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# AP® LANG
## STUDY GUIDE PACK

AP® English Language and Composition Study Guide

# The Rhetorical Situation

## WHAT IS RHETORIC?

Rhetoric is "the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques."

### Analyzing Rhetoric

To analyze rhetoric, follow the steps below.

1. Identify the relationship between the speaker, subject, and audience—often, much of this information can be found in the prompt of a Q2 essay.
2. As you read the passage, chunk by primary points. This can be determined by asking yourself: "What is the author pointing out to the audience?" There may be one primary point for several paragraphs.
3. Take note of textual evidence that appeals ethically, logically, or emotionally to the audience or strengthens the speaker's credibility.
4. Examine the speaker's purpose for writing the passage. Consider which primary points best support his/her purpose

### Rhetorical Appeals

There are three main types of rhetorical appeals that speakers and writers make. These appeals are the result of rhetorical choices that an author makes within a text.

| APPEAL TO AUTHORITY | APPEAL TO EMOTION | APPEAL TO LOGIC |
|---|---|---|
| When appealing to authority, the author can present details or evidence of any of the following to establish their own credibility:<br>• Experience<br>• Moral character<br>• Credentials<br>• Accolades | An author or speaker can effectively accomplish their goal by making their audience feel any one of a wide variety of emotions, including (but not limited to):<br>• Sympathy<br>• Sadness<br>• Anger<br>• Joy<br>• Pride<br>• Fear | This appeal can be accomplished by supplying any of the following:<br>• Facts<br>• Statistics or data<br>• Evidence<br>• Rational and logical argument |

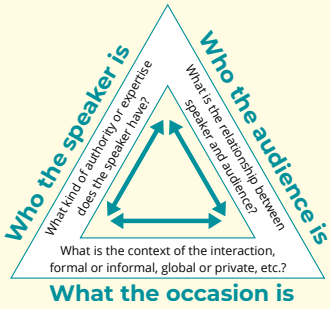
### Writing the Analysis

**Inadequate:** Lincoln begins his speech by using ethos. He tells his audience that "at this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first." This makes the audience trust him.

**Adequate**: Lincoln begins his speech with a precise tone, informing his audience that "no prediction in regard to the [progress of arms] is ventured." This matter of fact attitude reflects how Lincoln is tired of the war and ready to move forward as he hopes the audience will be after listening to his address.

**Sophisticated:** To begin his speech, Lincoln apprises the audience of his executive experience and acknowledges that there is "less occasion" for long dialogue. This salutation mirrors the morale of the war-ravaged country and entices his audience to continue to listen to a "detail of a course" that hopes to repair the nation.

The preceding examples were constructed from Abraham Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Speech." You can visit the prompt and the passage on page 2 of the document found at **https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/apc/eng_lang_frq_02_10330.pdf**




**MAIN IDEA, PURPOSE, AND TONE**

Whether analyzing a multiple-choice passage or a free response question, there are three general characteristics that you must examine.

**Main Idea**
- Refers to the content of the passage.
- Answers the question "What is this passage about?"

**Purpose**
- Related to Main Idea, but not the same.
- Answers the question "What does the speaker hope to accomplish through the main idea?"

**Tone**
- Refers to the author's attitude about their subject.
- As you read through the passage, circle any extreme words, and look for images and associations and consider how the collection of tone words affect the audience. How would that effect help the speaker achieve his purpose?

When writing a rhetorical analysis, it is important to address how a writer's rhetorical choices affect the audience by appealing to one of these six universal topics:
- Moral
- Spiritual
- Political
- Social
- Psychological
- Historical

**Justification:** In the first example, the student states that Lincoln "uses ethos." This is a common mistake—a speaker cannot "use" ethos (or logos or pathos for that matter); however, a speaker will make a choice that establishes credibility with the audience. While the adequate paragraph is "technically correct," it lacks an explanation of how Lincoln's words would induce the audience to move forward. A sophisticated writer analyzes how a rhetorical choice creates a logical or emotional impact on an audience and examines what sort of assumptions a writer made about his audience to make such an appeal successful.

# Diction

## DICTION

Understanding diction is essential to doing well in AP® English Language. Sure, diction in the literal sense may simply be the "distinctive vocabulary choices and style of expression" an author/speaker uses. But truthfully, there are layers and stages to what diction is and how good writers use it.

Diction affects the tone and complexity of a text. It can make a text formal and elevated or informal and casual, make it strong or weak, and diction can even identify the speaker—Shakespeare comes to mind. If you can learn to speak intelligently about the author's use of diction, you can own this test!

### Denotation and Connotation

Every word has two kinds of meaning:

- ***Denotation*** is the dictionary definition of a word.
- ***Connotation*** is the feeling a word conveys.

Consider these two versions of another sentence:

- ***Angry*** students ***protest*** dress code policies.
- ***Outraged*** students ***riot*** against dress code policies.

