

AP Language and Composition
Thomas Wootton High School
Summer Reading 2009

Purposes:

- To build background knowledge about significant political and social issues of our time
- To analyze complex issues from multiple perspectives
- To practice identifying rhetorical strategies in real world contexts

Assignment Parts:

1. Find and read eight articles about three different political or social issues. (Possible topics/issues are listed below.) Articles must be from reputable sources dated between June and August 2009. They may be columns from editorialists or more conventional news stories. Create an MLA style bibliography for each of the three issue areas. (You may use Noodletools to help you create the bibliography, but you are not required to do so.)
2. Write a 250-300 word analysis of each of the three topics. Your analysis must include a summary of the multiple, diverse perspectives represented within the debate AND must state your current perspective/argument on the topic.
3. Identify 24 examples of rhetorical strategies used in the articles you read and record them on the graphic organizer provided. You must find examples of at least fifteen **different** rhetorical devices, and you may not use any one device more than twice. A list of rhetorical devices/strategies and their definitions is included in the assignment document on the Wootton website.

Publication/Date	Rhetorical Strategy	Example
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Grading Rubric

- ___ 10 pts: All twenty-four bibliographic entries are included and formatted correctly. Articles are taken from a wide variety of well respected sources.
- ___ 20 pts: Analysis of first issue is detailed, clear, and well organized. Analysis accurately identifies the most important perspectives within the debate. Writer provides persuasive argument supporting his/her position on the issue.
- ___ 20 pts: Analysis of second issue is detailed, clear, and well organized. Analysis accurately identifies the most important perspectives within the debate. Writer provides persuasive argument supporting his/her position on the issue.
- ___ 20 pts: Analysis of third issue is detailed, clear, and well organized. Analysis accurately identifies the most important perspectives within the debate. Writer provides persuasive argument supporting his/her position on the issue.
- ___ 24 pts: Writer correctly identifies clear examples of twenty-four rhetorical strategies from list provided. (Must use at least 15 different terms, and may not use any one term more than twice.)

Topics to Consider (may choose other current, socially significant topics)

performance enhancing drugs, supreme court nomination, charter schools, No Child Left Behind, globalization, housing market, war in Afghanistan, North Korea, Iran, China, Iraq, Palestinian/Israeli relations, nuclear proliferation, global recession, natural disasters, foreign aid, stem cell research, global warming, nutrition/diet, homeland security, health care debate, gay marriage, international human rights, auto industry, immigration, cyber security, genetic engineering, space exploration, stock market, child labor, homelessness, gun control, animal rights, alternative energy, cloning, affirmative action, AIDS, nuclear power, piracy, trade, food and drug safety, global health epidemics

Sources:

Most local, national, and international newspapers and magazines are available online. You can also use ProQuest Platinum, one of the databases purchased by Wootton for student use. Log onto your Edline account, click on “Media Center,” click on “Online Resources,” click on “Wootton Databases,” and select “ProQuest Platinum.” The login and password are provided for you there.

Exemplar:

An example of a bibliography, graphic organizer identifying rhetorical devices, and analysis for one issue is available on the Wootton website. Click on the AP Language Summer reading link and scroll to the bottom of the document to see a model assignment. Remember, you need to complete each part of the assignment for three different social/political issues.

Exemplar for AP Lang Summer Reading 2009

Merit Pay for Teachers

Analysis Exemplar

The introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 has placed a new emphasis on academic success for all students, particularly poor and minority students who have historically performed worse than their affluent counterparts on standardized tests. Federally mandated tests force states to set specific learning goals, to measure student progress towards achieving those goals, and to hold individual schools accountable when their students don't meet standard. Unfortunately, students in economically depressed, urban areas are twice as likely to have a first or second year teacher in their classrooms as students in the affluent suburbs (De Vise). Talented and experienced educators often move to the suburbs for increased pay and less challenging learning environments. One of the provocative solutions to this problem, merit pay for teachers, has been gaining momentum in the last couple of years. Simply put, merit pay proposals would increase the salaries of teachers who increase student test scores and take away some of the protections that unions have put into place for teachers whose students are failing.

Although the Democratic party has historically resisted merit pay proposals, president Obama supports them in theory and has already allocated money to school systems willing to implement them on a trial basis. The stimulus package signed by Obama shortly after taking office included 200 million dollars for districts willing to experiment with merit pay, and Obama included five times more money (517 million dollars) in grant money for merit pay plans in the budget for this year (Bimbaum). Supporters of merit pay believe that the most important education reform is teacher quality, and they agree with Obama's conviction that "it's time to start rewarding good teachers, stop making excuses for bad ones" (Meckler). Several local school districts including Prince William County, Prince George's County, and the Washington DC Public Schools are considering or experimenting with merit pay proposals. The DC public school system has been entrenched in an 18 month battle with its teacher union, which opposes merit pay for many reasons, including the difficulty of accurately measuring teacher quality (Turque). The National Education Association, the largest teacher's union in the country, continues to support the current pay scale which is based on years of teaching experience. Recently, the NEA has expressed more cautious openness to merit pay proposals, because, according to NEA president Dennis Van Roekel, "If you pay one teacher more you have to pay someone else less" (Meckler).

