**Elements of Rhetorical Analysis**

**PURPOSE:** What’s the thesis of the article? What is the author’s point in writing the article? What are some purposes people might write articles? Persuade? Report? Question someone or something?

**STRUCTURE:** How is the text organized? What are the main ideas and how do they relate to the thesis and to each other? Do we start with a story? Or dive right into the facts? Move logically from one idea to the next? Or more personally/ emotionally? Move from most powerful to least powerful evidence or vice versa?

**AUDIENCE:** Who is the audience? Who will read this article? What makes you think that? General audience or more specific?

**EVIDENCE:** What types of evidence does the author use to support his/her thesis? Facts, statistics, anecdotal, description, etc. How good is this evidence? Is it observation, inference, or a combination of both?

**POINT OF VIEW:** First person? Third person? Second? What difference does it make?

**TONE:** What is the author’s attitude toward the subject of the article? What’s his/her attitude toward the audience?

**OTHER PERSPECTIVES:** Does the author include other people’s opinions? opposing views? Does he/she respond to them effectively?

**UNANSWERED QUESTIONS:** Does the author leave any questions unanswered? Can you think of anything he/she needs to address?

**UNFAIR ARGUMENTS:** Does the author use faulty reasoning or unfair arguments?

**STRATEGIES:** What strategies does the author use to achieve the purpose? Logos? Pathos? Ethos? How does he/she try to persuade the audience that his/her argument is valid?

* **LOGOS:** (Greek for 'word’) refers to the internal consistency of the message--the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence. The impact of logos on an audience is sometimes called the argument's logical appeal.
* **ETHOS:** (Greek for 'character’) refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer or speaker. Ethos is often conveyed through tone and style of the message and through the way the writer or speaker refers to differing views. It can also be affected by the writer's reputation as it exists independently from the message--his or her expertise in the field, his or her previous record or integrity, and so forth. The impact of ethos is often called the argument's 'ethical appeal' or the 'appeal from credibility.’
* **PATHOS:** (Greek for 'suffering' or 'experience’) is often associated with emotional appeal, but a better equivalent might be 'appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination.' An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally but to identify with the writer's point of view--to feel what the writer feels... Perhaps the most common way of conveying a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story, which can turn the abstractions of logic into something palpable and present. The values, beliefs, and understandings of the writer are implicit in the story and conveyed imaginatively to the reader. Pathos thus refers to the power with which the writer's message moves the audience to decision or action.
* (This info on logos, ethos, and pathos is cited directly from: Ramage, John D. and John C. Bean. *Writing Arguments.* 4th Edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1998. 81-82.)