The difference between these two sentences is caused largely by the *connotations* of the bolded words: "angry" and "outraged" have the same *denotation*: they both mean something like "mad." But "angry" students sound like they could be calmed down, while "outraged" students must have their concerns addressed. What about "protest" versus "riot"? Do they have the same *denotation*? What about their *connotations*?

### HOW WRITERS MANIPULATE DICTION

#### Qualifying Language

Authors can manipulate the degree of doubt or certainty of something by using qualifying words.

- The following words indicate a lack of certainty:
  - could, may, might, perhaps, hope, sometimes
- Using more absolute language indicates more certainty:
  - first, only, never, always, must
- An author can also indicate criticism by using works like the following:
  - predictable, dubious, fantastical, unexceptional

#### Imagery

Here are some words used to describe Rome in a passage from *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon:

- swelled, ripened, decay

The words describe the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in a way that makes it sound like an overripe fruit. What if those words were changed to less image-laden ones?

- grew, matured, decline

These words would give a less nuanced, less dramatic description.

**Why Diction Matters**

Writers carefully consider which words to use to best accomplish their rhetorical goals.

Consider the evolution of the following sentence:

- The stone looked like it could roll down the hill.
- The rock was about to crash down the mountain.
- The boulder was destined to come crashing down the cliff.

The sentence starts out without a lot of excitement, but it gets progressively more dramatic with each version. Each sentence conveys more or less the same idea, but each one fulfills a different rhetorical purpose.

**HOW TO TALK ABOUT DICTION:**

In the free-response section of the test, it isn't enough to just bring diction up; you have to be specific about it. First give a description of the type of language the author uses—is it objective? Subjective? Literal? Abstract? Then be sure to explain why an author has used particular words and how those words helped achieve a specific purpose.

**Adjectives for Describing Diction**

| high or formal | low or informal | neutral |
|---|---|---|
| precise | exact | concrete |
| abstract | plain | simple |
| homespun | esoteric | learned |
| cultured | literal | figurative |
| connotative | symbolic | picturesque |
| sensuous | literary | provincial |
| colloquial | slang | idiomatic |
| neologistic | inexact | euphemistic |
| trite | obscure | pedantic |
| bombastic | grotesque | vulgar |
| jargon | emotional | obtuse |
| moralistic | ordinary | scholarly |
| insipid | proper | pretentious |
| old-fashioned | | |

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# Analyzing Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?"

## Context:

Truth is speaking at a Women's Convention, so we can assume her audience is likely to be sympathetic to her message about Women's Rights and interested in her personal story. Crucially, the speech is situated in the North in 1861 before the Civil War.

## Audience:

An audience includes all the people who will listen to a speech or read a text (i.e., the primary audience) and the wider public who will read a copy of the speech in the future (i.e., the secondary audience). Based on the what you know about Sojourner Truth and the context of the speech, you can make assumptions about the audience based on the following questions.

- What conclusions can you draw based on the contextual informational?
- Based on the religious appeals that Truth uses in her speech, what can we assume about her audience?
- What other ideas, beliefs, values, or needs of the audience are revealed through Truth's speech?

## Purpose:

As stated in the prompt, Truth's purpose was to relay a message about women's rights to her audience. Consider the following to help you further understand her purpose.

- What is Truth saying about women's rights? Do they need more or less? Who is going to give them these rights?
- When abolitionists spoke about slavery, who did they primarily speak for: slave *men* or slave *women*?
- When women's rights activists spoke out, who were they advocating for, *white* women or *African-American* women?

In this passage, Truth's purpose is quite clear: she is advocating for the rights of African-American women, a group that was often overlooked in discussions of civil rights.

## Exigence:

Truth's motivation or exigence concluded from her message. Women are strong, capable, and deserving of the same rights as men. To prompt this analysis, consider the following:

- What have you learned about Truth through the lesson that would motivate her to persuade them to fight for equality?
- What assumptions do her and the audience have to agree on in order to accomplish her purpose?
- What universal truth is she discussing?

## SUMMARY

Because many in the North supported the abolition of slavery, Truth was able to speak candidly about the hardships she encountered and her desire for equal rights for slaves and women.

### Who was Sojourner Truth?

Sojourner Truth was an important activist for African-American and Women's Rights in the nineteenth century. She was born around 1797 in Swartekill, New York and was sold off at least four separate times in her childhood and early adulthood.

In her early childhood, she was owned by a Dutch family and spoke only Dutch. Her experience as a slave was filled with physical abuse, rape, and violence. Her fourth slavemaster beat her first husband to death. She adopted the name "Sojourner Truth" in 1843, claiming that God had called her to preach in the countryside. She supported the Union Army during the Civil War and challenged existing laws that treated African-Americans as property.

Since her death in 1881, Sojourner Truth has been considered one of the most important voices for civil rights in American history.

