

Rhetorical Strategies Process

Step One: SOAPSTone or SPACE CAT Thinking

Always start with a brief mental overview of these ideas. Does the introductory/bibliographical/biographical information give you anything to use, consider, or look out for? Who is the **Speaker**? What is the **Occasion**? Who is the **Audience** and what is the author's **Purpose** towards that audience? What is the **Subject** matter of the piece? Think about how these INTERRELATE. Who is the speaker to the audience? Who is the speaker to the subject matter? **Subject** to audience? Why is the purpose important to the speaker or the audience? Does the occasion or the speaker create a **Tone** expectation? Historical **Context** as part of Occasion? What is the **Exigence** for this piece? What sparked the speaker to choose to speak out now?

Consider these ideas after reading as well, to see if anything was revealed or if expectation met reality.

Step Two: Identifying Choices and Appeals

As a rule of thumb, look for things that stand out to you. You notice them because that was what they were designed to do, make you notice. What to "call" them generally falls into these broad categories:

Conceptual/Idea Based: (my term, don't call it that on the test)

- **Allusion**: References to another text, source or occasion, often, but not always, indirect (look at that). Can indicate the audience by suggesting who would be familiar with the reference, or be for the purpose of making an appeal based connection. Meant to call that other text to mind.
- **Analogy**: Creating a specific comparison between two situations, ideas, objects, texts etc. More direct than an allusion or a

juxtaposition. Look to the parts, elements or characteristics of the two things being linked. The argument can often revolve around this choice.

- **Irony:** When something is contrary to your usual expectations. As part of rhetorical analysis, focus on when it is created by the author intentionally, usually through word choice, such as bringing up a term or idea in a way in which the audience can see that the expectations of the words' meaning do not fit the situation, or when a broader situational irony is created or pointed out by the author to illustrate a point. There will be times when *critiquing* an argument that you could discuss unintentional irony on the part of the author, but critiquing is not the purpose of rhetorical analysis

Structural Based:

- **Diction/Tone:** These two ideas are about word choices on the part of the author. These choices could convey an author's mood toward the subject or indicate an intended audience. In rhetorical analysis, do not say "the author uses diction"; this is saying they used words... Describe the tone or mood of the diction.
Some specific concepts within this broader one:
 - Colloquialism: Ordinary or familiar type of conversation. Colloquial language is a marker of an author choosing a less formal tone.
 - Connotation/Denotation: Connotation is the association suggested by a word. Implied meaning rather than literal meaning. (For example, "policeman," "cop," and "The Man" all denote the same literal meaning of police officer, but each has a different connotation.) Denotation is the literal, explicit meaning of a word, without its connotations. Clever authors might play with the audiences understanding of this, or direct specific connotations towards specific audiences
 - Jargon – The diction used by a group which practices a similar profession or activity. Jargon can be a marker of an author

choosing a more formal tone, or indicating a more specific audience

- Vernacular: Language that is very specific to a group, place or profession, like colloquial language, but either much more narrow in terms of its intended audience or much more informal.
- **Syntax**: The structural organization of words and sentences/phrases. This can be seen in choices of the length of sentences, types of sentences (questions, for example), and the complexity or formality/informality of the sentences. Short sentences or connected phrases “stack” the ideas and can be used to build evidence or overwhelm the audience. Longer or more complex sentences can let ideas breathe or be used to illustrate the complexity of the topic or point. Mode choice could fall under this idea, though it is probably as well to talk about it as its own choice if it matters in the text
Some specific concepts within this broader one:
 - Lists (Enumeratio)
 - Conjunction play
 - Questions (Rhetorical - answer understood: Hypophora - asked and then answered)
 - Intentional bad grammar/structure
- **Repetition**: When words, phrases or ideas are repeated throughout the text. This can also be used to “stack” but is often more direct and specific than syntax based stacking. Repetition can work two ways, by emphasizing what is repeated, or also by highlighting what is different or left out. The most common is “Anaphora”, repeating what is at the beginning of lines, but repetition can also be done at the end, the middle, the end of one phrase and the beginning of another (chiasmus) or any combination of all those ideas.
- **Parallelism**: When words, phrases, ideas or structures are repeated throughout a work to draw out a deeper meaning or thematic connection. Often more subtle than pure repetition and incorporates the entire work, like bringing something from the beginning back at the end, or having a similar structure or characteristics in a series of paragraphs or examples.

- **Juxtaposition:** Placing ideas, examples or topics side by side conceptually for the purpose of comparing or contrasting them. Simple, but important to see if it's there. Applies to visuals as well. Can be a factor in creating irony as well.
- **Figurative Language** (kinda both, but doesn't matter): Creates comparisons by linking the senses and the concrete world to abstract ideas. Figurative language is not meant to be taken *literally*, it is symbolic in intent and nature. It can be an element of tone (like choosing to be "artsy-fartsy"), but is also key to the author linking the abstract idea of the piece to the concrete examples. Some specific concepts within this broader one:
 - Analogy (can be this as well as its own thing. However, analogies CAN be literal rather than figurative).
 - Metaphor/Simile
 - Hyperbole/Understatement
- **Imagery:** Creating a mental picture for the reader/audience pertaining to the five senses (think any or all of the five). Imagery can be a component of figurative language expressions, or set up or lead up to them. Usually it would be most effective to discuss the quality and impact of imagery, rather than merely its existence.

Appeals

Appeals can be broken down into three distinct areas: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. When discussing these appeals avoid referring to them by those terms or as choices themselves. Speakers are constantly using them, sometimes simultaneously. Instead discuss what the speaker is attempting to elicit from the audience, what making the appeal is trying to get the audience to think, feel or do.

Ethos: An appeal to the audience through a belief in the speaker's authority. Some examples include:

- Reference to beliefs/experiences the writer/speaker shares with the

audience

- Explanations of personal authority or perspective
- Attempts at an unbiased outlook
- Proper level of terminology for an audience
- Writing is grammatically correct

Pathos: An appeal to the audience's (specific) emotions through the use of emotional language. Some examples include:

- Specific, concrete language
- Emotionally loaded language
- Varied connotations
- Emotional example
- Imagery
- Description
- Narratives or stories of emotional events
- Emotional tone(s)

Logos: An appeal to the audience's rational thought by using logical evidence. Some examples include:

- Direct references
- Explanations
- Definitions
- Facts
- Statistics
- Quotations from valid sources
- Citations from specialists (those with authority)
- Informed opinions