work.*)

Andie: I've never kissed a boy.

Chase: There's time yet for that.

Andie: There was a boy last summer; I was at one of those cancer camps.

Chase: Uh-huh

Andie: I just never had the guts to ask him. You know there's a good chance I'm not going to walk out of this hospital. Even if I do, I'm nine. There's not a lot of kissing going on in the third grade.

Chase: You will walk out of here, all right, and you will kiss a boy.
There you go. Smile.

Andie: Will you kiss me?

Chase: No.

Andie: No one will ever know.

Chase: I'm... I'm... I'm sorry. I can't.

Andie: I won't tell anyone.

Chase: Listen, you're nine years old. I'm thirty.

Andie: I just want to know what it feels like. Once.

Chase: This isn't your last chance for that

Andie: What if it is? Please kiss me.

(*After a moment he kisses her.*)

It's fairly obvious how language and emotional appeals play a role in this scene, but interpretation is aided by the visuals of the doctor's and patient's facial expressions, the pacing of the scene as played by the actors, and other paralinguistic features, which make the scene dynamic and the characters' interaction easier to discern. The goal is to have students make the same inferences about the subtext of written material.

The next step is to take away the visuals. I continue to use television scenes from familiar shows, where students already know the context but have to support their interpretations with details from the text. This example is from *Gilmore Girls*, a show whose quick-fire dialogue I love not only for its humor but for its density and use of allusion:

(Lorelai enters the house, looks around feeling sad and lonely. She notices message machine is blinking as she drops her keys on desk. She presses playback button, and answering machine beeps. She sits as the message plays.)

Luke's voice: Hey, it's me. Uh, listen, I got a call from my sister and T.J. They're up in Maine, and they got into a little accident—nothing major, just each one of them broke an arm and a leg, *(Lorelai looks concerned)* so anyhow, they can't run the Renaissance Fair booth for a couple of weeks. So they asked me to come and help them out, and I, unfortunately, answered the phone, so I'm on my way to Maine. I'll be back in about a week. Okay? Bye.

Lorelai: Great. *(Machine beeps)*

Luke's voice: Hey, it's me again. I'm not sure if we're at the point in this relationship where you actually need to know that much information about my whereabouts *(Lorelai smiles and chuckles)*, so if we're not, I'm sorry. I could have just said, "I'm going out of town, and I'll call you later." So I'm going out of town, and I'll call you later. *(Machine beeps)*

Luke's voice: Me again *(Lorelai shoots a look of disbelief)*, the idiot that leaves you three rambling messages on your machine. I just wanted to tell you I got a cell phone before I left, so, you know, you could call if you want, but only if you want, so that's it.

Lorelai: Ah! (*frustrated as she was prepared to write down number.*
Machine beeps)

Luke's voice: Yeah, a number might be good.

Lorelai: Thank you. (*Writes number on paper*)

Luke's voice: 860-294-1986. Okay, bye. (*Machine beeps*) Just...don't change your mind until I get back, okay? Okay. Talk to you later. (*Machine beeps. After only a few moments she picks up phone and dials number from paper and sits on sofa. Ringing cell phone.*)

Luke's voice: Hello?

Lorelai: Well, if it isn't Dean Moriarty.
(Scene switches between Luke's truck as he drives and Lorelai's sofa.)

Luke: Yeah, this is the life.

Lorelai: So, are Liz and T.J. okay?

Luke: Yeah, they're just not getting around too well. Liz is all panicked that if they don't finish out the season, they're gonna lose their spot next to the apple doll booth, which is apparently the prime spot, so I said I'd help them out.

Lorelai: Very chivalrous of you.

Luke: Yeah, I'm a regular Lancelot. So, you get my messages?

Lorelai: Oh, no, did you leave a message? Sorry, my answering machine dropped dead of exhaustion. What did you say?

Luke: Not much.

Lorelai: Okay.

Luke: So...

Lorelai: So...

Luke: That was a hell of a test run.