### What is Exigence?

"Exigence" is the motivation behind the speaker's purpose. It is often unsaid, which makes it challenging for students to discuss, but it is an important differentiator among essay scores because it allows for richer and deeper commentary. In order to analyze the exigence, the you must first understand how the context, audience, and purpose connect to the speaker.

## Passage and Commentary:

### Passage

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

### Commentary

1. She isn't condescending to her audience by calling them "children." She is actually using a term of affection and connecting to her audience on a personal level.

2. What she does here is both funny and ingenious. She is an African-American woman from the South, speaking to white women in the North, about denied rights for both groups of women. Despite their many differences, she draws the two groups together by a goal both can understand—all of us women are *talking about rights*. She points out their common opponent: white men, who, she predicts *will be in a fix pretty soon*—and it sounds like it'll be at the hands of these women who talk about their rights. By uniting her audience through a common enemy, she sets up a call to action.

3. From the text, we can't tell who the man is, but we can imagine her pointing at him or gesturing toward him. Whoever he was, she didn't bother to name him—he is only *that man over there*. We can guess he's the kind of white man she was just talking about. Additionally, like many slave owners who stripped away the slave's name as a form of identity, she has stripped away the white man's identity and power. Truth's use of imagery is effective here. She paints a picture of the "helpless" women, while in all reality her audience members were fully capable of accomplishing these tasks.

4. Truth accepts the man's argument but shows how it doesn't apply at all to her own experience. Women may deserve respect and may expect gentlemanly behavior, but these niceties are not extended to her personally. Not only does Truth highlight the "injustices" she is faced with, but she again sets up her main point—women can do hard things. She has done them.

## Notes:

## Passage

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

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### Commentary

5 She asks an obvious and daring question: *"Ain't I a woman?"* Of course she is a woman. There is only one way to answer that question, and that's what makes it so effective. She is essentially forcing her audience to nod their heads along with hers.

6 Here she shifts to direct commands to her audience: *Look at me! Look at my arm!* She is presenting her body as physical evidence to her hard, toilsome labor.

7 Truth also appeals to her own credibility—her *ethos*—by citing her personal experience. She could also be extending her criticism towards *that man over there*. For all of his careful duty toward women, we can tell that he views them as fragile and in need of male help. But not Sojourner Truth: she doesn't *need* a man to open the door for her. She is not *that man's* stereotypical caricature of a woman. She's stronger than any man and yet she asks *Ain't I a Woman*? Shouldn't she get to enjoy those same acts of chivalry shown to her white peers?

8 She is not just comparing herself to men at this point, she is developing an autobiography of an African-American woman in bondage: her food came *when [she] could get it*. She had to *bear the lash.* She has suffered terribly as a slave.

9 This is the climax of her brief story and the most important of her credentials as a woman. She is a mother. She not only ensures her credibility here—her *ethos*—as a speaker, but also appeals to her audience on a deeply emotional level—an appeal to *pathos*. Her thirteen children. *Thirteen...and seen most all sold off to slavery*. Truth did all that a mother, an enslaved mother, could do.

## Notes:

## Passage

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### Commentary

(10) To the women in her audience—decent, upstanding members of society, the vast majority of whom were wives and mothers—this is the most personal and emotional appeal she could possibly make. She continues to connect with her audience. While some of her listeners may not be able to relate to or identify with her strength, they may be able to connect to her as mother.

(11) The majority of the women in the audience would identify themselves as Christians, which explains why saying *none but Jesus heard me,* would leave such a powerful impact. Not only did she have thirteen children and have to watch them sold off into slavery one after another, only having the freedom to grieve bitterly for them, but she also had to do it *alone*. No one would have the decency to come beside her and help her through each of her thirteen tragedies. Only Jesus, whom Sojourner and these women both worshipped, would hear both the cry of an enslaved woman and a free white woman and hold them in the same regard.

(12) This is the fourth *And ain't I a woman?* Yes, she is a woman, and it seems as if she's more of a woman than anyone else. Her repetition of the question continues to draw her audience in, to remind these women of their own strength in the face of adversity.

(13) Here again is one of her favorite rhetorical devices, the rhetorical question, being used to great effect. It gives her the chance to transition to her next argument and also inject another term of affection for an audience member—*honey*—on her way to enriching her case. This could also serve as a counter argument and refutation. She is a smart woman, and she is aware of the arguments that men make against women's rights.

(14) Here she concedes that even though she has less formal education and less intellect than her audience, she is still deserving of rights. (Wouldn't it be mean, indeed.)

## Notes:

## Passage

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

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### Commentary

15 She moves on from *children* and *honey* towards *that little man in black there*, who has apparently made the mistake of arguing that *women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman!* The man is wearing black and it's relevant enough for her to mention, so we can safely guess that he is a priest or minister. Again, Truth does not give this man a name. She strips away the humanity that he may have in order to serve her purpose—keeping the audience focused on women's power and women's rights.

