

Analysis and Synthesis

(aka Rhetorical Analysis)

This assignment is meant to remind you of the strategies (which you learned in 1010) for reading and compressing difficult material, and then asks you to enter the conversation in which your texts work.

The objective of this assignment is to summarize the texts, analyze them, and synthesize the information into your own, unique, new views. That is, along with gathering what the text *says*, you will extend the paper to discuss what the text *does*. You will use as evidence the facts that you can determine about the writer's purpose, the context of the text, the intended audience, the rhetorical situation (including the effectiveness of the text for that situation), and the rhetorical tools used.

This paper is worth **150 points total**: 85 for content, 20 for organization, 35 for style, 10 for presentation, with an additional 25 for peer reviews and having the draft ready on time.

Pay special attention to Chapter 13 in Allyn & Bacon for instructions and examples of how to effectively and strategically complete this paper assignment.

Requirements

This paper needs to be **1000-1500 words** (about 4-6 pages), following all the style and formatting guidelines for the course. You will take **two scholarly sources** from your research to write this paper on (one may be the one you used for the previous paper). They should have different stances on the issue, different angles of vision. The farther apart they are in stance, the easier time you will have with your final paper in this class. Along with the teacher review sheet, peer review sheets, draft, revision, and your peer review summary, you will include a copy of the sources when you turn it in to me for the teacher draft and for the portfolio.

For the paper itself, you will write no more than a **100 word summary** of each article. After the summary, you are to write about what the text does and how it does it. This should be similar to the Strong Response paper you did in 1010. Typically, the summary will be about 25% of the length of the section, while your strong response and synthesis will be 75% (in other words, a ½ page summary will have at least 1½ pages of strong response). After the responses, include the word count in brackets at the very end of the document. Finally, include a References section with the source information for both sources, in APA format, on the same page (you do **not** need to start a new page for this References section).

Writing About What it Says

A **summary** allows you to demonstrate your understanding of the text and to make sure you get all the points. *Mapping* and *Capturing* can help you create an effective summary. When you write a summary, you are “reading with the grain” as it says in Allyn and Bacon. You keep yourself open to the author's ideas and points, and then restate those points succinctly and accurately, and as fairly as possible. A summary requires you to focus on both the **structure and the content** of the text.

To create an effective summary, you must read the source text **several times**. The first time, read for general meaning and argument flow. The second time, look at the “gist” of each paragraph and describe its function and main idea. Finally, read through it again, locate the main points of the argument, and create a Map of it (and perhaps even a Capture -- in many ways a mini-summary).

An effective summary does the following:

- Represents the original article accurately and fairly, remaining objective and neutral, not revealing your own ideas on the subject but, rather, only the original author's points.

- Gives the original article balanced and proportional coverage.
- Uses your own words to express the original author's ideas. Keeps your reader informed through attributive tags (such as "according to" or "argues that") that you are expressing someone else's ideas, not your own. Avoid using verbs that reflect a bias (such as "rants" or "leaps to the conclusion").
- Possibly includes quotations for a few key terms or ideas from the original, but quotes sparingly (which would then be properly cited and documented so that the reader can find the original).

Writing About What it Does

When you write about what it does, you join the discourse community of the text or subject matter and speak back to it. It requires you to **actively engage** the text, both agreeing and disagreeing with the author's points, whether or not you actually agree with the writer's stance. You must look past the stance and focus on how effective they are with the text itself. You may also analyze the topic discussed, but only insofar as how the author discusses it.

This section of the paper needs to have a guiding statement that clarifies what you will discuss in the rest of the paper (this is known as a **thesis statement**). To write about what it does, you analyze the **rhetorical context** of the text. This means that you acknowledge the writer's purpose, the context that this source appears in, who the intended audience is, and the situation for this writing. You must then analyze the effectiveness of the text in addressing that situation.

You **must** respond both with and against the grain, meaning that you need to identify the text's strengths and weaknesses. This is much like the Believing and Doubting Game we talked about earlier.

The following is a quick checklist of questions to stimulate your analysis:

- What is the rhetorical context of the text? What is the purpose? Why would the author have written this?
- Who is the text's intended audience? How is the author trying to change that audience's view of their topic? What rhetorical strategies intended to influence the audience most stand out?
- How do I differ from the intended audience? How are my purposes for reading different from what the author imagined?
- How have the author's rhetorical strategies affected me?
- How have the author's ideas affected me? How have they expanded or complicated my own thinking? What do I agree with? What can I support?
- How can I question the author's data, evidence, supporting arguments? If I am not persuaded by the author's ideas and evidence, why not? What is missing? What can be called into question?
- What is excluded from the author's text? What do these exclusions tell me about the author's value system or angle of vision?
- How can I question the author's values, beliefs, and assumptions? Conversely, how does the text cause me to question my own values, beliefs, and assumptions?
- How has the author changed my view of the topic? What do I have to give up or lose in order to change my view? What do I gain?
- How can I use the author's ideas for my own purposes? What new insights have I gained? What new ways of thinking can I apply to another context?

Look for the questions that most stimulate your thinking and then freewrite your response to each. In the final draft of the paper, you can bring all this information together to create a logical, organized response.