Lorelai: You mean for the inn, of course.

Luke: Of course.

Lorelai: Yes, it was. Although, you know, until you have a successful second go-round, you really don't know if everything's gonna work.

Luke: Then I guess there's got to be a second go-round.
(*Smiles*)

- Lorelai:** Well, yes, it's the only thing that makes really good business sense. So, where are you right now?
- Luke:** About 10 minutes from "if I lived here, I'd blow my brains out."
- Lorelai:** Ah, yes, I hear it's lovely there this time of year.
(*Fade out*)

The students annotate the scene as they read, looking carefully for verbal clues that verify the relationship they already know exists between these two: a friendship tentatively evolving into something more, leaving both characters awkward and uncomfortable. What makes this discomfort and the earlier friendship clear? The pauses, the double-entendres, the sporadic return to casual banter. Applying the earlier framework from Norman's book, students begin to articulate the connection between what is said and how it is said. They also identify how this connection reveals the intentions of each character and, thus, the purpose of the scene.

The final step is to apply the same strategy of analysis to focus scenes taken from the literary texts they are studying. Students now make assumptions about what is happening in the scenes, but because they don't know the characters, they must justify those assumptions by examining textual features.

Sample Work: Analysis of *Antigone* Focus Scenes

Once students feel more confident analyzing discourse in plays from a rhetorical point of view, I assign them to write a short essay in which they select from a range of possible focus scenes for analysis.

Using the questions from our discourse analysis framework, you arrive at your thesis—a conclusion about what is going on in a scene, the relationships between the characters, and their attitudes toward the situation they are in.

Read your scene carefully, taking notes using the discourse analysis framework.

Then write an essay that analyzes the discourse in the scene, commenting on the following:

- *characterization and relationships between characters*
- *nature/progression of conflict*
- *characters' attitudes toward/positions on the situation*

Your introduction should include a thesis that makes a clear statement about how these aspects contribute to the overall understanding of the scene.

Use specific examples from the text. **DO NOT** go outside the passage for examples—you may briefly mention story elements that provide context, but your analysis is of the lines themselves.

Hand in a photocopy of your annotated scene with your assignment.

Catherine comments in her essay on the scene between Creon and Haemon (lines 706–859)⁷ that the degeneration of language mirrors the degeneration of the relationship:

At first, both refer to each other formally as “Father” and “Son” while stating their opinions at length, a mutual sign of respect in the mind of Creon, who begins praising “good sons.” However, Haemon then attacks his father’s judgment, barely disguising the statement that his father is “empty” of character because Creon assumes he “alone possesses intelligence.” Immediately, Creon is defensive, mocking his son with rhetorical questions and daring him to admit to “admiring rebels” such as Antigone. Thereafter, discussion diminishes to barbed single-sentence retorts, with Creon denying his son the right to call him “Father,” and Haemon stating he would

7. The students whose essays I’m excerpting here use the Fagles translation of *Antigone*, so I must take into account that some of their interpretations will be based on the connotations implied by his choice of words while translating. For ease of reading, I have also removed the line number citations from the excerpts, but the students are required to include them.

judge Creon “insane” if he were not his son. This mutual disrespect and lack of resolution shows that the relationship between the opposing father and the foil of his son is gravely wounded.

Kathleen arrives at a conclusion about the values of the Thebans through her examination of one of the Chorus’s speeches early in the play:

In *Antigone*, military performance is a medium through which honour is defined. In Sophocles’ play, the chorus speaks disparagingly of the Argive army that “turned into headlong flight, / Galloping faster and faster” from battle. The Thebans, of course, think very little of their enemies to begin with, and the scornful tone and imagery of cowardice in this line demonstrate that the speakers think their enemies’ retreat further reduces their honour.

