

Organizing and Outlining the Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Possible Organizational Patterns

1. **Purpose by Purpose** – If you’re analyzing multiple purposes, this is likely the best one to use. You may have a paragraph for each purpose if you can accomplish it in a paragraph, or you may have multiple paragraphs for each purpose. If you divide each purpose into multiple paragraphs, then each paragraph can focus on a strategy used to achieve that purpose. In this pattern, your **topic sentences** would address the purpose you are focusing on in each body paragraph and the strategies that the writer uses to achieve those purposes.
2. **Device by Device** – This is very similar to the organizational pattern that most of you used for your *A Tale of Two Cities* essay last year. You will have one paragraph per device that you’ll be analyzing. This structure will only work if a) you’re focusing on one purpose and b) you have enough of each device in your speech and enough to say about each device. In this pattern, each **topic sentence** would address the device your paragraph is analyzing and how that device contributes to the achievement of purpose.
3. **Strategy by Strategy** – This is similar to device by device, but it is a bit broader. If you have strategies that are more general in your thesis, this might be a good structure for you. In this pattern, each **topic sentence** would address the strategy your paragraph is analyzing and how that strategy contributes to the achievement of purpose.
4. **Section by Section** – In this structure, you will discuss what the speaker is doing as s/he progresses through the speech. This is where being able to understand and break down the text’s structure comes in handy. Divide the speech into “chronological” sections. This can be accomplished based on shifts in content or shifts in tone. In this pattern, each **topic sentence** would address what is happening in the section of the text you are analyzing in that particular body paragraph. The evidence in the paragraph would be the dominant rhetorical strategies/devices/appeals from that section.

Writing Analysis

When analyzing each piece of evidence in your rhetorical analysis paper, you need to be sure that you completely answer these four questions (five if you’re going section by section):

1. What IS this piece of evidence?
2. How does it work?
3. Why does the writer use it?
4. How does it help to achieve purpose?
5. How does it work HERE? – Again, this one particularly matters if you’re analyzing the speech section by section.

Writing Introductions and Conclusions

Two of the most commonly asked questions regarding any paper are “What do I do in my introduction?” and “What should I put in my conclusion?” This varies based on the nature of the writing assignment and the approach you personally take in writing the essay, and this step should likely come AFTER you have written body paragraphs. For a paper like this, here are some suggestions as to what information might be pertinent in an introduction or a conclusion.

- **Introductions**
 - Establish rhetorical situation (SOA)
 - Establish any other pertinent background information (For example – Do you need to provide some more background about the issue that your chosen speech addresses?)
 - Close by transitioning into your thesis.
- **Conclusions**
 - The impact/results of the speech
 - The effectiveness of the speech
 - Expand outward – Further implications? Things that can be learned from the speech?