

Example 3: Rhetorical Analysis Essay

The Basics: A rhetorical analysis essay asks you to explain the rhetoric (strategies used by the author to communicate their ideas) of an article and argue why, in your opinion, those strategies are effective (or not) at convincing the audience of the author's perspective. Common aspects of articles discussed in this type of essay include writing style (Is it written as an academic paper? Is it more informal and conversational?); the types of evidence used by the author (statistics, personal anecdotes, etc.); and contrast assignments, it is important to remember not to take a side on the issue addressed by the author.

Sample Prompt: "Mitt Romney's '47 Percent' speech is a masterpiece of rhetorical strategies. In your opinion, which rhetorical strategies does Mitt use to try to convince her readers of her point of view? Is the article effective at doing so? Why or why not?"

What to do...and not to do

DO...	DO NOT...
<p>Have a <u>thesis statement</u> that <u>clearly states</u> whether the article is rhetorically effective and <u>why</u>.</p> <p>Use <u>quotations, paraphrases, or descriptions</u> of key aspects of the article to provide examples of the article's effectiveness (or lack thereof).</p> <p>Remain <u>neutral</u> on the topic of the articles (e.g., whether art classes should be required); focus your paper on the <u>rhetorical strategies</u> used by the author and <u>their effectiveness</u>.</p> <p>Examine the author's use of <u>ethos, pathos, and logos</u>, as well as various other rhetorical strategies (types of evidence used, visual aids like graphs and diagrams, using vivid examples, etc.)</p>	<p>Write a <u>position paper</u>. Remember that you should not take a position on the issue that the article addresses.</p> <p><u>Attack the author</u>, rather than critically examining the rhetoric.</p> <p>Spend <u>a large portion</u> of your paper on <u>summarizing</u> the content of the article rather than <u>addressing the rhetorical strategies</u>.</p>