Sabrina focuses on how the characters’ use of questions in lines 489–593 reveals much about their presumptions, their intentions toward one another, and Creon’s effectiveness as a leader:

Creon questions Antigone in such a way that shows that he is already convinced of her guilt. First, he declares her actions and then asks her whether or not she denies doing them. Then Creon orders her to “tell [him] briefly, [without any] long speeches” whether or not she was aware that “a decree had forbidden [her] actions.” Creon’s questions do not allow Antigone to recount her side of the story. He aggressively interrogates, using question after question, not allowing her to get more than a few words in. He is dismissive in his questioning, and does not address her by name—he rudely refers to her as “you” or “this girl.” Creon’s addresses demonstrate clear disdain of and lack of respect for Antigone, who is therefore even more likely to disrespect Creon more than she already has by betraying his decree. In order to deal wisely with public affairs, a leader must promote an authoritative, yet approachable, public image. Creon’s rage and disrespect for those around him make him appear tyrannical, which is an unwise public image for a king.

Both of these students have used the framework of discourse analysis to investigate the details of their scenes from a rhetorical perspective, focusing on the purpose of each character’s contributions and, eventually, determining the overall purpose of the scene in terms of one of its themes.

Practice with AP Exam Prompts

If you want students to practice rhetorical analysis of dramatic or literary texts within the context of a practice prompt, there are at least two from former AP English Language and Composition Exams that fit the bill. One uses a drama, the other fiction.

The first, from 2002's Form B, on an excerpt from *Julius Caesar*, asks the student to analyze the arguments of two different characters trying to persuade Caesar:

Below are excerpts from a crucial scene in Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*. Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, has dreamt that Caesar will be murdered and tries to persuade him to remain at home, where he will be safe. Decius, a member of a group of conspirators, tries to persuade Caesar to go to the Senate, where the conspirators plan to kill him. Read the excerpts carefully. Then write an essay in which you analyze the rhetoric of both arguments and explain why you think that Caesar finds Decius's argument more persuasive than Calphurnia's. You may want to consider such elements as choice of detail, use of appeals, and understanding of audience.

Notice that the prompt asks students to analyze the two speeches for such specifically rhetorical elements as the use of appeals. The purposes of the speeches are provided by the prompt: Each hopes to persuade Caesar of a different course of action. Students are asked to *evaluate* the effectiveness of each speaker's strategies in achieving this end; this is a tack you could take in examining other dramatic scenes, such as Othello's appeal to the Duke's court in Act One of *Othello*, or Joan's defense of herself in *Saint Joan*. A practice prompt could be easily modeled on this former AP Exam question.

The other rhetorical analysis of fiction appeared on the 1993 exam. In this prompt, students were asked to compare two marriage proposals, one made by Jane Austen's Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*, and the other by Mr. Headstone in Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (context was irrelevant to an analysis of the speeches themselves, and so the characters and novels were not named in the prompt):

The passages below are from two different novels. In each passage, a man is proposing marriage. Compare the rhetorical strategies—such as arguments, assumptions, attitudes, diction—used by the speakers in the two passages and comment on both the intended and probable effects of the proposals on the women being addressed.

Because the proposals are essentially speeches, it isn't much of a stretch to apply the same techniques of rhetorical analysis. Yet some students, not having had practice with rhetorical analysis of fiction, could be thrown by the fact that the proposals are from novels if they haven't been exposed to the idea that speeches and persuasion appear in literary contexts as well as in nonfiction ones.

As with the *Julius Caesar* prompt, this one can be used as a model for similar exercises with other texts, in which students are given only an excerpt of a character in a novel giving a persuasive speech (for example, O'Brien in *1984*) and asked to predict the effect on the audience based on the appeals that character has used.

Conclusion: Making Literature Matter to Language Students

As a final word, consider this: Many students who take the AP English Language and Composition course may not be future literature majors. The context of the English Language and Composition course, where books are examined as important vehicles of human ideas and communication rather than from a solely literary perspective, can turn your students into lifelong readers. If they're keen on rhetoric, they may very well end up keen on the rhetorical qualities of fiction and drama, too—a newly enthusiastic audience for the appeal of literature.

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