The current system of pay in education does not reward teachers for either time or talent and tends to draw experienced teachers out of the schools where they are needed most. Since the quality of teaching is the most significant factor in student performance and closing the achievement gap is one of the highest priorities in US education, merit pay should be implemented nationwide. However, teachers and teachers unions should be heavily involved in developing the systems of evaluation used to assess teacher comprehensively and fairly, or merit pay will fracture professional communities within schools.

Bibliography Exemplar

Bimbaum, Michael. “Performance Pay Considered for County Teachers.” The Washington Post. 10 May 2009:

De Vise, Daniel and Michael Alison Chandler. “Poor Neighborhoods, Untested Teachers.” The Washington Post. 27 Apr. 2009: A1.

Honawar, Vaishali. “Teacher performance-pay plans expand across U.S.” Washington Times. 10 Apr. 2009: A3.

Meckler, Laura. “Obama Seeks to Expand Merit Pay for Teachers.” Wall Street Journal 11 Mar. 2009: A6.

Rhee, Michelle. “The Toughest Job.” The Washington Post 9 Feb. 2009: A17.

Ripley, Amanda. “Rhee Tackles Classroom Change.” Time Magazine 26 Nov. 2008. 28 May 2009 < <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1862444,00.html>>

Turque, Bill. “Howard Law Dean to Mediate Schools Beef.” Washington Post 15 April 2009: B04.

Turque, Bill. “Teachers to Face Individual, School Evaluations of Student Success.” Washington Post 12 Mar. 2009: B04.

Graphic Organizer Exemplar

Topic: Merit Pay for Teachers

Publication/Date	Rhetorical Strategy	Example
Washington Post, May 11, 2009	Transfer	A school board member from Prince William county who drafted a pay for performance plan for his school district cited President Obama and Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan as philosophic supporters of the plan to add authority and credibility to his plan.
Washington Post, April 27, 2009	Rebuttal	Although a number of well publicized programs such as Teach for America have “glamorized the first-year teacher” for his/her work ethic and hopefulness, research has consistently shown that “inexperienced teachers tend to be

		less effective, especially in their first two years.”
Washington Times, April 10, 2009	Metaphor	In order to highlight the burgeoning number of attempts to implement merit pay for teachers, the writer argues that the attempts “appear destined to mushroom” after President Obama identified the policy as one of his key educational reforms.
Wall Street Journal, March 11, 2009	Parallel structure	President Obama tries to appear reasonable and non partisan when arguing that too many liberals have “resisted the idea of rewarding excellence in teaching with extra pay,” while too many conservatives “have opposed new investments in early education.” Obama seems pragmatic and proactive for drawing equally from the intellectual resources of both political parties, emphasized by the parallel structure.
Washington Post, February 9, 2009	Anticipating Counterarguments	In a letter to teachers, Michelle Rhee communicates her understanding that she is raising expectations for teachers, so she anticipates teachers’ requests for “professional development and support” to help them meet those expectations.
Time Magazine, November 26, 2008	Anecdote	The writer begins the article with a story of a student who emailed the Chancellor of DC Public Schools, Michelle Rhee, to complain about broken down computers in his classroom. The fact that Rhee responded personally, and within 24 hours to the student concern, demonstrates the persistence and dedication to real reform that becomes a theme of the article.
Washington Post, April 15, 2009	Ethos	Michelle Rhee reminds teachers that “her students' standardized test scores improved markedly during her tenure” as a teacher in the Baltimore Public schools, so she empathizes with the demands of their jobs but insists her expectations for teachers

		aren't unreasonable.
Washington Post, March 12, 2009	Concrete Examples	Michelle Rhee lists all of the factors that will be taken into consideration when evaluating teachers, including "standardized test scores where practical, intensive classroom observation and "value added" measurements of students' growth" in order to alleviate teacher fear that they will be narrowly graded on unfair criteria.