16 She opposes his theological argument by asking, *Where did your Christ come from?* (Twice.) Truth makes her argument more powerful, more insistent by repeating herself. She calls this man's teaching out by referencing Christian belief: Jesus was born of a virgin and his father was God himself. No man necessary! Sojourner Truth doesn't just best men in physical challenges, she schools them in theology too! This appeal to reason gives her audience the justification they may need to fight for their own rights. If God thought a woman was strong enough to carry Christ, He certainly believes they are strong enough to think for themselves.

17 This is a clever, brilliant argument. She accepts the premise that Eve caused the downfall of mankind, but then uses that premise to reach the opposite conclusion of the *little man in black over there.* If women caused the fall, they must be the ones to fix it.

18 This assertive statement makes her purpose clear—men can no longer subjugate women. This call to action unites her audience once more through a common goal—to fight for the right to make the world a better place.

19 In spite of the force and power of her argument, Truth finishes the argument in a polite and gracious way by acknowledging and thanking her audience. She ends her message in a gracious manner to illustrate that a woman can be strong and assertive, while still being gracious to her audience.

## Notes:

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# The Analysis Essay

Like the Synthesis essay, the Analysis essay has reading that you have to respond to. What makes the Analysis essay distinct is that there's only one essay, which will be about a page long, and there's no separate "reading time" for this one.

## What Does "Analysis" Mean?

Read the instructions in the prompt carefully. They will say something like "write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies [the author] uses to convey his message." To *analyze* means to explain **how** or **why** the author makes particular rhetorical choices, not just to list them or summarize the passage.

## How to Analyze

The following gives a guideline for how much time to spend on each of the following steps, but these are not set in stone. As you practice, you can experiment with whether you'll do better with a little more time for reading, a little more time for planning, exactly the suggested times, or something else.

### 1. Read—10 minutes

You have to read both the prompt (read it twice, to be sure you understand it) and the passage carefully. As you read the passage, think about the following points:

1. Identify the relationship between the speaker, subject, and audience—often, much of this information can be found in the prompt of a Q2 essay.
2. As you read the passage, chunk by primary points. This can be determined by asking yourself: "What is the author pointing out to the audience?" There may be one primary point for several paragraphs.
3. Take note of textual evidence that appeals ethically, logically, or emotionally to the audience or strengthens the speaker's credibility.
4. Examine the speaker's purpose for writing the passage. Consider which primary points best support his/her purpose.

### 2. Plan—2 minutes

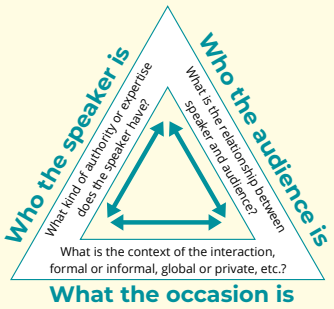
Before you can start writing, you need to know *what* you're going to write. Consider the following points to determine what you'll write about in your essay:

- Be sure you know *what* the argument is.
- Choose the *most important* rhetorical choices you noted while you were reading. You likely won't have time to discuss all of them, so make sure the ones you choose to discuss are the most effective ones.
- Make a basic outline with a thesis and the idea for each paragraph.

### 3. Write—33 minutes

Monitor the time you spend writing, as the proctor won't tell you when to move on to the next essay. For maximum success, follow these guidelines:

- Write as fast as you can while still keeping your handwriting legible.
- You do want to make clear that you understand what the argument is about, but don't spend too much time summarizing or quoting the passage: the graders are familiar with it.
- Remember to focus on the *why* and the *how* of the rhetorical devices:
  - *Why* did the author make that particular choice?
  - *How* does each choice help the author accomplish a particular goal?




**Common Rhetorical Choices:**

Rhetorical speakers will often manipulate their audience with one or more of the choices below. As you read the text, look for the evidence of the following:

**Structure:**

- Juxtaposition literally means to place two things side by side. Authors uses juxtaposition to discuss two contrasting or opposing ideas.
- Parallelism is about expressing similar ideas in similar grammatical or syntactic structures.
- Repetition involves repeating the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer.

**Figurative Language:**

- An allusion is a brief reference to a famous person, group, historical event, place, or work of art.
- Irony is a figure of speech in which words are used in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words.
- Imagery means to use figurative language to represent objects, actions, and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses.

**Diction:**

Often, an author will develop a specific tone throughout a passage, and this is accomplished using specific types of diction the author chooses. Ask yourself, how would you describe the word choice? What is the impact of such word choice?

**Syntax:**

Additionally, an author will manipulate the sentence structure to impact the audience. If an author incorporates several long or run-on sentences, they might mirror an extended period of mistreatment that the audience has endured.