Terms for AP Language Essays

***use these terms from this list to complete the graphic organizer

1. **ad hominem** – an argument that attacks the integrity or character of an opponent rather than the merits of an issue; mud-slinging.
2. **alliteration** – the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in two or more words in a piece of writing. “Sally sells seashells down by the seashore.”
3. **allusion** – a reference to some famous literary work, historical figure, or event.
4. **anecdote** – a brief story or narrative usually of an amusing or interesting nature often used to introduce a topic or illustrate a general principle
5. **analogy** – a comparison that attempts to explain one idea or thing by likening it to another. Can be confusing if the compared items are basically unlike.
6. **begging the question** – to assume the conclusion to one’s argument to be true - “Sally is mischievous because she has a little devil in her...”
7. **card-stacking** – a type of logical fallacy when the writer only includes extreme evidence that supports his/her argument and omits other relevant facts that contradict his/her argument.
8. **colloquial (ism)**- a word or expression acceptable in informal usage but inappropriate in formal discourse. “ok, bug, cool, awesome, phat...”
9. **concrete detail/language** – said of words or terms denoting objects or conditions that are palpable, visible, or otherwise evident to the senses.
10. **connotation** – the implication or emotional overtones of a word rather than its literal meaning. “mom, apple pie, Fourth of July...”
11. **counterargument** –addressing an argument that opposes your own argument to show the limits/problems of alternate points of view or to add complexity/precision to your own argument
12. **descriptive detail** – said of words or terms that describe a scene, person, thing, or idea; evokes the look, feel, sound, and sense of events, people, or things.
13. **diction** – Word choice; choice of words a writer uses in an essay or other writing to create shades of meaning. Types of diction include formal and informal, colloquial and elevated, abstract and concrete, neutral or emotionally charged, jargon,
14. **euphemism** – an inoffensive term substituted for one generally considered to be offensively explicit; “passed away” for “died.”
15. **extended metaphor** – a metaphor written developed over several paragraphs or stanzas in a written work.
16. **false cause** – a logical fallacy when the writer assumes a cause and effect relationship when the two events are merely positively correlated. Example...students who participate in extra curricular activities tend to have higher GPAs, but that doesn’t mean that the activities cause academic success.
17. **hyperbole** – extreme exaggeration; 85 million extra credit points.
18. **imagery** – a phrase or expression that evokes a picture or describes a scene; may be literal (attempt to describe something realistically) or figurative (an expression is used that likens the thing described to something else); includes simile, metaphor, personification.

- 19. invective** – sharp, harsh, insulting words used to attack. Often used to negatively characterize an opponent in argument rather than critiquing the opponents argument in a logical manner.
- 20. irony** – the use of language in such a way that apparent meaning contrasts sharply with real meaning; Brutus is an “honorable man;” having Coke machines turned off at lunchtime.
- 21. juxtaposition** – to place side by side; in writing, juxtaposition of word or ideas is done on purpose by authors to create effect and meaning.
- 22. metaphor** – a figurative image that implies the similarity between things otherwise dissimilar; does not use “like” or “as.” “I have been acquainted with the night..”
- 23. mood** – the feeling the author creates in a piece of writing; affects the reader. Mood can be gloomy, sad, horrible, joyful, bitter, frightening...discuss “Saving Private Ryan,” “Schindler’s List.”
- 24. narrative** – a story, description of events real or fictional; stresses the sequence of events. Important to note sequence – may be out of order – why? “Saving Private Ryan,” “Pulp Fiction.”
- 25. non-sequitur** – a statement that does not follow logically from what preceded it.
- 26. oxymoron** – a figure of speech in which incongruous or contradictory terms are combined, as in “a deafening silence,” “jumbo shrimp.”
- 27. paradox** – a statement that appears to contradict itself or be contrary to common sense but that may be true. “The more we learn the less we know.”
- 28. parallelism** – a principle of coherent writing requiring that coordinate elements be given the same grammatical form: “I was born an American, I will live an American, I will die an American.” Done for musical effect or emphasis or to highlight connectedness of ideas
- 29. personification** – attributing human qualities to objects, abstractions, or animals.
- 30. point of view** – the perspective from which a piece of writing is developed. Includes first person, third person (omniscient or limited).
- 31. rebuttal** – considering counterarguments and providing evidence to contradict them. Helps writer appear more reasonable and balanced
- 32. repetition** – the act of repeating a word or phrase to create a certain effect; “I Have a Dream”
- 33. satire** – often an attack on a person; the use of wit and humor in order to ridicule society’s weaknesses so as to correct them: Horatian (gentle) or Juvenalian (harsh). Dante’s Inferno, CT, Modest Proposal.
- 34. simile** – a comparison of two dissimilar things using “like” or “as;” figure of speech; “My love is like a red, red rose...”
- 35. statistics**-- specific data usually expressed in the form of numbers, often used to demonstrate the frequency or extent of a phenomena
- 36. syllogism** – in formal logic, the pattern by which a deductive argument is expressed:
- All men are mortal.
John Smith is a man.
Therefore, John Smith is mortal. (in order for the conclusion to be true, the major and minor premises must also be true)

37. symbolism – the practice of using objects or actions that in context represent something else. Ask students for examples of symbols.

38. testimony – quoting “experts” on the topic under discussion to provide evidence or increase the credibility of your argument

39. transfer -- creating a mental association between two things in order to borrow the positive or negative connotations of one thing to either discredit or praise the other. Example...ads that use the positive associations of celebrities to endorse their product.

40. tone – the reflection of the writer’s attitude toward subject and audience; can be formal, informal, objective, subjective; tone of voice could also include irony, sarcasm, anger, humor, hyperbole, understatement.

41. verbal irony – difference between surface meanings of words and their intended meanings. Frequently used as a device of satire.

42. ethos – principle of argument in which the writer establishes his credentials with his audience; appeal of credibility.

43. logos – principle of argument in which the writer appeals to the reader’s sense of reason

44. pathos – principle of argument in which the writer appeals to the reader’s emotions